

TAMSYN MUIR

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

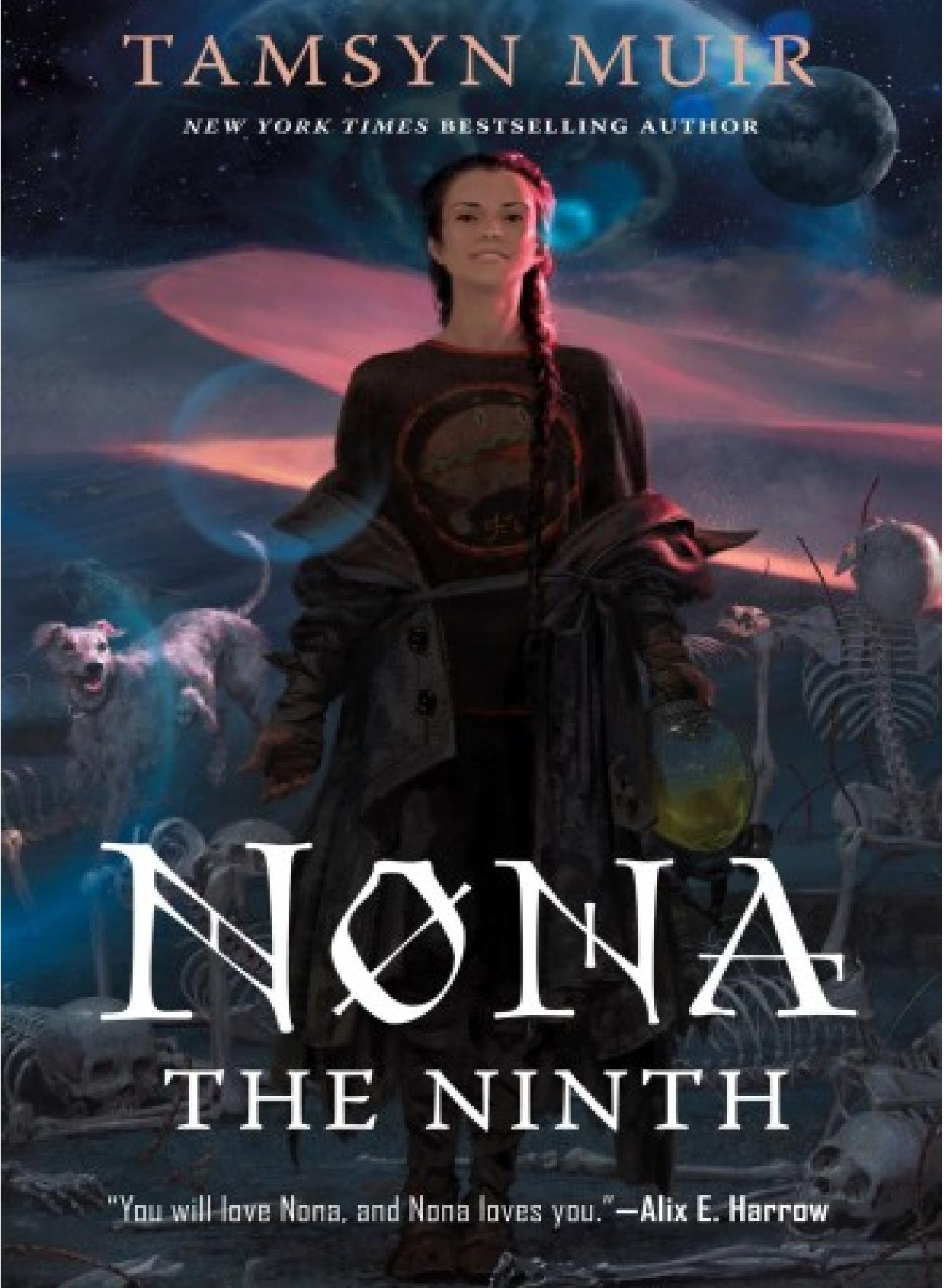


NONA THE NINTH

"You will love Nona, and Nona loves you." —Alix E. Harrow

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for pT



DRAMATIS PERSONAE

GUEST LIST

(as transcribed by C. Hect.)

Dogs to invite to birthday party

- Brown one by the fish shop, average sized, four legs
- Stop It, name assumed, lies under counter at dairy, red colour, big sized, four legs
- White-and-black one seen once in the park, average sized, tail curled twice, three legs
- Noodle, king of dogs in secret, white-adjacent, small sized, six legs
- Spotted beach dog, often on beach, large sized, huge ginger eyebrows, three legs

Members of gang to invite to birthday party

- Hot Sauce
- Honesty
- Born in the Morning
- Beautiful Ruby
- Kevin

Teachers

- The Angel?

Blood of Eden

- Crown Him with Many Crowns (No.—C.)
- The Captain, maybe (Not possible.—C.)
- Cell Commander We Suffer and We Suffer, although actually she might be Wing Commander, I don't know which it is (It's both, and no.—C.)
- And you three (Good to know.—C.)

*One for the Emperor, first of us all;
One for his Lyctors, who answered the call;
One for his Saints, who were chosen of old;
One for his Hands, and the swords that they hold.
Two is for discipline, heedless of trial;
Three for the gleam of a jewel or a smile;
Four for fidelity, facing ahead;
Five for tradition and debts to the dead;
Six for the truth over solace in lies;
Seven for beauty that blossoms and dies;
Eight for salvation no matter the cost;
Nine for the Tomb, and for all that was lost.*

You told me, *Sleep, I'll wake you in the morning.*

I asked, *What is morning?* and you said,
When everyone who fucked with me is dead.

When everyone we loved has gone or fled,
That's morning. Empty's just another word for clean.

Let's put this first-draft dream of mine to bed.

In the appointed hour
I'll pull up your sheets. I'll kill the light,
Lie down beside you; die; and sleep the night.

This time will be the time we get it right:
Forgiveness not so hard, nor anger long;
Our graves will be less deep, our lies less true.

You held aloft the sword.

I still love y

JOHN 20:8

IN THE DREAM, he told her the words about where he took his degrees, his postdoc, his research fellowship. They were his noise and not really for consumption. More like meditation; like even his mouth knew the pointlessness of it, and just wanted to recite. Dilworth. Otago. Auckland. Overseas to Corpus. (She likes the word *corpus*; it sounds nice and fat.) Then another year abroad, where he got the grant and met the men who would make things happen. Special pleading with the New Zealand government and Asia-Pacific Environmental, at his suggestion, then back to the facility outside Greytown. They mocked it up to look like a freezing works. We all thought that was funny, he said.

He said: We just wanted to save you. You were so sick.

He said, It was me and A— and M— at the start. It wasn't that they didn't have the money for a bigger team; we were simply the only ones capable of what they were asking. M— for medical, A— because he was the glycerol-6 genius. He could've gone anywhere but he stuck with me ... and thank God for that, because he handled all the shareholders. I was there for everything, but those meetings were like dying. I'll never love meetings. C— was brought on by the oversight execs for contracts, you know, checks and balances, but look where *that* ended up, she was on our side before the first year was over ...

He said: You have to understand that right up until that last year we believed they were going to see it through. We *knew* the plan could work. The Mark-R cryo cans had room for eleven billion people, easy. We'd got the procedure down to five hours per person with a trained team of four. Assuming an existing medical degree, that training could take as little as weeks, manpower wasn't an issue if we started *now*. Sure, the maternity stuff wasn't totally ironed out, but we were nearly there, and the packing was perfect. Of course they bitched about the timeline, and they bitched about the money, but they were always going to bitch about the money. Our rule was, nobody knowingly left behind.

He said: Even when they were constructing the other ships we got told straight-up that it was nothing, they were being sent off to the Kuiper installation to be on point for the full-population evac. IAF were involved, Pan-Euro Astronautics gave it their blessing, it was all so benign. We even lent them G— at the time because they wanted to talk about coating. M—

said that she didn't like it, she smelled a rat, and you know what I said? You know what I told her? I said, *Don't let it get to you* and I said, *Don't get paranoid!* I fucking looked her in the eye and said, *This is the way we're getting out, and you know that the moment half a dozen trillionaires realise it, they're going where the oxygen is.* That's what I always told her. *They're going where the oxygen is. Wealthy men head for the exit.*

He said: When they called me up and said the cryo project was over she looked at me and she just said, *There they go, John.*

In the dream they were sitting on the beach. He had made a fire from damp driftwood. The smoke made a black mark where it touched the tarpaulin, at the top, where it was stretched over their heads. The ash was still falling. It made them sick, but only ever for a little while. Anything that hurt them only ever hurt them for a little while.

In the dream, she was sat next to a bundle of meat he'd cut, thighs mostly, for when they felt hungry, which happened rarely and always simultaneously. When it did happen they would be side by side, eating until their stomachs were sore. They would drink from the sea like dogs.

He said after a pause: You know the worst part? She cried. She and A—both cried. In each other's arms, like babies. They were so fucking scared. And I was right there, and I couldn't do piss. Everything I was and everything I had done, and I couldn't do a damned thing.

He was quiet for a long time. The sea ate at the sand. The waves glowed a little even though there was no sunshine, only thick yellow cloud.

She prompted: So what did you do?

He said: A damned thing, didn't I.

She said: When is the part where you hurt me?

He said: Soon. It's coming up.

She said: I still love you.

And in the dream he rubbed his temple with his thumb and said: "You always say that, Harrowhark."

DAY ONE

REGARDING NONA—HOT SAUCE IS WATCHFUL—THE CITY HAS A
BAD DAY—NONA GETS A BEDTIME STORY—FIVE DAYS UNTIL THE
TOMB OPENS.



1

LATE IN THE YEAR of nobody she really thought about that much in particular, the person who looked after her pushed the button on the recorder and said, “Start.”

She squeezed her eyes shut and began in a practised hurry:

“The painted face is on top of me. I’m in the safe water—I’m lying down, I think. Something’s pushing at me. The water goes over my head and it’s in my mouth. It goes up my nose.”

“Does it hurt?”

“No.”

“How do you feel?”

“I like it. I like the water, I like her hands.”

“*Her* hands?”

“They’re the things around me—maybe they’re my hands.”

The pencil scratched loudly on the paper. “How about the face?”

“It’s the picture face.” The sketch they’d made for her, the one locked in the secret drawer where they put all the really interesting things, like cigarettes and the fake identification cards and all the money they said wasn’t legal tender and couldn’t be used. The pencil obligingly scribbled its way across the page. It was hard not to open her eyes and look at the person opposite, so she amused herself by imagining what she would see: tanned sure hands on the notebook, head bent over it, the fringe pinned up waiting for haircut day. Imagining was better than looking anyway, because the battery lamp wasn’t switched on.

She said, “What are you writing?” because the pencil was still going. Most of the time the writing was interesting, but some of the time it was just boring descriptions of how her face was changing when she talked, like *0.24—Smiled*.

“Incidentals. Keep going, you woke up late.”

“Can you change the alarm song? I can sleep through ‘Good Morning, Good Morning’ now.”

“Sure. I’ll drop a wet sponge on your face instead. Keep thinking.”

She kept thinking.

“The arms go really tight around me. They’re her arms, definitely.”

“Is she familiar?”

“Maybe. I don’t know.”

“How do you know they’re ‘her’?”

“I don’t know.”

“What happens after that?”

“Don’t know.”

A long pause. “Anything else?”

“No. It’s gone already. Sorry, Camilla.”

“Not a problem.”

Camilla Hect depressed the button with a bright and final plastic *clack*. This was the cue, so she exploded into action. The rule was that she had to lie still and concentrate as hard as she could from the time that the button went down to the time when the button went up. When it went *up*, pyjamas came *off*; under the pale, wavering light of the tiny torch taped to Cam’s clipboard, she undressed and dressed herself at the same time, which required a lot of contortions. She wrestled out of her nightshirt with her arms and stretched on her trousers using her ankles, in the move that Camilla called *worm with problems*.

Being the worm with problems did not worry her. Just being able to dress herself was charming. In the bad old days she used to have to be helped even with the nightshirt, because she couldn’t be trusted not to get stuck with it halfway over her head and get all hot and upset from claustrophobia. It was incredibly important that she not get upset like that again. She had only ever had two tantrums in her life, but it would be humiliating to have a third. Her fingers fumbled a little with the vest, but she was fine pulling on the UV sand shirt, even with arranging the cuffs, which could be complicated and if you got it wrong you had to stand in the bath to take it off again in showers of yellow dirt. The canvas jacket with the toggle closers didn’t slow her down at all. When she finished Cam said, “Good. Quick,” and she was so exhausted from the praise she collapsed back on the mattress.

“I’m doing my stretches now,” she announced hastily, before she could be told to do anything else. She swung her legs upward until her feet were pointed flat at the ceiling, and as she’d been taught, rotated her toes from that angle to circle around the water stains she could see on the plaster. The winter wet was over, but the huge patch of black damp in the corner hadn’t dried up yet. She had told everyone that she should really talk to the landlord, but it had been communicated to her that if she could even *find* the landlord she would get a gold medal.

Camilla had not said anything in approval or censure, so she said more emphatically, “My *legs* are really *tight* today,” in the immortal hope that Cam would take her *ankles* in her hands and walk them forward. Cam would do this until her knees were touching her chest and her hamstrings were stretched so taut she was convinced they were about to go *ping* and snap. It was the best thing in the world. If she was *really* lucky Camilla would rub her calves, which were always sore from walking, or even sometimes her back, though that was usually after practise. But Camilla was busy writing and did not take the bait no matter how much she wiggled her toes. She even repeated herself, and added, “Wow, *very* tight, goodness gracious,” in a slightly louder voice.

Cam said, not looking, “Walk it off.”

“I think I might have a cramp. I think I can’t move.”

“Guess you can’t go to school, then.”

She knew when she was beaten. “I’m up, I’m up.”

To prove how *up* she was, she arched her back and rocked up to stand, having only pushed herself up a little bit with her arms: she’d been practising, and when she straightened up with only the slightest wobble she was delighted. But all Camilla said was, “Don’t hyperextend,” crushingly, and worse, “Go see if Pyrrha needs help with breakfast.”

“Okay. She’s probably done though, we took forever. Maybe the food went cold,” she added, misty with desire.

Camilla briefly looked up from the notebook with a critical eye at her bedhead, which had not been improved with stretches or jumping, and she added: “Get her to do your hair. I’m going to talk.”

“Oh, good! I’ll time.”

“I’ve got a clockwork.”

“Cam, that sounds strange, nobody here calls it a *clockwork*, they say *watch*.[”]

“Good to know. Stop trying to miss breakfast.”

She hedged cunningly. “At least please can you write down, *I love you, Palamedes*, please, from me? At least write, *I love you, Palamedes, from Nona.*”

This Camilla Hect did unblushingly, though Nona had to take it on trust. When she squatted down on her haunches, following the strokes the pencil made, she could not make out a single word. She could not even make out a letter, not of any alphabet she’d ever been shown, which interested everyone except herself. But you could always trust Cam. When the pencil stopped and the message was obviously discharged Nona leant into her and said, “Thanks. I love you too, Camilla,” and: “Do you know who I am yet?”

“Someone who’s late for breakfast,” said Camilla.

But as Nona straightened, she turned and smiled her rare brief smile, the one like the sun catching the glitter of a car on the motorway. Cam smiled so seldom now that Nona immediately felt it was going to be a good day.

It wasn’t any lighter in the kitchen. There was thin blue light coming through the joins in the curtains, and an orange glow from the worn-out hot plate mostly blocked by the other person she lived with. There was a baby wailing in morning-related outrage a few apartments away, so Nona walked on the balls of her feet to not add to the noise. The people underneath hated it if you walked loudly, and Pyrrha said they had militia links and not to piss them off because they were also hungover ninety percent of the time. This was unfair, because the person *above* them never took their shoes off inside, which surely meant they were allowed to complain about that. But Pyrrha said they shouldn’t piss *them* off because they were a cop. Pyrrha called it the shit sandwich. Pyrrha always seemed to know everything about everybody.

“All done? Good timing,” said Pyrrha, without turning around.

Pyrrha was holding a can of spray-on oil whose nozzle she directed neatly into the pan, where she wiped the pale froth around with a spatula. She was wearing pyjama pants and a string vest and no shirt, so the orange glow of the hot plate ring lit up all the scars on her wiry arms. She was feeling around for the breakfast things in the cupboard with her other hand, so Nona came and took the mesh basket and started counting out plates for her. “Is that pikelet mix?” she said.

“Get bowls. It’s eggs,” said Pyrrha.

Up close Nona could smell the spray-on oil and watch Pyrrha agitate a fork in a beaker of violently orange liquid, radioactively orange even in the dark, before tipping it into the pan to sizzle. Yellow lacework immediately formed where it splashed against the hot edge. Nona replaced the plates with two chipped bowls, and Pyrrha said, “Doesn’t that school of yours teach counting?”

“Oh, but Pyrrha, it’s so hot. Can’t I have something cold?”

“Sure. Leave them to get cold.”

“Yuck, that’s not what I meant.”

“The eggs aren’t optional, kiddie. How’s the dreams?”

“Same as normal,” said Nona, reluctantly taking another bowl. “I wish I could dream something different for once. Do you dream, Pyrrha?”

“Sure. Just last night I dreamed I had to give a briefing, but I wasn’t wearing pants and my backside was hanging out,” said Pyrrha, hacking the shocking orange curds into clumps with the edge of the spatula. During a pause in Nona’s gurgles of mirth, she added solemnly, “It was no fun, my child. I knew I’d be okay so long as I was hiding behind the podium, but I didn’t know what I’d do once I had to sit down again. Die, I guess.”

“Are you being serious or joking with me?” Nona demanded, once this fresh pleasure had subsided.

“Deadly serious. But go put another mark under *ass joke* anyway.”

Nona was happy enough to get up from the table and cross to the big sheet of brown paper tacked up on the wall; to take the pencil and wait for Pyrrha to say, “One higher, one left, stop right there,” so she could make a blobby tally mark.

She counted up the tally marks and said, “That’s the seventh one this month. But that’s not fair when you keep making them. Palamedes will say you’re skewing the data.”

“I never could help giving the girls what they wanted,” said Pyrrha. She turned off the hob and upended some of the pan into Nona’s bowl, then set the pan back on the hob with a cloth over it to keep it warm. She wiped her hands and said, “Eat. I’ll do your hair.”

“Thank you,” said Nona, grateful for the understanding. “Cam said to ask. Can I get braids?”

“Whatever the lady wishes.”

“Can I get one big braid and two little braids coming off it at the sides?”

“Sure, if we’ve got time.”

“They don’t come loose and the plain plaits do.” Nona added in the spirit of truth: “And I can’t help chewing the ends with plaits. I want to steer clear of Temptation.”

“Don’t we all? I need to stop torturing myself by staring at the cigarette drawer.”

“Don’t start the secondhand smoke argument again,” said Nona in alarm, but then, figuring she’d been harsh: “Anyway, they’re bad for you and I love you, Pyrrha.”

“Prove it,” said Pyrrha, which meant she had to eat the eggs.

Nona ate while Pyrrha brushed out her hair in short, brisk strokes, letting its fine black sheets fall over Nona’s shoulders. It went almost to the bottom of her back now, and it was soft and thin as water: every fourth haircut day they cut it, but not *every* haircut day because it was a pain, and because people noticed your hair growing less when it was already long, Camilla said. Camilla and Pyrrha both got to have short hair, which she envied. Cam’s was dark brown and bobbed off sharply at the chin and it felt nice against your cheek, and whenever Pyrrha didn’t shave her head quick enough she got a little flat cap of dark terracotta, the colour of wet red earth at the building site. Most of Pyrrha was the colours of the building site: deep dried-out browns, dusty hunks of clay, rusted metal. She was raw and ropy and square-shouldered, and Camilla was long and shadowy and lean. Nona thought they were both exquisite.

Camilla came in when Pyrrha was fixing up the first braid and when Nona had gotten as far as *chewing* the eggs, which was an agonising step on the journey to *eating* the eggs. Camilla said unhappily, “Eggs? Have we not invented a new protein?” which meant it wasn’t Camilla at all.

The easiest way of telling who was who was in the eyes. Palamedes had soft cool eyes of brownish grey, like bare ground in the cold mornings when Nona had been little, and Camilla had the clearest of clear grey eyes like storybook ice, not like normal cloudy ice at all. But Nona could tell them apart from across the room, which she was proud of, because their body was otherwise exactly the same. The difference was how they stood: Camilla couldn’t stand still, ever, not without shifting her weight back and forth on each knee or popping her knuckles, and Palamedes stood like he was playing a game of Hot Chocolate and the tagger was looking right at him. Hot Chocolate was in fashion with her friends at the moment and Nona wanted to get really good at it.

“Meat’s black-market only right now,” Pyrrha said, starting in on a second braid. Palamedes was spooning gritty black spoonfuls of instant coffee into mugs. He said absently, “Coffee, Nona?” even though she always said, “No, but thank you”—Palamedes liked giving you options—and he even waited until she said, “No, but thank you” before he poured the boiling water twice. No milk, because they’d run out of packets. He put one mug where Pyrrha could reach it—she was currently leaning over to the counter for a hairpin—and kept one for himself. They sat and steamed in the muggy air, and Nona sniffed at the nice bitter coffee smell. Pyrrha continued, “Anyway, you’re paying for the meat roulette. The stuff the butcher’s keeping back is only ten percent upholstery, the rest is livers and gristle.”

Nona wanted to know. “What part’s the upholstery?”

“A very nutritious part,” said Palamedes.

“The part that hung out in my dream,” said Pyrrha.

That set Nona off again, so she had to get up from her eggs to make another mark on her tally sheet. Palamedes stared, distracted, and said: “Dear God, two in a day? Why are we even remotely in doubt? Forget the meat, I was being facetious. We wouldn’t have upholstery money even if I wrote hardcore pornography for a living.”

Pyrrha said, “Wish you’d try. These nicotine patches are killing me.”

“If that’s meant to make me feel guilty, I feel nothing, thank you,” said Palamedes. “Cam’s body is a temple. She’s the one who’s banned me from a life peddling poor-quality erotica. Says she doesn’t want our last gift to the universe to be tales of people mashing birthday cakes beneath their bottoms. Speaking of, Pyrrha—do you have a minute? You came in too late last night to talk.”

“We’re over time, is why,” said Pyrrha. “The damn drills stop every half hour so we can take cover.”

Nona felt the pin securing the last little braid to her head, and then the braid being patted flat with one weathered hand. Pyrrha said, “Empty that bowl, Nona,” and took her mug of coffee as Palamedes spooned himself some eggs. She and Palamedes went back into the bedroom with their breakfasts and closed the door behind them.

In their absence Nona considered the eggs. They were a uniform yellow colour, with dusty black flecks of pepper. You were allowed to put as much thin, fiery red sauce on them as you liked, but it wasn’t the taste Nona

minded. She then considered the window beyond the curtains, which was open a crack, at the very least enough for a spoon; Pyrrha had, after all, said to empty the bowl. But Palamedes said that she could handle abstract concepts and therefore literal interpretation was not a defence. She considered the eggs again. As a virtuous compromise she put three spoonfuls in her mouth and walked soundlessly over to the shut door. It was unnecessarily harsh to expect her not to listen *and* to eat.

“—verdue for a chat about the due date,” Pyrrha was saying.

“If they want her early, want can be their master. They gave us a year.”

Then they both moved away from the door, which made things more difficult.

“—nything from your si—” Palamedes was speaking at the bottom of Camilla’s voice.

“—aying some guys to comb over Site B … push maybe tomorrow we
—”

“—promise in Site C: we know they own the build—”

“—afe sites first. The closer we get to the barracks … to being rumbled that we’re searchi—”

There was more talking, but they had both dropped their voices past Nona’s comprehension so it sounded like *mnah mnah mnah*. She held the eggs in her mouth silently and pressed her ear to the door as hard as she dared, and was rewarded with Palamedes saying:

“—could’ve made inroads on the barracks at any point. They’re holding off. Why?”

“You know why,” murmured Pyrrha’s voice in response. “The moment they go in there and clean out the last poor bastards busy divvying up the rats and the sedatives, that’s going to put a big black mark on the negotiations. The Cohort dies like anyone else under siege … eventually.”

“Then this is our last chance to make a difference. Give us *orders*, Commander.”

Pyrrha was audibly chewing. “Stopped being that when I died, Palamedes. It was a courtesy title, anyway, and there’s an embarrassment of commanders here if you want ‘em.”

“Pyrrha,” he said, “why are they running now? Why would Blood of Eden run when they have the best hand they were ever dealt? Why would they run when common sense, good tactics, and foreknowledge must tell them all that this is the best moment to make a stand? The time you’ve

spent—the insights you've had that nobody else has been privy to—and you're truly telling me you don't even have an *inkling*?"

"You're not a prude. Feel free to say it," said Pyrrha, and though her voice was its normal deep, comfy, slightly hoarse self, there was a little undercurrent in it that Nona couldn't quite parse. Nona would have understood it more if only she'd been able to see Pyrrha. "I spent all that time sleeping with the enemy with very little to show for it, right? Blood of Eden is a house with many rooms, and I was only ever visiting one of 'em. Sure, I've got *inklings* aplenty."

"Then you've got to brief us—"

He was cut off by a metal-on-plastic noise, like eggs being spooned from the bottom of the bowl. "No. Not if there's any risk of you two undergoing interrogation."

"Neither of us appreciate being treated like children."

"Children? I'm treating you like the Sixth House Warden and his cavalier, neither of whom have been trained to survive a Blood of Eden hot seat," said Pyrrha. "Don't think because Camilla's carrying you that you'd have an easy ride. You have no idea what BoE torture is like, and we don't have the five years I'd need to teach you."

"Pyrrha, stop saying you don't have time to teach us things and *start teaching*. We're quick studies."

There was a definite slurp of coffee being drunk. Pyrrha always did drink loudly. She said she still wasn't used to her teeth. "I could teach you some bits and pieces, sure. I'd need my necromancer to teach Camilla."

"Why?"

"Because you need teaching to be an asset, and Cam wants teaching to be a killer." There was a brief silence, until Pyrrha said slowly, "Or you could take me up on my first offer, which would solve a lot of your problems—"

Palamedes spoke at the bottom of Cam's voice, which made it harder to catch. "It was a beautiful offer, Pyrrha, and almost completely useless. There's no retiring our forces in a search-and-recovery op. In any case Eden would turn on us completely, even our own cell. We need to fight clever."

"If you wanted to fight clever you'd focus on search-and-recovery and not on the barracks. It's not helping Cam. She's mad as hell—even madder than you—and it's getting you nowhere."

“Thank you for your insight regarding my cavalier,” said Palamedes politely. “It’s appreciated.”

A snort of laughter. “He ices over ... I’m too old to know not to be offensive, Palamedes, so forgive me quickly for telling you your business and let’s move on. I’ll say it outright. Forget the barracks and stop trying to be the people’s hero. We’ve lost that fight.”

“Lost? There could still be two hundred people holed up in th—”

“—optimistic—”

“If there were *two* I’d do it. It’s a rotten way to die, House or not. What’s more, once it’s over—the deluge.”

“Hey, we might get some breathing space. It might drain the boil.”

“You can’t truly believe that.”

“No, I don’t. It’ll be first blood,” said Pyrrha, and made another slurp. “I know how it is. You should have heard the demo crew yesterday. These people are beside themselves waiting for kickoff, waiting for the Houses. One guy tells me this’ll all be over once the barracks get cleaned out, another guy tells me he’d welcome the Cohort regiment with open arms if they just brought supplies and broke up the gangs. Half my guys would strangle the other half on a pretext. This is what happens when you force refugees from twenty different planets to live cheek by jowl and you keep thinking people unify under a common threat ... She always made that mistake. I told her twenty years ago. Works beautiful in the short-term, but you’ve got to give them a future to really keep ‘em glued. Palamedes, we made this mistake ourselves. You can have the barracks *or* your people—or neither. You can’t say ‘I choose both’ like a wet towel and expect the universe to fall into line.”

“Pyrrha, this is sounding perilously like giving up.”

“Is it? You *know* I’m ready to give up. This is a shitshow. You know I’m ready to get Nona safely off-world the moment you accept the way things are.”

“There’s *no way* off-world—”

“It’s called a ship—”

“If you’re hiding a ship in your dungarees, please share it with the rest of the class.” His voice now raised a little. “Bypassing the question of *how*, where would we go, Pyrrha? What would we do?”

“Anywhere,” she said. “Anything. I’ve been out of commission for ten thousand years ... I’m ready for pretty much anything else.”

There was a brief silence, then a slurp. When Palamedes picked up again, his voice was earnest. “It’s a false dichotomy, you know. We’re all of us in one layered hostage situation. Three million people squatting on a thanergy planetoid millions of kilometres away from us. Nine million people in this city alone...”

“Who aren’t yours by any stretch of the imagination.”

“*Nine million*, Pyrrha, that’s equivalent to the whole of the Seventh and the Eighth put together. Three million people, plus nine million people, plus sixteen. We refuse to leave any of them behind.”

“You’re big-minded. Know who isn’t? Blood of Eden, and me,” said Pyrrha. “If you asked me to pick between the three of us and those twelve million plus sixteen, I’d pick us without turning a hair. You’re not listening to me. BoE are *making* that choice, Palamedes ... We Suffer’s lost. The Wakers and Ctesiphon Wing can’t protect us. Merv Wing’s got the glue, which is *a way out*. The Hopers call the shots now ... and I’ve met leaders like Unjust Hope before. They’re the guys who come to the fore when people want leaders who don’t count the costs. We’re heading for a purge, Sextus. This is the Blood of Eden who don’t give a fuck.”

“I wouldn’t have called them too generous with fucks before.”

“You’ve got no idea. Listen to me. You’ve never met this Blood of Eden, not really. *This* Blood of Eden has spent their entire existence gambling everything on staying alive for one more day ... and I don’t know if I even want to find out why anymore. ’Cause you know what? Gideon’s dead, and I don’t give a fuck either. Not if I can save our skins.”

“I don’t believe you.”

“You should. I know a little moon that’s only half-flipped. It’s got great soil, breathable air. Gideon used to think about running away there. I know how to farm ... I can teach you and Cam and Nona. I can teach you how to wait. That’s my speciality. And the moment I get my hands on a ship, that’s where I’m taking us.”

There was another rustling: but then the timer bleated in a soft, muffled way, as though it was coming from inside a pocket. Palamedes made a sound under his breath that Nona knew was a rude word. He said quickly: “My time’s up.”

“That’s the best part, right? Getting out of rough conversations.” And, almost immediately, more quietly: “Forgive me the joke, Warden. I forget you’re not used to it.”

“Never will be. You understand. Look, you’ll be late for work and Nona will be late for school.”

Pyrrha’s voice dropped so that the only thing Nona caught was: “—ing her go to—?”

“I want her to remain as calm as possible. Can you push for Site B?”

“I’ll do it by end of day, even if I have to finish it off myself. Don’t worry.”

Nona looked at the last lumps of yellow in her bowl and silently scraped half of it up to put in her mouth, figuring that if she swallowed all at once she wouldn’t choke or taste. She could not have made the slightest sound, but Camilla—she could tell it was Camilla again—called from within: “How long were you listening, Nona?”

“You were pretty loud, so nearly the whole time,” said Nona, through eggs.

“Then that damn breakfast had better be eaten,” said Pyrrha.

Camilla stood by the kitchen counter and tore through her half-eaten breakfast mechanically as Nona unwrapped a sterile tablet in the bucket of greywater for the dishes. Pyrrha balanced a mirror on the table and shaved her face. Nona loved the clean, bright smell of shaving soap, and to see Pyrrha swiftly and expertly scrape the dark russet-brown stubble off her cheeks and from around her mouth, and the little wet red marks that appeared. When she reached over to touch one freshly smooth cheek, the marks were already wrinkling up and disappearing. Cam was stationed by the pegs at the door saying, “Hats,” prompting Nona to dutifully take down and hand round the hats, and, “Masks,” for the same. The hats were hideous, large-brimmed, with cloth panels that came down behind and strings to tie beneath the chin: Nona often thought about burning hers, and it wasn’t as though they needed either hats *or* masks. That was the whole problem, wasn’t it? Nona wouldn’t cough even if the wind blew the smoke straight into her face, and Pyrrha wouldn’t burn any colour other than her deep cool brown. Camilla was busy untucking the back veil on her hat, so Nona let her attention drift to the side of the window, where light was thickly glowing through the little rips in the tape, and the sky was visible through the worst tears.

The sky over the city used to be a thick yellow butterscotch colour. Now it was only like that at the very edges of the horizon, as the blueness had spread like a stain on carpet, touching even the light. Nona took a moment

to surreptitiously twitch the curtains, peeking between the broken antisniper striping to catch a glimpse of the world outside. The blue light got stronger, and Camilla said sharply, “Nona,” and she hurriedly let the curtains fall.

Pyrrha, now masked, paused before the door with her wiry knuckles: “Roll call. What’s this week’s *all scatter* word?”

“Lowdown,” said Camilla.

“And the *all clear*? ”

“Deadweight,” said Nona.

“Perfect. What are your stations if that thing in the sky even *looks* like it’s about to stop periscoping? ”

“The underground tunnels by the fish market,” said Camilla.

“The big underpass bridge dugout,” said Nona.

“Ten points to you both. And what do you do once you’re there? ”

“Hide until you come,” said Nona, and then added, truthfully: “And rescue any nearby animals so long as they don’t exceed the size of the box, and are woolly rather than hairy.”

“Half points. No animals, hairy *or* woolly, I don’t care. Cam? ”

Camilla had finished with her hat, and now she was easing the big dark glasses onto her face—the ones she kept specially, despite the fact that they were a little unbalanced on her nose and her ears. They made both Palamedes and Camilla look chilly and clinical, but as Palamedes said, they solved the problem of the ghost limb. Without them he was everlastingly pushing something up his nose that wasn’t there. And Nona thought Camilla privately rather liked them.

She settled them on, considered the question, and said: “Fight.”

“No points. Camilla, if you engage with a Herald, you’re not coming home.”

“That’s your theory,” said Camilla.

“There’s data behind it. Hect—”

“If Camilla gets to fight, I should get to keep adjacent dogs,” said Nona decidedly. “Even if they’re hairy.”

Pyrrha turned her eyes up to the ceiling in mute appeal. Her exhalation rasped loudly against the vent in her mask. “I used to run the whole Bureau,” she said, and she didn’t sound like she was addressing either of them. “Now I’m up against wannabe heroes and hairy dogs. This is the punishment she would’ve wanted for me. God, she must be pissing herself laughing ... Let’s go, kids. Like hell am I walking in this heat.”



2

PYRRHA WORKED FOR NONA, Camilla looked after Nona, and Palamedes taught Nona, all on the understanding that she was not simply a person, but probably one of two people. Nona did not know either of her real possible names. Palamedes said not to lead her unnecessarily. One of the reasons they had called her *Nona* was that the first thing she had said, when they saved her and brought her here, was *No, no*. *No* became *Nona*, and *Nona* meant *Nine*, and nine was an important number.

What she definitely knew was that her body belonged to one of two people, and she was interested in her body. When she looked in the mirror she had skin the colour of the egg carton, and eyes the colour of the egg mixture, and hair the colour of the burnt-out bottom of the pan. More to the point, Nona thought she was gorgeous. She had a thin, complicated face, and a mouth too easily unhappy and too easily discontented; but she had nice white teeth in a smile that looked sad no matter how happy she was, and arched black brows like she always wanted to ask someone a question. Nona talked to herself in the mirror even now. When she had been earlier born, and less self-conscious, sometimes she would rest her face against the mirror's face, and try to reach her reflection. Camilla had caught her kissing it once, and had written about six pages of notes on that, which was humiliating. It was hard enough not to be allowed a single solitary secret, without a book being written about whatever you did.

If Camilla had six pages of notes on her kissing herself she had about twenty regarding eyes. Nona's egg-yellow eyes belonged to the other person—the other girl; that was how all of their bodies worked, not only hers. All four pairs of their eyes belonged to other people. Pyrrha's deep brown eyes really came from her dead best friend, and Camilla's clear grey eyes should have really been Palamedes's, and vice versa with his wintertime irises. Nona's eyes were a deep, warm gold, the colour of the sky at midday—or at least the colour the sky had used to be at midday.

“You see,” Palamedes had said to her, “the eyes are a dead giveaway. When you give yourself to someone else, their soul shows in yours by the eye colour; that’s why you’ll never see me looking out of Camilla’s face with my own eyes again.”

“So someone’s inside me, then? I mean—I’m that somebody?” She always stumbled over this.

“Maybe yes, Nona, maybe no. Eyes can also show that a soul is in someone else’s body temporarily. Your amber eyes could mean that you’re like Camilla and me, or it could mean something else. But you seem to have had … a big shock.”

“Maybe I’ve just lost my memory,” said Nona dubiously.

“It happens,” agreed Palamedes—not convinced.

She didn’t care whose eyes were whose; but she was a little vain, and cared about being nice-looking. Nona knew early that other people thought she was pretty too. Once a long time ago when she was waiting in line to pick up some detergent and Camilla was getting something else they’d forgotten, the person in the line behind her had said, “Hey, pretty thing, where have you been all my life,” and laughed a lot when Nona said truthfully that she didn’t know. Then they had stood quite close to her and touched her on the hip, where her shirt was tucked in. The shop was very crowded and there were a lot of people waiting to get things, and the aisles were packed high with stuff, and there were people the shop paid to make sure nobody stole things, and they added to the crowd. Nobody was paying them any attention.

When Camilla came back the person was still trying to talk to her, and Nona had to translate what they said to Camilla, and Camilla looked the person deep in their eyes and casually touched the hilt of the knife she kept down the waistband of her trousers, and then the person moved to the back of the queue.

“If someone touches you again, and it’s not me, and it’s not Palamedes, and it’s not Pyrrha,” Camilla had told her later, “move away. Get one of us. You don’t know what they want.”

“They wanted to see me naked,” said Nona. “It was a sex thing.”

Camilla had made a sound, and then pretended it was a cough, and drank a whole glass of water. After the glass of water, she said, “How did you know?”

"That's just the way people look when they want to see you naked and it's a sex thing," said Nona. "I don't really mind."

After a moment, Camilla had told her it wasn't a great idea for Nona to let people she didn't know see her naked, and not to encourage sex things. She said sex things were right out. She said there were enough problems in the world. Camilla said it was bad enough that she had used to help Nona in the bath. Camilla had also written down a lot more notes.

That was after Nona could talk, but before she started making herself a useful member of society. It was difficult living with Pyrrha and Palamedes and Camilla in those early days and feeling as though she couldn't contribute much. They worked so hard for her. Pyrrha was an excellent planner and good with her hands, and if you gave her five seconds to talk she could make *anyone* believe *anything*, so they ate quite a lot off the money she won at cards. She ran them all with what Cam said was military efficiency. Pyrrha was the one who made them learn code words for *all clear* and *danger*, which changed every week. Nona got to be the one who picked them on weekends because that helped her to remember. Pyrrha also gave them special emergency code words for *someone following* ("red ribbon") and *someone listening* ("fritters"). They even had a code word for *important resource, come help me get it* ("fishhook"), but Palamedes said Pyrrha needed to stop treating cigarettes and liquor as important resources, so they hadn't used that one in ages.

Pyrrha could cook, and she was tough, and if you went up to the roof of the apartment building and put a marble on top of a certain column, she could close her eyes and raise a rifle and shoot the marble from the other side of the rooftop. She wouldn't do this lately even if Nona asked, because bullets were expensive right now (but a lot cheaper than meat). So Pyrrha could earn money *and* fight with a gun. She was also very wonderful with a sword, but she never lifted a sword unless all the curtains were drawn and the door was locked. They hid the swords behind a false board in the cupboard.

Camilla could fight with pretty much anything, and especially knives—she wouldn't do the marble trick with her knife because she would just say, "What did it do to me?" and then smile her tiny beautiful smile. Palamedes said that was typical. It seemed like there was nothing Camilla couldn't do after a few tries—the laundry, or starting up a truck, or opening a door when she didn't have the keys, or telling the drunk man at the bottom of

their hall that none of them liked it when he hit his partner, in a mystical way that caused the man to move out of the apartment forever.

Palamedes could think. He said it was his party trick.

But Nona couldn't shoot *or* fight *or* think. All she had was a good nature—that wasn't true all the time, but Nona didn't want it bruited about that she had a *bad* temper when she had only ever thrown two tantrums in her life and couldn't remember either of them. Even if she'd been proud of those, you couldn't brag about two tantrums. Every day she held a sword until she seriously didn't care about swords anymore, but she still couldn't fight with one, no matter how big or thin it was. Camilla had wanted to teach her properly, but Pyrrha said not to, that they wouldn't be able to tell if anything suddenly came back.

Nona couldn't do the forbidden bone tricks either, even though Palamedes did nearly the exact same thing with big grey lumps of bone as Camilla did with the sword. She had to hold them, and listen when he told her to do nonsensical things—"Pretend you can stretch it; stretch it now," or "Pretend you can touch the insides; split it open." He never made Nona feel bad for not being able to do any of these things, only acted like it was interesting that she couldn't.

In the beginning she hadn't been able to do much for herself at all, but over time she had remembered how to button her shirts, and tie up her laces, and soap herself in the bath, and pour water into a glass so that her hand didn't tremble and the water didn't slop out. It shamed her, remembering how little she could do at the start. She had been so frustrated, in those slow early days. But now she could do nearly everything. She knew important facts like what was expected and what was unexpected at different parts of the day, and that people's ears weren't so interesting that she had to put her fingers inside them. In those early days Palamedes and Camilla and Pyrrha had often looked at her in a sort of stupefied shock; now they were still stupefied but they were not so shocked, and often she made them laugh.

And now they touched her, sometimes not even by explicit request. Pyrrha would roughly hug her in one big suddenness, or sweep Nona up in her hard, wiry arms before setting her down on the sofa; Palamedes would pull the blankets up over her if she was getting into bed and tuck them in softly at the corners. If she slipped her hand into Camilla's, when they were walking down the street, Camilla would hold it. Nona didn't understand

how the others could walk around and go through their lives only touching each other as much as was necessary. When Nona asked, Camilla said that this was because they needed to get the washing-up done.

Nona could do all the basic things now, but there was still distressingly little that she was good at. Nona was good at:

1. touching,
2. wiping dishes,
3. running her hand over the flat cork carpet in a way that got all the hair out of it,
4. sleeping in lots of different ways and positions, and
5. speaking any language that was spoken to her, in person, so she could see the person's face and eyes and lips.

It turned out that Palamedes and Camilla could only speak one language, and Pyrrha could speak all of that one and some of another two and a little bit of about five more. The one language all three were fluent in was a kind people used for business transactions, so it wasn't strange that they used it—but it was falling out of favour, because it was a language used by awful people. Even then, the dialect spoken in the city didn't always make sense to them, or the pronunciation was strange. Nona understood everybody, and could speak back to them so that they understood her, and nobody ever said she had an accent. This confounded Palamedes. When she first said that she could speak back by watching them talk and making her lips look like theirs, it confounded him so much more that it gave Camilla a headache.

There were lots of different languages and dialects around because of all the refugees from other planets, and because of all the resettlements—Nona knew about resettlements because it was all anyone talked about in a queue—and if you spoke someone else's language they were nicer to you, and assumed you had come from the same place they had come from and lived through what they'd lived through, which was helpful. Many people were suspicious of other people because they wanted a good resettlement and were afraid that other people would somehow get them a bad resettlement. Many people had lived through at least one bad resettlement already. Everyone was crammed on one of three planets now, and they all agreed that this planet was easily the worst, though this always made Nona feel a little bit offended on the planet's part.

And so Nona lived with Camilla, Palamedes, and Pyrrha, on the thirtieth floor of a building where nearly everyone was unhappy, in a city where nearly everyone was unhappy, on a world where everyone said that you could outrun the zombies, but not forever.

You were not allowed to say the words *zombies*, *necromancers*, or *necromancy* outside her house, or really inside it either. Nona said they talked about everything else, so why not those words, but Palamedes said superstition for the latter and indignation for the former, which Nona did not understand. This had been the case for Nona's entire life, which would be six months next week, and Pyrrha had said as a treat she would take everyone for a birthday trip to the beach (if nobody was setting up a mortar on it).

Nona was so grateful to have had a whole six months of this. It was greedy to expect much longer.



3

HARDLY ANYONE WAS SUSPICIOUS OF NONA, even in the early days. They assumed she was the way she was because she had been through something terrible. They had all known at least *one* person who had not been through something terrible. When she asked Camilla how she came across to other people, Camilla said unworldly. Pyrrha said she acted like she had given away one of her two brain cells already. Pyrrha said to keep going, that people loved it if you were good-looking and dumb.

Nona didn't want to be just good-looking and dumb; she wanted to be useful. She was dimly aware that she was not what anyone had wanted. This was why she had gone out and got herself a job, even though it wasn't a paying one.

About four months in, when Nona had learnt enough to be allowed outside and to talk to strangers and to do up her own shirts, she was permitted to visit not merely the garage beneath the Building but the surrounding three buildings too. There was a school behind her building that used the first two floors of an old beat-up office block for classrooms, and Nona liked to hang around near the fence and watch the children play during break time. This caught the attention of a nice lady teacher who asked Nona why she wasn't in school herself. She said truthfully enough that she did lessons at home, and the nice lady had made a face and asked Nona where she lived. When she heard that Nona lived in the Building, she didn't quail, but wrote down the floor and apartment number on a piece of paper.

When the nice lady teacher turned up one evening and told Pyrrha and Camilla how wonderful the school was and how it had almost twenty other children and reading and writing at all the levels and an hour of the sciences *every day and games*, and talked about how it was even more important for children in the refuges to have a routine so why didn't they want that for Nona, Cam had to tell the nice lady that Nona was nearly nineteen.

The nice lady was totally foxed.

“But she’s such a dot.”

Pyrrha explained without missing a beat that what with everything Nona had gone through she had been ill and still didn’t eat very much, which was why she was so knobbly and undergrown. The nice lady said that yes, many of the children had problems like that, but it was still hard to imagine Nona was anywhere over fourteen, wasn’t it? The nice lady added that she obviously didn’t get her build from her father, and she smiled at Pyrrha. Before anyone could stop her, Nona laughed and laughed and said, Pyrrha wasn’t her *father*. The nice lady got suspicious—Nona could see it in her hands—and suggested that Nona should come anyway, could even be a Teacher’s Aide, someone who helped the other children with their lessons. They told her Nona couldn’t read *or* write and the nice lady said, Oh.

But at this point Nona felt the lure of not only an hour of the sciences every day *and* games but also the glory suggested by the capitals of a Teacher’s Aide, and she said: I want to go, please and thank you.

The nice lady asked why didn’t they try it out the next morning and see how it went. Nona was delighted. The lady said she was the main teacher, but they also had a wonderful science teacher and it would be lovely to have someone else on the team. Their last Teacher’s Aide had tragically died. Pyrrha said, Were the kids that bad then. The teacher’s mouth thinned and she said, No, the water plant explosion, and so Nona said, Yes she would go! before Camilla or especially Pyrrha could say anything else. Then Pyrrha, much to Camilla’s disgust, flirted outrageously with the nice lady teacher until the nice lady teacher left.

After Pyrrha saw the nice lady teacher out, Camilla, who had been pacing around the kitchen, looked up and said coolly—

“What was that?”

“Getting us out of hot water, my naive beauty,” said Pyrrha, collapsing into a chair with an appalling creak. “She paid you and junior the compliment of thinking you were working girls, and that I was your pimp. God knows I’d have had better luck pimping out Augustine and Alfred.”

Nona wanted to know: “What’s *pimp*?”

Instead of getting to know what *pimp* was, she got in trouble for giving anyone their door number and house number. Nona cried, lavishly and immediately, but Camilla and Pyrrha wouldn’t budge. They also agreed that no way, no how was she going to school, not then and not ever. Camilla

said it was too dangerous, and Pyrrha said it was a shame but they were going to play it safe. Nona went to lie down on the bed and be angry.

Then much later on, when Nona was having her bath and Pyrrha was watching out for her, because back then there was still the danger that she'd have a funny turn and drown in six inches of water, Pyrrha said casually to Nona: "You're allowed to go to school for half days, on trial, and only as long as you practise answering questions with us first."

Nona was ecstatic.

"Why? How? Truly?"

"Palamedes talked to me—then he convinced Hect."

"Oh, I *love* Palamedes," said Nona, and thus fortified dunked her head under the water, which she didn't like normally because she was mortally afraid of getting soap in her eyes. When she emerged, spluttering, she had presence of mind to ask: "Why did you flirt with the teacher, even though you didn't like her?"

Pyrrha's hands stilled from folding laundry, sitting next to the tub.

"How'd you know I didn't like her?" she asked.

Nona still didn't have the words to explain. "Just where you put your body—you only looked at her sometimes, that's all."

"Wish I'd had you in the Bureau," said Pyrrha, but she didn't answer the question.

That was why Nona was allowed to go to school, on the understanding that she would say she was living with her sister and a friend of her father's and that everyone else was dead. This was an answer so ordinary and boring that she soon wished she had been given a more interesting one, for cultural cachet.

Although Nona was officially a Teacher's Aide, she quickly learnt that she was really only interested in three parts of school. The first was games; the second was the Hour of Science; the third was the coloured markers that you could write on the squeaky whiteboards with and then rub off with a cloth so that you could mark again, which she was allowed to do to her heart's content. In fact, she only loved the Hour of Science because that was when she was allowed to look after Noodle, the science teacher's dog, who was a dirty white creature with six legs and a gentle disposition. She looked after Noodle while everyone else had to wrap ice cubes in socks and the normal nice lady teacher, Joli, marked books or drank big cups of hot tea; then during games she watched to make sure nobody hit balls through any

of the windows in the abandoned building next door. If they did, the ball was lost, because there were still mines and burnables all over. Neither of these duties was particularly hard, and she considered her lot a happy one. It was all unpaid, of course, but when she was at the dairy or talking to the people who weeded plants in the park, it was such fun to say, “I work at the school” when they asked her what she did. Everyone always said she was doing good work and they couldn’t ever even think of doing it themselves but well done her.

It was just as hard to make Nona learn any facts as it was to make her learn the sword or the bones—harder, probably; as she explained all the time, as sweetly as she could, her brain simply wasn’t interested in them. It was as though someone had probably told her everything before and she had already forgotten it. Every lesson she sat in on, at a rickety desk with an old plastic chair at the back of a class full of kids, she could feel exiting her ears as soon as it entered them with the ring of old familiarity—it *felt* and *sounded* as though she had heard it all before. The teachers were amazed when they found out about her being able to speak all the languages, but Pyrrha had schooled her to say that she had had “lots of resettlements,” which seemed to suffice. The nice lady teacher abandoned trying to teach Nona, and instead treated her like a good, simple colleague who could be relied upon to clean whiteboards and look after extraneous dogs and explain to the littlest children, in a variety of languages, where the bathroom was—which was really all teachers wanted.

At school, after the first week, Nona was cornered by five children who informed her that she was now their friend.

“Okay,” said Nona.

“Hot Sauce wants you,” she got told.

Hot Sauce was the oldest child, at fourteen, but would have been the authority no matter her age. She was queenly for her years and spoke very seldom. She had burns on most of her body and had got to hold a gun in a war. If you were new to the school her group always eventually found you and said, “You have to come and see Hot Sauce,” and took you to Hot Sauce, and Hot Sauce would lift up her shirt and hoick up her shorts and show you the burns. This was intended to instil a sense of reverence in the fresh meat, not disgust, but the group was just as proud if the new child broke down crying or didn’t want to look.

Hot Sauce herself was blank and unmoving in her moods and did not seem to have many strong passions, except that she was violently disdainful of every subject but the Hour of Science.

Nona wanted to know why Hot Sauce wanted her.

“You’re old and can get us drugs,” said Honesty, who was twelve and served as Hot Sauce’s lieutenant. “You live in the Building.”

None of them was crestfallen when Nona told them that she was not allowed to get anyone drugs; they took it with stoic acceptance. “What’s special about the Building?” she asked.

“It’s banned,” said Honesty.

One of the other children, Beautiful Ruby, said: “My mother says that if you get caught downtown or you shoot at the wrong window you get taken to your building.”

“But you play in the garage all the time,” said Nona. “I’ve seen you. You were one of the ones who hit a car with one of the big hard balls and the alarm went off for three hours.”

“Ah,” said Beautiful Ruby wisely, “but that isn’t *in* the Building. That’s the garage. You can see out through the struts, so it doesn’t count as being *in* the Building.”

“You need to show us the secret room where they keep the bodies after you’re taken to the Building and shot, or you can’t be our friend anymore,” said another child, Born in the Morning, who was the group’s negotiator.

“I can’t,” said Nona, in agonies. “I only know the cupboard in my place where the hot water cylinder is.”

The children got together and agreed that this was complete shit, not good enough, and not up to expectations. But when they petitioned Hot Sauce, Hot Sauce simply said: “She talks to the Angel. She gets to look after Noodle.”

The Angel was what they called the nondescript, washed-out, dusty-haired personage who came to teach the Hour of Science. Why they called her the Angel was unclear, but Hot Sauce idolised her: she was widely liked by all the children, because she was calm and even-handed and the same day in and day out, but for Hot Sauce and therefore the others it was more like an obsession. Nona got to look after the science teacher’s dog and knew its name and could report on how its fur felt (nice) and how its breath was (awful). She received such pearls from the science teacher’s lips as: “Was

Noodle a good boy for you today? Thank you, Nona,” which made her an elevated personage.

Facts about the Angel were in short supply. Where the science teacher lived was a mystery, and Nona’s hours were such that there was no way she could follow the science teacher home to see where home was or what she did there. Camilla came and picked Nona up every day after lunch, when school shut down in the afternoon heat, and the Hour of Science happened before lunchtime.

So all in all, Nona’s worth to the children was universally agreed to be minimal. She ranked very low among them, definitely below Honesty and Beautiful Ruby and only fractionally higher than Born in the Morning. The only person Born in the Morning outranked was the seven-year-old, who was just Kevin.

Those were really all their names—even Kevin—but nobody ever told Nona why Hot Sauce was called Hot Sauce. Hot Sauce had no parents, so she couldn’t ask them. The other kids had thirteen people at home between them, but the numbers were skewed by Born in the Morning, who was saddled with five fathers: Eldest Father, Second-Eldest Father, Brother Father, Younger Brother Father, and New Father. More importantly to Nona, Beautiful Ruby had a new baby at home, and sometimes Ruby’s mother brought the baby to the school foyer and she could look at the baby’s fingernails, which were small.

Nona explained all this to Camilla and to Pyrrha and sometimes to Palamedes over dinners, usually in the hope that she could talk so much nobody would notice she wasn’t using her mouth to eat. They all agreed that whatever made Nona happy at school made Nona happy at school, but the bottom line remained that she shouldn’t buy anybody drugs.

“I don’t,” explained Nona. “Honesty found someone else to buy him drugs, so I don’t have to.”

“Is his name really and truly *Honesty*?” Palamedes wanted to know.

Nona struggled.

“That’s how I hear it. Anyway, he shouldn’t be called *Honesty* at all, he tells huge lies and he’s trying to teach me too.”

Nona longed to lie, but didn’t know how to stop her body from showing the truth; at first, she had triumphantly caught every one of Honesty’s lies, until he took her behind the bike sheds and said he would give her a cigarette a week if she stopped. He was lying, but she could see how much

it meant to him, so she stopped. And when she *did* get a cigarette, she slipped it to Pyrrha.

Most of the best things she learnt from Pyrrha, and Palamedes and Camilla, whom she loved and trusted with all her numbered days; but in those early times when she wasn't used to living, the schoolchildren had taught her everything else. New words, mostly, which were always enlightening, but also how to spend time doing nothing.

They made doing nothing an art: squatting on stoops or loitering in parks beneath splintering trees, running like crazy if they heard shots, running like crazy even if they didn't—so hard to keep up!—hunkering beneath the roofs near the sanitation ponds, going where nobody cared if they went, fighting over scraps of shade near the huge cemetery hills where they had dug all the bodies out of the cracked sand and concrete and put them in a huge pile, which still smelled terrible. One of their favourite ways to hide was to clamber up a dusty mound of rocks and rebar right at the very edge of their part of the city—they had to do this carefully because they could easily slice themselves open on a piece of rusty metal, and that meant Nona had to be doubly more careful than anyone—and sit around on the second floor of a building that had been blown wide open to the sky. There was plenty of stained old office furniture to squat on, and they could watch the enormous stretch of road that ran all around the city. There was a huge expanse of it: Honesty said you could fit twenty vans on it at a time and there used to be a train track in the middle, with turn-offs and turn-offs for the turn-offs that led to a nest of tunnels beneath the city itself. In the tunnels you could drive and drive and drive for hours and never see sunlight, said Honesty, but hardly anyone used them now. There were special fleets of gunners in cars that patrolled down there and shook people up for money, or scavenged the cars that had never made their way out. Every so often an absolutely enormous earthquake rumbled beneath them, and when Nona first asked what it was, Hot Sauce said, “The Convoy”; and because it was Hot Sauce and not Honesty, she knew it had to be true.

How wonderful it sounded—*The Convoy*—so big and mysterious and subterranean. Nona had no real idea of what a convoy was or what it looked like for a very long time, but she joined in with the others when they felt the rumble in the old office-space hideout and competed to be the first to say, “The Convoy,” and have the others question, or jeer, or confirm.

“Can’t feel it.”

“That’s a fart.”

“No way, no way, that’s right. That’s the Convoy, I can feel it, my shoes are off.”

The whole broken building would rumble and shake, and at the end they would chorus, “Convoy gone.”

Nona was frankly disappointed when she asked Pyrrha what a convoy was, when Pyrrha was half-absorbed in melting slag for dummy pellets in her little bullet-shaped crucible, and Pyrrha explained that it was a bunch of vehicles driving in a line, probably very big ones. But she never quite got over that little shake, that tight vibration of the stomach when the Convoy was near, how it excited her somehow. It was like she could feel something wonderful in it.

They often stayed in the abandoned office building until the glowering dusk, because nobody wanted that space or threw chunks of brick at them to make them leave. Nona loved to watch the moon tremble in front of the big broken hanging blueness in the sky, careless of it, while Honesty prised bullet casings out of holes in the walls and Kevin played with his dolls. Beautiful Ruby and Born in the Morning whiled away the time with a deck of playing cards that had too many numbers for Nona to join in. Sometimes Hot Sauce would play too, but mainly Hot Sauce silently and majestically held court as the city honked and smouldered and yelled.

Nona liked to sit near Hot Sauce; it was good to be quiet. One time they were sitting there and the Convoy rumbled beneath them, with the others hooting and hollering and Kevin putting his hands over his ears patiently waiting for the Convoy to go away, and when the last rumbles had died, Honesty looked over and said—

“You’ll join, Hot Sauce, won’t you? Hot Sauce will join.”

“Join what?” said Nona, the ignorant one.

Which made the others do their usual chorus of—

“Nona doesn’t know.”

“Nona doesn’t know *anything*.”

“Tell Nona.”

And Honesty, who had been very nice since the cigarette arrangement, said: “When we leave school, we’re going to kill zombies, we’re gonna kill necromancers.”

“You shouldn’t say the *word*,” said Nona, forgetting in a panic that that was a Nona rule, not a school rule.

All Honesty did was drum his heels on the floor next to the wheelie chair that the stuffing was coming out of and exclaim: “Who cares? I’m not scared. This isn’t class, I can say what I want.”

Born in the Morning said with an air of old rehearsal, “I threw a rock at a necromancer and it died,” and Kevin crowed, “No, you didn’t! No, you didn’t!” and Beautiful Ruby said, “That’s such a bullshit story you tell,” and Honesty, easily and hypocritically, said, “You are *such* a liar, my man.”

Born in the Morning protested, “I *did* throw a rock and it *did* die,” and Nona said, “What, the rock?” at which the others paused in order to jeer at her. Then Beautiful Ruby explained that the rock had been thrown at one of the cages and the necromancer had been almost all the way on fire, and the question of whether or not the rock had even hit the necromancer or the bars was still a live one, but the rock could have helped. A rock hits you in the head you’re going to die, aren’t you.

While the others litigated whether or not the rock still counted if the necromancer was almost all the way on fire, Hot Sauce, sitting with her legs dangling over the side of the broken floor, had gone very still. Nona always noticed when Hot Sauce was still, because her stillness was peculiar: it wasn’t the stillness others got when they were thinking about things in class, markers paused as their brains furiously combed over some answer. It was the stillness of someone *rejecting* thinking. Midargument, Ruby’s voice rose over the others—“There aren’t any necromancers here anymore, they’re all dead.”

Born said, “Not all of them. My dad says they’re all in the barracks.”

“Which dad? You have like seventy.”

“Don’t say I have like seventy, you know how many dads I got.”

“If I had the amount of dads you got, I’d sell some of them,” said Ruby.

“You *think* you would, but you *wouldn’t*,” said Born wisely.

Honesty said, “Some of the zombies go spying outside the barracks, they ain’t all mad. That’s why you got to make sure you see all your friends eating and bleeding, or, you know—*bam*, you’re dead, or bones, or worse.”

“I eat,” protested Nona.

“Nobody’s saying *you’re* a zombie, you dumbass,” said Honesty. “I’m saying hidden zombies, you know, spies. You’re pretty stupid for your age, you know that?”

“I watched Nona eat a pebble,” Kevin volunteered, bending one of his doll’s legs into position. Then: “And a marker top.”

“Don’t squeal, Kevin,” said Nona, offended and on her dignity; she had just learnt *squeal* and therefore used it constantly. “And Honesty, don’t call me a dumbass. At home they said if you called me a dumbass again I should tell you that they know what you look like and they’ll beat you up.”

“Okay. I don’t want to piss off your folks, you live with a pimp,” said Honesty.

By that point Nona knew what *pimp* was, and was so annoyed she knew she was on the road to a tantrum. But before intragroup violence could erupt or get contracted out, Hot Sauce raised her voice and said—

“The necromancers will come back. They may already be here.”

Everyone subsided into reverent silence at Hot Sauce’s proclamation, even Nona, who took the opportunity to do five breaths in and out like Camilla had shown her.

Eventually Beautiful Ruby broke the silence and said, “What about Varun, Hot Sauce? What about Varun the Eater?”

“It’s here for them,” said Hot Sauce.

They looked up through the big crack at the blued sky respectfully.

Then Honesty said—“You’ll join up, right, Hot Sauce? You going to go over?”

But Hot Sauce didn’t answer, and then Kevin wanted to go to the bathroom, so they had to call out “Not me,” to see who had to escort Kevin to the bathroom. He was a big boy and easily old enough to go to the bathroom by himself, but Kevin had such a huge facility for freaking out and locking himself in places that you had to wait until he’d finished peeing to make sure you didn’t need to bust a door lock open with half a brick. By the time that had been agreed on (they concluded Ruby had said *not me* last) the question had been dropped, and there was Hot Sauce, very still and looking at the sky.

Nona whispered, “Join what, Hot Sauce?”

Hot Sauce didn’t answer her. When she *did* say anything, she asked a question instead, which was irritatingly like Pyrrha. “You like it here?”

“I love it here,” said Nona sincerely. “I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.”

“You’re sweet,” said Hot Sauce.

That settled it, Nona knew. If Hot Sauce thought Nona was *sweet*, she was going to be part of the group no matter what. From that day nobody bothered to question Nona’s presence no matter what she said or how old

she was or how little facility she had for buying anyone drugs. She was one of them, which gave her enormous pleasure. She was born to the untold wealth of belonging to Camilla and Pyrrha and Palamedes, and now added the beauty of being friends with Hot Sauce and Hot Sauce's friends, which gave her high status in the world, even considering Kevin. She loved Camilla and Pyrrha and Palamedes, but the thing about being with Hot Sauce and the others was that you could be completely and entirely alone.

Eventually, when it got dark enough, all their families would come looking for them—Cam always came *horribly* early—except for Hot Sauce, who had nobody to come looking for her, and Honesty, whom nobody ever remembered about. But even with this flaw in paradise, Nona could do nothing but hug her knees to her chest and feel fantastically, wonderfully lucky, luckier than anyone else who had ever had the pleasure of being born.



4

THE MORNING ROUTINE was that they would walk together until Pyrrha had to split off, and then Cam would drop Nona off at school and go off to do her own thing, clean the house or do crimes that Nona wasn't allowed to partake in. Nona liked the walk, but the early morning was as cold as the afternoon was hot, so to keep warm she had to stamp her feet and put her hands in her pockets. They walked alongside all the other workers—the ones who didn't get picked up in the morning in the worker vans, or didn't have a job that merited a worker van, or didn't have a job but lived in hope—and they all trudged slowly through the street in clusters, parting only when a truck ground through, the driver leaning on the horn if someone didn't move out of the way quick enough.

Nona's breath was misting on the inside of her mask and escaping out its cracks in ghostly grey puffs by the time they made it to the park, comfortable but not talking. It was always the same route—straight down the street all the way to the gates of the thing that had used to be the big park—and then Pyrrha would say something like, "Let's cut through, it's so smoky," or she'd say, "Let's not. Park's full of mercs," and then they'd go around. This morning she said, "Let's go through the park. Move with the crowd," so Nona took Camilla's hand and moved with the crowd.

The plants filtered out some of the clinging smoke, and Nona loved to look at the trees and the bristly, curving shapes of the shrubs and bushes. Much of the vegetation had been turfed up, some in an attempt to make a community garden, some of it into shanty houses skulking against the big concrete fence. Another place had been cleared and ineptly concreted over, and they put the cages there. The cages were bone-cold and they'd been

almost fully cleaned, but Nona didn't like looking, so she spent her time gazing at the mist of trailing vines on the tree trunks instead.

Once they were out of the park and out of the crowd, Pyrrha kissed the top of Nona's head and said, "Be good," like she always said. She did not kiss the top of Camilla's head but told her, "Good hunting, you two."

"Good hunting," echoed Camilla.

Pyrrha melted into the crowd in her big steel-toed boots and her over-the-shoulder bag with her helmet and extra batteries for her helmet light and her gloves and her lunch. It was easier now than when Nona had been very new and Palamedes said she had no object permanence, but Nona still always felt a pang watching Pyrrha walk away, commingled with the pride of having Pyrrha, the familiarity of seeing someone and knowing they belonged to you. Camilla drew her back to the pavement with a guiding hand on the small of her back, and said the magic words: "You'll be late for school."

Then it was one right turn, one cut through an alley, and one pause as Nona pointed out to Cam a building that had been fine only the other day and now had a huge hole in it ("They used a very big gun," was Cam's explanation) before they got buzzed into the school building by the nice lady teacher and went up two flights of squeaky linoleum stairs. Camilla always turned down the offer of a warm drink in the tiny staffroom, and turned it down quicker the more compassionately she was asked, and then she melted away into the street like a grey shadow. Nona often watched her from the window.

"Kevin's here already, so he can help you take down the chairs and clean the whiteboards," said the teacher.

This was absolute stupidity on the teacher's part, as Nona knew Kevin would not help take down the chairs nor clean the whiteboards, nor do anything but sit on the cushions where the stuffing was leaking out in drifts of off-white beads. Then the teacher said, unexpectedly: "Hot Sauce is here too."

Not even the teacher knew Hot Sauce's real name. Nona said, "That's early."

"Yes. I asked her why, but she wouldn't say. Check on her, won't you?" As though *Nona* could check on *Hot Sauce*. "I'm worried about her, living alone. I've tried to tell her about the sheltered accommodation, but she's too independent..."

Nona was still laughing over the idea as she went into the classroom and started taking the chairs down off the desks. Kevin was, as she'd predicted, lying flat on one of the cushions doing something social and complex with two stuffed rodents; but there was Hot Sauce, feline and still next to one of the schoolhouse windows, her burns rippling neatly beneath the electric light when Nona turned it on.

"Turn it off," said Hot Sauce, so of course Nona turned it off. "Come here."

Nona took the plastic, chlorine-smelling box of whiteboards and the rag and the spray bottle with her, and she squatted down next to Hot Sauce, wetting the rag with the stuff in the spray bottle. Hot Sauce said, "Don't let them see you from the window."

"Who's watching?"

"Don't know. Green building. Fourth floor."

Nona was smart enough to catch herself getting up to look, which she privately congratulated herself upon. She placed the cleanly scrubbed white square on the threadbare carpet, which also smelled like chlorine, and started on the second. She remembered about Blood of Eden and all the talking, and it gave her a sudden worry. She said, "Do you think they're watching *me*?"

At least Hot Sauce took her seriously. She went *hmm*, which was how you could tell. "Why would they be watching you?"

"I don't know."

"They were here before you. So. Doubt it."

Nona said, "Who are they?"

Hot Sauce didn't say anything for the longest time. Then she said, "I'm investigating."

Once Hot Sauce said that she would do something, all you could do was wait for Hot Sauce to do it. She would not invite you to help, or ask your opinion. Hot Sauce's failure to ask anyone's opinion on anything she did was probably the reason she was the unquestioned authority in the school, over and above the teachers. Nona had told Palamedes about it and Palamedes had said, Lead researcher material, certainly. So now there was nothing for Nona to do but clean off all the whiteboards and lug the box of them over by Kevin, and when invited examine the silent discourse between the stuffed rodents, which was conveyed by mashing them together. Nona

searched for the right words and said, “They’re having a baby, aren’t they?” and Kevin seemed pleased.

By the time the whiteboards were cleaned and all the chairs were taken down and Nona had emptied the bins, most of the other children had streamed into the classroom. They all sat at their tables, with Nona at a special table at the back for her and any of the smallest children who were feeling wet or vulnerable and wanted to sit in her comforting presence. This morning Nona was left alone, which she liked; Hot Sauce had put the wind up her. She listened with only one ear to the teacher taking the morning roll call, and she took the whiteboard she was allowed to use and drew squiggles on it with only half her brain. The other half of her brain was plagued with questions.

Who is watching the classroom from the green building?

How will Hot Sauce investigate?

Then her mind wandered.

What will Pyrrha check out for Camilla today?

Why is the seat such a nutritious part?

Who am I?

So her drawing wasn’t much good, and was further harmed midway through the lesson, when the teacher was taking Honesty and Hot Sauce and Born in the Morning for integers while the nursery class copied things down off the board. One of the tinies who didn’t like going to the bathroom alone tugged on Nona’s sleeve, so she ended up standing in front of the cubicle lost in thought, and then she got distracted looking at herself in the mirror. It was such a relief to be pretty, and to have the braids that Pyrrha had given her look so dark and juicy and glossy. Cam said her hair was drying up and she had white spots on her nails, but Nona couldn’t see it. When the tiny emerged from the toilet Nona helped it wash its hands and return promptly to the numbers on the board, and by then the Angel had arrived.

The Angel looked less like an angel than ever that morning. Nona always liked the science teacher’s face, which was sort of snub-nosed and thin and crinkly around the eyes, but that morning she was frankly untidy. She was a gallant little person of fortyish who gave the impression that she had learnt a lot early in life and discovered late that it was no real good to her or anyone else. This lent her teaching a weightless, secretive feeling, like it was really all for fun at the end of the day. She liked to wear button-

up shirts, often with suspenders to hold up the trousers, and a dust jacket to keep her clothes neat walking through the city; but that morning her shirt looked like yesterday's shirt and her face looked like yesterday's face—careworn, with her freckles fading into the background of her skin. All of the Angel was tinted in soft greys and browns, but she had delicious reddish freckles scattered on her cheeks and nose which added life and vivacity to her face; not so much today. As Nona led the tiny by hand into the classroom, Hot Sauce had paused on integers to say, "Good morning, sir," which caused a reverberation around the classroom of equally respectful *Good morning sir*—*Good mornings*; but the Angel's answering "Good morning, everyone" was distinctly pallid.

Hot Sauce noticed that. Nona watched as Hot Sauce never fully returned to integers, but quivered at the front desk with the others, her eyes constantly flicking back to the Angel. Nona thought the Angel was moving like someone who hadn't slept well. Sometimes Pyrrha went out late at night and came back smelling like alcohol, and Camilla would say nothing at all, but if Palamedes was there he would say, "Really, Pyrrha?" and Pyrrha would just say, "Really, Sextus," and then the next morning she would be walking in that same rumpled, weary fashion—though Nona thought she exaggerated it for effect. Nothing Pyrrha drank could really hurt her. She had even drunk the contents of the bleach bottle once. When Palamedes had asked why, Pyrrha said she had realised she wasn't used to being tortured while immortal and wanted to get a head start, and Palamedes said *bullshit* because he thought Nona had not been listening. Nona wondered if the Angel had been drinking too, albeit not bleach, which had given Pyrrha some sensational hiccups. She shared this thought with Hot Sauce and the others at break time after numbers and reading, when they huddled in the corner with their sliced fruit.

"What, hungover you mean?" said Honesty. "Give us your fruit, Nona."

"I already promised it to Ruby," said Nona, whose portion was always promised before class started, sometimes days in advance.

"Fuck you, Ruby," said Honesty. "You *know* I want it when it's stone fruit."

"You shouldn't always get whatever you want," said Beautiful Ruby.

"I never get whatever I want," said Honesty, inconsolable.

"If you swear again I'll make you go and put your name up on the board," said Nona.

Hot Sauce said—

“The Angel doesn’t drink.”

Born in the Morning wanted to know how Hot Sauce knew. Hot Sauce simply said, “Because I know,” which ended that line of questioning.

Beautiful Ruby, perhaps buoyed by being that day’s fruit recipient, held out cupped hands for the foodstuff in question and said: “Hey, you don’t look so well lately, Nona. You look kind of sick.”

Everyone turned to look at Nona, who writhed beneath this judgement, and they agreed that she had not looked well for, like, weeks. “I *do*,” she said indignantly. “Look at my braids—I look wonderful,” which thankfully replaced their worry with a group effort to squash her vanity. They often took it in turns to squash Nona’s vanity, which never worked. Beautiful Ruby, the best-looking out of them all and therefore the authority on looks, had once said, “You got the face of a rat and the body of a dead person,” but Nona knew she was beautiful and was complacent about it. Even if they *all* assured her that she was nothing to write home about, she could say, “Who cares? I can’t write,” and then they had to switch tack and squash her for being proud that she was so goddamned stupid. Nona quite liked this really; it made her feel like she belonged. They were all proud of her stupidity, in the same way that they were proud of Honesty’s rampant crimes and of Hot Sauce being the most important person in the universe.

Ruby ate all of his stone fruit and nearly all of Nona’s too, then he magnanimously said, “I’m full. Honesty, you take the last bit. I get fruit at home.”

Honesty was not overburdened with shame. “Lucky boy, lucky boy,” he said, and he tossed the fruit up in the air—the rest of them shouted—and caught it in his mouth, which he always did. Honesty had the widest mouth Nona had ever seen. He chewed and did not bother to finish chewing before he said, “I don’t mind telling you I need the blood sugar. I’ve got a job after lunch.”

Born in the Morning scoffed, “*Real* job or *Honesty* job?” but Born in the Morning was always a bit of a stickler.

“Real job, sunshine, real job. *Underground*,” he added, and tapped his nose mysteriously.

Hot Sauce said—

“Dangerous.”

“I know; those tunnels is hell,” said Honesty baldly. “But I’ll be in a car the whole time and no shooty-shooty, it’s just stripping stuff off the pipes again.”

Beautiful Ruby was impressed. “You should’ve said, I would have given you half if I’d known.”

“I’m not a boy who boasts,” said Honesty.

“God, you’re a liar,” said Born in the Morning.

When the class teacher clapped her hands together and announced the Hour of Science, which meant Nona was about to get the Hour of Noodle, Hot Sauce dawdled behind. She looked Nona dead in the eye, the ripples of her burns making pretty ridges up and down one cheek, and she said—“You’re right.”

“That I’m beautiful?” said Nona.

“No. About the Angel. The Angel’s worried.”

“Okay,” said Nona.

“Stay on the grounds today,” said Hot Sauce. “When you take Noodle.”

It was getting hot. When she took Noodle down the side stairs of the building and went out through a side door to the rubble out back, the heat hit her like a slap—not as uncomfortable as it would be later, but enough that it wasn’t hard to do as Hot Sauce said and keep to the shade with Noodle. He gamely ran a few times around the fenced part, all six of his legs moving in wonderful concert, but then he tired out and came and sat next to her and panted. Nona shared water with him from a bottle and looked around—looked up at the next building and listened to the sounds on the road, all the carolling honks and people calling out to one another—but there was nothing abnormal at all. This was almost worse, because she had been waiting for it. The most interesting sight was someone lounging in an alleyway opposite the school building, sitting in a busted-up chair next to an overflowing bin, and Nona watched intently, trying to decide if they were dead or not. She decided *not* dead, because they were wearing quite a good jacket and faceguard and nobody was coming around surreptitiously trying to take either.

She was somewhat disconsolate and cross by the time the main teacher called out to her from the second-storey window, but she cheered up at the handover: Noodle licked her hand, and the Angel said, “Nona, you are a little lifesaver,” and there was the pleasant, after-class dopey feeling of half the children preparing for lunch and sleep. The blinds were being drawn,

and a couple of parents were there to pick up children who had food and naps elsewhere, but Hot Sauce and her friends were all dragging their mats together, claiming the coolest and darkest corner of the room.

When Hot Sauce saw her she said, quietly, “Anything strange?” and Nona reported everything, including the possible body, and Hot Sauce seemed satisfied even though there was so little to tell. She said, “Okay. Nothing. Good work, Nona,” and Nona was happy again, and forgot all about the body, or anyone watching anything.



5

CAMILLA WAS WAITING FOR HER in the vestibule where the coats and masks and the bathrooms were. When she asked how school had gone, Nona was able to say “Good!” with perfect truthfulness, and then they sidled away before the main teacher could try to slip them a pamphlet and look Camilla over for bruises, and they walked home in complete amity on the shadiest side of the street. As they went out of the school building Nona looked quickly in the alleyway for the person she’d seen in the coat and mask, but they were gone, which meant either they really had been alive or someone else had gotten to them already.

The heat made the backs of Nona’s knees blister with sweat, but Cam, unlike Palamedes, was always merciless about keeping her going. In a way she was glad that it was Cam today and not Palamedes, because even in his short appearances Palamedes liked to ask probing questions about exactly what the teacher was teaching, and to say things like “My God, *that’s* how they teach mathematics?” and cluck Cam’s tongue in a way that was impossible to answer. Camilla was just quiet and nice and held Nona’s hand, and once they got into the Building gave Nona a long drink of ice water from the cooling cupboard.

Nona enjoyed the water, but wilted a little at the sight of Camilla removing a carton of more sliced fruit from the cupboard. She and Pyrrha and Palamedes had gotten it into their heads a month or so ago that Nona could be tempted with fruit, which was true then but not particularly true now. Nona had decided that she was fine with *having eaten* fruit, but not with *eating* fruit; but she was too cheerful to disappoint Camilla, so they both ate slices of sweating orange melon until it was time to tack up the thick black sheeting on the windows, and then Cam barred the door and gave Nona the bones.

Nona sat cross-legged on the floor and chose to arrange them into a sort of snaking spiral, smallest pieces in the centre and biggest pieces on the outside, as Camilla sat nearby and sketched what she was doing on a brown sheet of butcher's paper.

"Where did you go?" Nona asked, once she had taken the time to admire her handiwork. "When I was at school, I mean."

The pencil stilled briefly. "Seeing people."

"About Site C?"

"Keep going. There are some bones left."

Nona added a big greyish knobble of bone to the spiral, but with no great interest. It was only a bone. Nice to nibble at, boring otherwise. "Done," she said, then guessed, "People like Crown?"

The pencil had been put down. The eyes had shadowed into earthen greys. "Crown," said Palamedes pleasantly, "isn't our friend right now. Okay, take that smallest piece there and try rolling it in your fingers. Feel all the little indentations in that scooped-out portion."

"I love Crown," Nona protested, giving the smallest bone a desultory grope.

"Why do you love Crown?"

Nona thought about it.

"She has lovely hair. And when she hugs you she smells like cinnamon, and her breasts feel nice, and she's so big and pretty."

Palamedes looked at her, and then he took the notepad out of Camilla's capacious pockets. Nona despaired: there was always a tick somewhere if she mentioned *breasts*. "That's not exactly *love* as I would classify it," he said. "That's simply a list of things most red-blooded human beings like about Crown. How do you know what cinnamon smells like, Nona?"

"Oh, I don't know. I just do. Is your timer on?"

"Yes, it's on. Thank you for asking. Why don't you pick out the piece of bone you like best, and tell me about it?"

She looked at them all: there were long treelike pieces with branches coming off them, and little wedged pieces and a long smooth piece with a jaggedy end. Nona picked the jaggedy piece and ran her thumb over the prickly splintered end, liking the bright itch. "Am I not allowed to love Crown?" she said.

"I could never stop you from loving anything. I don't have the right. Nobody has the right to tell you who to love or who not to love, and equally

nobody's obliged to love *you*. If you were forced into loving them, it wouldn't be love..."

Nona liked that.

"That's why I love Hot Sauce and Honesty and my friends so much. They don't *have* to like me, and it was a huge surprise when they liked me, but they do."

"Being unexpectedly loved is so wonderful or terrible, isn't it?"

"Wonderful, I think," she said. Then she said, "Well, *I* still love Crown, anyway."

"She's used to people loving her *anyway*," said Palamedes, with the air of someone not wholly paying a compliment.

"Do we still like the Captain?" (Even Nona couldn't quite *love* the Captain.)

"I pity the Captain to the very depths of my heart, and never did like her much," said Palamedes. "I pity Crown not at all, and like her terribly; that's the problem. Why don't you try to make that end smooth?"

Nona pressed her thumb down hard on the jagged end of the bone piece. The pad of her thumb began to feel warm. The tiny splinters of bone broke her skin, and a pinprick of red blood bubbled up. Nona stuck her thumb in her mouth. Palamedes carefully drew it away—"Good thinking, that's antiseptic, but I can do better," he said—and, with fine lines appearing at the side of Camilla's mouth, the minutest fragment of bone popped out from the blood. Then the wound was gone, and the warm feeling with it.

Nona said curiously, "Does that hurt Camilla?"

"No, thank God. I'd never do it if it did."

"Why is it that the blue light in the sky hurts—other people," said Nona, "but not you and Cam?"

She had asked this upward of a dozen times, especially lately, but Palamedes always answered unhesitatingly no matter how many times he had been asked before. "She's got the wrong kind of body. She and I can cheat ... for now ... draw on *me*, not *her*; for the unusual kinds of things that I do, with the downside being that our time is very limited. If I was in her body for too long, I'd hurt her and the blue light would start to hurt me. But in summary, nothing will hurt Camilla so long as I stick to the time limit. Make sense?"

"I think so," said Nona, and deciding: "Yes. That's a relief ... I wouldn't want anything to hurt Camilla. I love Camilla."

“And why do you love Camilla?”

Nona struggled with this a little. It was like asking why you breathed air.

“I love the way she moves,” she said pitifully.

He said, “Me too.”

“Do you miss seeing her?”

“Dreadfully. But the recordings are nice.”

“Is the blue light going to start hurting Pyrrha, Palamedes?”

Another question she had begun asking again. Camilla said it was anxiety. Palamedes said gently, “No. She’s immune to the blue light and it’s not going to start hurting her. She’s got the right type of body to be hurt by it, but the wrong soul. She was made to be immune to the blue light.”

“So do I have the wrong kind of body, or the wrong kind of soul?”

This was the only question Palamedes ever hesitated on.

“We don’t know. We were worried that the blue light was hurting you when you first came to us, but you’re fine. This could mean that you’re like Pyrrha, and that you’re immune because your soul is protecting your body. But … there are a lot of factors, Nona.”

“Is that why—Blood of Eden don’t want me?”

“Oh, they want you,” said Palamedes. “They want you very badly. Look —are you scared by the conversation Pyrrha and I had this morning?”

“Not really. I mean, I know things are getting worse,” she said, wanting to sound worldly. “I know I’m not fixed and we only have a few more months to fix me, and who knows what’s going to happen in the meanwhile. But I’m not scared of We Suffer. I like We Suffer.”

Palamedes quirked Cam’s eyebrows in the way that meant he was amused.

“Just because the commander gave you a sweet the once?”

“It wasn’t just that,” said Nona.

It was *sort of* that. We Suffer had given her a sweet early on when she had not been having a good day, and she had said, *Keep at the mission, Nona*. The sweet had been *too* sweet—she had to apologetically spit it out after about five sucks because it got too much—but she had liked *Keep at the mission, Nona*. It had made her feel full of purpose.

“In another time and in different circumstances I would also have liked We Suffer,” said Palamedes. “Hell, I might have liked all of Ctesiphon Wing. Right now though … Tidy up the bones, let’s stop for today.”

They stopped then started tidying up the bones together, putting them in the false bottom of the big box that was otherwise filled with canned beans.

“Sometimes,” she found herself saying, quite meditatively for her, “I don’t like it when you do—the necromancy word—” (“You just said it,” said Palamedes) “—but it feels nice at the same time. It’s mixed up. It’s like when you do that, it makes me sad—not sad that you did it, but sad that you *can* do it. Did I say something wrong?” Nona added in a rush, seeing Palamedes’s face.

“No,” he said, gently, after a moment. “I don’t understand yet, that’s all. Not even a little. I have so much to learn in the ways of not understanding.”

Then he got the expression he only got when he was thinking about doing something. This was the expression that isolated him the most from Camilla’s face: Camilla had the same look on her face when she was doing something and when she was thinking about it, which was what made Camilla so hugely unexpected. Before he could do whatever it was though, the timer bleated in his pocket. “Time’s up,” he said. “Give this to Cam for me, will you?”

And he spread Nona’s fingers like he always did, and he quietly kissed the second right-hand knuckle.

Nona always paid so much more attention to the lessons of the hand and the mouth than she did to the lessons of the bone and the sword: they were significantly more interesting. With the bone and the sword she faintly got the impression that she was being read a boring bit out of the newspaper, or one of the two-for-one books Pyrrha sometimes bought from the back of somebody’s truck. Whenever she was read to from one of these she was asleep in minutes. But she was good at this, whatever *this* was; she didn’t even know; nobody would give her the words, and she didn’t have them herself. The first time Palamedes had asked her to do it, quite a long time ago, and the first time she had raised Camilla’s hand to her mouth and done it—pretty much exactly as Palamedes had, making the same shape as his mouth had done like she did when speaking languages, and touching the same way as his hands had touched—Camilla had looked at her, and then she had gone away to sit in the bath by herself in the dark for almost an hour, even though there hadn’t been any water in the bath.

Now when Nona waited for Camilla’s eyes to clear, and she lifted up Camilla’s hand to press her mouth to it, all Camilla said was, “Thanks.” And she almost didn’t flinch.



6

PYRRHA WAS WORKING LATE THAT EVENING. They were demolishing a big building that everyone was worried was about to come down and squash all of the surrounding streets flat and go right through the road to the tunnels. The work kept on being stop-start stop-start because people couldn't decide who was responsible for paying the workers: the militia or the old civic government. Down at the local dairy one of the old men had grumbled that at least with the Houses around you knew who was paying who and the other old man had said, Is that all you care about, you shameful old bastard, and then they realised Nona was there and to cover up their mutual embarrassment they had asked Nona what *she* thought. She said she didn't mind what happened so long as Pyrrha got paid, because she wanted a birthday present. Then they chuckled her beneath the chin and laughed a lot and Nona didn't know why, because she had been perfectly sincere. They each gave her a coffee coupon, and she was so excited that she nearly dropped the coupons twice on the way home.

Now that the last of the heat had died, Camilla was uncapping fresh water to put into the tank so that they could have a bath. Nona had her scrub-down in front of the sink, hopping cold despite the heat, eager to get into the warm water; the door was cracked a little so that she could hear Camilla moving around, sloshing the water around with a stick to make sure there was nothing blocking up the pipe. She said: "Will you read to me?" They were still getting through old news sheets where people wrote in questions about problems they were having and the editor suggested things they could do. They were written half in a language Cam could read and half in one she couldn't. Nona loved these sheets. Nobody in real life would

ever have the problems those people in the paper had, and the suggestions were even worse.

“Piece of melon gets you five minutes” was the reply.

“I can eat two,” Nona decided. “That’s ten.” And: “When’s Pyrrha coming back?”

“Bedtime, probably. We won’t wait up.” Then she shocked Nona deeply by saying, “Nona, would you ever want to leave here?”

“What?”

“Live on a farm with the Warden and me. With Pyrrha. Out of the city. Away.”

“No,” said Nona, startled and not at all pleased. “I love it here.”

“Would you love a new home too, if we were all there?”

“Maybe,” said Nona, now startled *and* suspicious.

“Is there anything you’re not telling me?”

It was the first time ever that Camilla had asked that question. It was such an abundantly awful question to ask. The silence drew out between them in a way that made the tips of Nona’s ears feel hot. It felt as though it lasted a very long time.

Then—“Yes,” said Nona, faintly.

There was another long pause. “Do you promise to tell me or Palamedes if you get scared about something, or don’t know what to do?”

That was more like Camilla. “Sure,” Nona said.

“Thanks. We appreciate it.” The door opened a fraction, and a plastic saucer with two slices of melon appeared. Nona began rinsing her soapy arms. A voice cleared outside the door, and the sheet rustled. *“Dear Aunty. When my boyfriend and I get into an argument, he goes to the bathroom and then makes me apologise to...”*

Nona sat in the bath and ate one and a half slices of melon, which was one and a half slices too many, and got about seven minutes of the letters from people with problems. She laughed a lot. She couldn’t read Camilla anything in return, but Camilla liked having baths by herself, so Nona amused herself in the front room taking strips of paper and folding them into little crinkles and streamers the way Honesty and Kevin had shown her. Kevin was very good at folding paper into shapes: he had small and nimble fingers. Despite having waited and waited, it was still hot when they both settled down for bed, but there was a breeze and the windows were open, and they were both comfortable with wet hair and lying with no covers on.

Nona tried to doze as the water dried on her body, listened to a muffled siren falling and rising somewhere beyond the blackout curtains, but she and Camilla were both fidgeting too much—Camilla with some discipline, stretching her legs out, pointing her toes at the ceiling, Nona trying to get comfortable on her back. She waited for Cam to tell her off for being restless, but eventually Camilla asked, “Should I read another letter?”

This was such a nice offer that Nona was pleased and sleepy immediately.

“Cam,” she said, snuggling up into her back, “can’t you tell me a story instead, like you used to? I’ll rest my eyes while you talk.”

“You haven’t wanted stories in a while. Said you were too sophisticated.”

“That was because Beautiful Ruby made fun of me when I said what I did to get to sleep,” said Nona.

That had been early on. It hadn’t even been that Beautiful Ruby hurt her feelings; it was that the others had shushed him immediately and Honesty had said in a much louder voice than was necessary, “Shut up, lad, Nona can do kiddie things if she wants to,” which was a *much* better way of letting her know she was being an appalling baby. And Hot Sauce had looked at her in a way she really hadn’t liked.

“Hmm,” was all Camilla said. Then: “What kind of story?”

Nona thought about it.

“Tell me the story about how you met me again. Neither you nor Palamedes have told me that one in ages.”

“Okay.”

Camilla’s curt, sweet, low voice took on the tones of recital: “We met you when the Warden saved you, after you were hurt.”

Nona supplied, “And it was the first time he showed he could do things like that because he didn’t have a body, and you were amazed,” and Camilla said, “Who’s telling this, me or you?”

Nona subsided. Camilla said, “It was the first time. He and I … were trying to talk. He was stuck, not having a body that talked. At the time we knew you were in trouble. You’d disappeared. We’d been trying to get you. We found you and Pyrrha. You were hurt. Pyrrha helped us escape from an attack. We lost people. Ships. Something very important. But we got you away, and we wanted to keep you. Other people said no. But you didn’t know what was happening. You weren’t a threat to anyone. Neither was

Pyrrha. But not many people believed me, or the Warden. Many people said you were too dangerous.”

Nona said, “And everyone paid attention to We Suffer, who said, ‘I trust them. They will not betray us.’”

“Yes … back then We Suffer trusted us. We Suffer even let Pyrrha live. Pyrrha talked fast. Then I found a way for the Warden to come back. That was a relief. He wanted to evoke the break clause … which means, he wanted his family away from the Houses. You weren’t awake yet. You only woke up for very short periods and you couldn’t speak properly. We looked after you. The Warden convinced the Oversight Body, convinced the Sixth House to come with us. We showed them the secret of the installation. We helped them find a stele that would anchor such a big thanergy transition … which means, we helped them move. Then the Warden picked sixteen people to talk with Blood of Eden. To discuss the future. You were waking up. You met me for the first time.”

Nona said, “What did you think of me?” knowing the answer.

“I thought I didn’t know you at all. You were new.”

Nona always loved this answer unreasonably; the idea that *that* was when Camilla met her, that was her birth. She said, “I don’t remember much about back then.”

“Not surprised. We didn’t let you meet many people.”

“And we lived here and I got better and Pyrrha went out to work and you taught me how to speak. And then things went wrong.”

That had been a hideous time.

Camilla said, “Yes. Then things went wrong. The light appeared. We found out Blood of Eden had lied to us … or at least, didn’t have the power to look after us anymore. That’s it.”

Nona stretched her toes out until her ankles burned.

“That was still the kiddie version,” she said, faintly accusatory. “I’m more sophisticated, Cam. I can understand more.”

“Okay. Keep in mind I never had to practise an adult version.”

“Can I ask questions?”

“Go ahead.”

“I don’t understand why We Suffer hates Pyrrha.”

“Pyrrha’s best friend killed We Suffer’s boss.”

That made sense.

“Why did you want to take your families away from the other place?”

“We didn’t feel we could be there anymore … not until we really understood what we were doing, morally. The Warden is our leader, and our families listened to what he had to say. We voted on it … made promises we couldn’t keep.”

Camilla’s voice was bitter. Nona was sorry.

“If I remember who I am, can’t I help to find them?” she said.

“That’s up to you,” said Camilla.

“Will your families like me? Will they say, ‘Well done, Pyrrha, well done, Camilla, well done, Palamedes?’”

Camilla smiled audibly.

“No,” she said.

After that Nona slept, or thought she was sleeping: she lay in the heat feeling it itch across her body, rolling over to find the cool part of the pillow where Camilla had tucked the frozen blocks in the pillowslip like she did every night. She heard Camilla breathing and felt nearly completely at peace, happy despite everything. Sometimes it was hard not to be happy; sometimes it was so difficult when everyone else had that hard, hurt look at the corners of their eyes that meant they didn’t quite know how to carry on: the men at the dairy, Pyrrha, Palamedes, the nice lady teacher at school, Kevin.

When she was 90 percent asleep, she heard the door very quietly unlatch and close. Then she counted, and at the end of five counts there was Pyrrha at the door saying, “Ah, my darling hearts, my sleeping babes, Daddy’s own treasures,” and Camilla saying without opening her eyes, “Go to bed. I just got her to sleep.”

Nona fell asleep and was happy.

JOHN 5:20

IN THE DREAM, she said, “But that’s it? They shut you down—it was over?”

They were standing at the top of a hill now. She couldn’t remember moving. At the bottom of the hill there was a great swept-out plain, as though somebody had cupped their hand over the landscape and scraped everything to one side. Like filth off a table. It was clean to their left, and to their right, where the invisible hand had stopped, was a huge confusion of rubble and metal and foliage—trees and structures; stones and metal.

He sat down on a patch of brown grass and laughed a little, and said, “Beloved, it wouldn’t be over—it wouldn’t begin—for a year.”

He said: It was the thin end of the wedge. He said that official paperwork claimed they’d decided to pull back and think things through again, but he’d always known they’d reinvested in something else, he just didn’t know what. He said when the leak happened everyone suddenly knew everything, their project was all over the news, everyone had a fucking opinion. Then it suddenly dawned on the general public that this was the next move—we really were in the endgame, you weren’t going to last the distance—and everyone started to panic. The economy tanked. It hadn’t been in great shape to begin with.

A— was panicking because our kill-fee money was suddenly worth nothing and what if the banks crashed and that nothing went too? C— was panicking because with the project over she was getting recalled to England and didn’t want to go, she’d got N— and didn’t want to leave her, refused to admit they were dating even though we all knew. M— was panicking because we had a health board and someone from Energy coming to talk about shutdown and what the hell were we going to do with all the dead bodies we’d collected to test on?

He said, It was the last one that was getting to me. I knew all those bodies by name. Funny to say, but they were my mates, you know? I’d worked on them for such a long time, and they’d given us so much, and now they were going to get dumped in some concrete skip because after what we’d done to them they couldn’t be cremated or buried safely. I hated that.

I didn’t have to worry about the public or the media—we had a pet cop, P—. She’d made detective by that point; was going on to big things in the

MoD. Knew G— from way back, and G— and I were both hometown boys, so P— kept the heat down for us. We got a lot of attention at first because they wanted someone to blame, wanted to rubberneck, wanted to write up think pieces about it. Wanted to know who we were. M— and A— could've walked into new jobs in a heartbeat but I was irradiated, I'd never work in the industry again. I sure as hell wouldn't be allowed to work on anything else to do with you. I told M— and A— to go and that I'd shut up shop, but they wouldn't leave me. None of them left me.

He said: It was such pandemonium. I mean, the worst was yet to come, but it was like the crisis had been announced all over again. Like you'd sprung this on us out of nowhere, like you'd never said you were sick. We went through the same old shitty questions of what to do. What about the Mars installation, what about the fusion batteries? We've still only got room for five million tops up there, guys, and we haven't worked out how to feed them either. What about the Kuiper platform, what about Uranus, what about the shell we're building there? And it's like, we knew that was going to be slow twenty years ago, before we knew we were fucked. The only way out was to dump the population on an exoplanet. The cryo cans would have let us get everyone to Tau Ceti in my lifetime. Then we could work backward from there. It was about giving you breathing room, you know? I knew I wouldn't live to see you get well, but I wanted to stop you hurting.

He said: I wasn't panicking with the rest of them. I know I should've been. But I wasn't. I kept working on the plan even without backing. Kept refining the canister mixture. It was like I knew more every day about how it should work, what the little niggles were. I was having six breakthroughs a day. They'd all expected me to go nuts. A— kept saying, Are you sleeping, are you okay, are you taking any Class As, you know you can tell me. But I wasn't taking anything. I was sleeping like a baby. I was looking at those guys on the slab and something in me was like, I know you, I know this.

He said, Told M— that. Huge mistake. She was like, *Oh my God, you're drinking, aren't you. You're on amphetamines. You are on coke. You are on amphetamines and coke.* I was all, *Yeah ... Coke Zero.* She didn't laugh. I laughed.

He said, I guess I've always thought any pun was automatically funny.

After a while he said, Problem was the electricity guys were all, look, we sympathise but we cannot keep diverting three percent of the country's

electricity to your vats. He was a nice guy. The health board man was a dickhead though. Kept saying we had to dispose of the bodies on site, had to do it now, could we liquefy, could we put the fluid in a concrete chamber and bury it. You would've fucking loved that. I was like piss off, those are our friends, we need to treat them with respect. I mean ... I guess it was me saying stuff like that, which was worrying A—. G— kept saying I was fine, but he was the voice in the wilderness. G— always thought anything I did or said was fine. Not necessarily right, but fine.

And then out of nowhere they said, No more prep. We're shutting you guys down tonight, lights off. And we knew that out of the cans the bodies would degrade immediately. We only had the demo cans; the mass-produced ones were made in a Five Eyes factory in Shenzhen. No question of getting any of the corpses that far. I had to let them go. I went around to everyone, talking to my favourites—I know it was weird having favourites, but let's bloody face it, I'd gone weird—not even saying goodbye, just saying it'll be fine, hang on for me, kia kaha, kia māia. C— made appeal after appeal after appeal. No dice. They shut down our power to the vats one night, one minute after six. We were all there, waiting, when they turned them off.

He fell silent, and she prompted—“What happened, Lord?”

He smiled out over the hillside, over the flat plains and the twisted rubbish, a strange fleeting thing with teeth.

“Most of the bodies got the melt, like we thought they would,” he said. “Damaged beyond repair. Their brains liquefied almost immediately. But, Harrow ... all the ones I touched, all the ones I loved ... they stayed incorrupti

DAY TWO

MUSH FOR BREAKFAST—HONESTY'S JOB GOES TERRIBLY WRONG—
THE CITY HAS A WORSE DAY—CAMILLA-AND-PALAMEDES—“KEEP
HER HOME TONIGHT”—FOUR DAYS UNTIL THE TOMB OPENS.



7

NONA'S DREAM CUT OFF ABRUPTLY. Something wet and heavy and awful had been dropped on her from above, right on her face, splattering drops everywhere. She squealed so loudly that someone above them stamped on the floor, at which point she had to stop squealing. Camilla was inflexible: she had pressed the button, and she had said, "Start."

Nona closed her eyes so hard that she could see bright lights at the fronts, little lightning patterns.

"It's the sitting part. My feet are in the nice water, the safe water. The water's in my boots. My socks are full of it. I'm talking to her but I can't see her face. I tried to, Cam, but it's what always happens, I don't manage to look at it, it just doesn't work."

"That's fine. Keep going."

"We have a talk."

"What do you talk about?"

"I don't know. I can't really understand. I hear the words. Sometimes I open my mouth and words come out and I know I'm talking."

"Sensations? What are you touching?"

"I'm touching her hands. She's touching my hands. But in the dream it's always *my* hands, remember, Cam, I'm touching my own hands but they're not mine."

The pencil scribbled furiously.

"Okay. I know how it is. Keep going."

"There's eyes all around us, red eyes. In the darkness. I remember this time, they're red."

"Do you have any thoughts?"

"Yes," said Nona. "I'm hungry. In the dream. Really hungry."

The pencil stilled.

“You’re hungry?”

“I’m *so* hungry,” said Nona.

The pencil didn’t move. Nona realised Camilla must have been waiting for her, must have been disappointed, so she added in tones of slight injury: “I probably would have remembered more, except then a wet cloth falls on my face and I go ‘Ahhh’ so loudly that the militia person above us stomps, so Pyrrha’s probably going to get another rude letter about us, so really I think the wet cloth on my face isn’t a good idea and can you change the alarm?”

“Well, you didn’t wake up,” said Camilla. “Anything else? Anything else at all?”

“Nothing.”

The record button got pushed down with its big bright *clack*. Nona, still rubbing her face where the sponge had hit it, panicked herself out of her clothes. Her arms and legs seemed even more unwilling to move in the same direction than normal, which meant she probably didn’t even look like a worm with problems but more like a spider who was about to go terminal. She didn’t like the T-shirt waiting for her, even though she had been the one to lay it out. It depicted a cheeseburger with little legs. The tinies liked it, but today she found it juvenile and unprofessional, not the kind of thing for a Teacher’s Aide at all. Camilla shone the little light at the end of the clipboard on her so that she could do up the button on her trousers and then the cinch, and Nona spent some time mopping her wet fringe.

“Sorry I gave you a fright,” said Camilla. “With the sponge. I didn’t mean to.”

All Nona’s resentment melted away.

“No, I’m sorry I didn’t get up,” she said, contrite. “If you drop a sponge on me tomorrow I promise I won’t scream about it.”

“I won’t do the sponge again. Failed experiment.”

The pencil worked away at the paper. Nona patted her hair down to make sure that the braids were still tight, that nothing was coming out, and when she stood up and peered at herself in the mirror comforted herself on that part: her hair still looked great, at least. There were dark circles under her eyes, and she rubbed them with her thumbs.

“Nona, when you’re looking at your hands...”

That startled her. Camilla rarely asked anything after Nona had recited her dream.

“Yes?”

“Who do they feel like they belong to? Do you like them?”

Nona chortled. “Not one bit.” Nona hated having hands.

But Camilla didn’t ask for any reason why; she just squinted a little as though she was trying to figure out what she could make for dinner out of a limited number of ingredients, and said, “Sure. Thank you.”

“Was that a clue? Are we any closer? Do you know who I am yet?”

“No.”

“That’s okay. I love you. Tell Palamedes I love him too, don’t forget,” said Nona, and, very pleased with herself, went off to brush her teeth and eat her breakfast without even being told; that session had been nice and short.

She was so early that Pyrrha hadn’t even started cooking breakfast yet; or maybe Pyrrha wasn’t going to cook at all because she hadn’t got out the little beaker to fill up the heat ring, and she *was* getting out a big covered dish from the refrigerator.

Pyrrha emerged from the fridge and said, “Cold mush all right? I covered it with fruit juice last night. Threw a handful of dried sultanas in there too, so go hunting.”

“Better than eggs,” decided Nona. “How was work?”

“Excellent. Two of my guys got in a fight because someone said the fighting at Prithibi had been tougher than the fighting at Antioch. Had to peel them off each other. Ear-biting stuff. Here—take some water, it’s going to be a scorcher today.”

Nona took the water from Pyrrha’s brown, work-chapped hand and even sipped it. It was blisteringly cold.

“Silly thing to fight about.”

“Absolutely, but there’ll be more of that before the end,” said Pyrrha. “They would have just yelled at each other three months ago. Now they’d happily kill each other over who spilt whose beer. There’s more dead bodies in the streets now than there were at the first barracks massacre. You see them lying around, dead, not of exposure either … just dead. Creeps me out. How is it at school?”

“None of *my* friends want to kill each other,” said Nona. Then she amended: “I mean, they say it all the time, but they don’t really. None of the

little kids have bit each other in weeks, and when they argue too much Hot Sauce says, *Quiet*, and they're quiet."

"Hot Sauce is a girl with a future, so long as she gets a new name."

"Honesty says there's a really special and wonderful reason behind her name and I should ask her sometime," said Nona, trying to select the smallest possible bowl to have mush spooned into. Tiniest one for her, middlest one for Pyrrha, biggest one for Camilla and Palamedes. Then she remembered last night.

"Pyrrha—why does We Suffer hate you?"

"Because I remind her that her God was just a human being who could get tired and fuck up," said Pyrrha instantly. That was the wonderful thing about Pyrrha: she didn't waste time saying things like "What made you think of that?" or "Why?" She went ahead and answered. In a way though, it was also a bad thing about Pyrrha, because she lied and told the truth at exactly equal top speeds. "I like to think she doesn't hate me so much anymore ... now that she's seen my famous charm, that is. Now she probably says to herself, 'Of course, how could anyone have resisted it?' Because I'm charming, Nona, that's what I am."

"If you're that charming," said Nona, "how come you're single?"

Pyrrha struck an attitude, with a spoon over her forehead, that looked much too melodramatic for her wolfish, ribby body.

"I've got a broken heart and I'll never love again."

But even though Pyrrha was being ridiculous, Nona thought that she was saying it more truthfully than she wanted to—that if Nona looked at the way the red-brown eyes crinkled at the ends, Pyrrha really *was* brokenhearted somehow; which made complete sense, if she thought about it. Pyrrha had used to be like Camilla and Palamedes and now her equivalent of Palamedes was gone—really dead—killed by a terrible monster that nobody would describe to her. It seemed impossible to think of Camilla and Palamedes being apart. Of course they *were* apart, separated forever by a matter of minutes; but Nona knew they talked to each other in pages of letters and letters and letters. Nona had seen the stacks. Camilla didn't lock them up because Nona couldn't read and when she said to Pyrrha, *Are you going to read my correspondence?* Pyrrha said, *Not unless I need to induce vomiting.*

Nona was pushing mush around with the spoon when Camilla came in, rolling down the rolled-up cuffs of her shirt, and said: "Oh, God, we're on

baby food,” which of course meant it wasn’t Camilla at all.

“Delicious num-nums for baby,” said Pyrrha. “Anyway, it’s this or beans and dried fish flakes.”

“I thought you were bringing home groceries last night.”

“I’m on half pay until they find someone to foot the drill bill,” said Pyrrha.

“Yes, but what happened to that half?”

Pyrrha spooned the softened mush into the big-size bowl and handed it to Palamedes. “You’re going to make someone a really irritating wife one day, Sextus,” she said pleasantly.

“Dve, if I thought you were drinking all of our money away I would sleep a peaceful and easy sleep.” Palamedes brandished the spoon in her direction. “Who, and whyfor, did you bribe?”

“Some guys. Site C,” said Pyrrha succinctly.

“For God’s sake, Pyrrha, if it’s that hard to access I’ll swap you Site B, Cam and I have ways and means of accessing—”

“I would pay any amount of money to stop you taking that risk you take,” said Pyrrha, digging a spoon into her mush and placing it squarely in her mouth. “Mmm, mmm. It’s so swallowable.”

“Pyrrha,” said Palamedes, “we only do it when we have to, and we’d do *anything* for a clue.”

Pyrrha dropped her voice very low.

“Who gives a shit about clues? It’s a thalergetic fuckfest you’re subjecting that cerebral cortex to, is what it is. Every time you overlap, son, you’re subjecting her thalamus to appalling stress—”

“I greenlight it every time, I thoroughly scan her for—”

“You should be draining and replacing her fucking brain fluid,” said Pyrrha. “When Gideon and I designed that trial, I used to crack his skull and sieve it myself, just as a control variable. It’s aggregative. I doubt you’re testing her white blood cell count either. The only other people I put through that damn trial were Mercy and Cris, because only Cris didn’t mind being trepanned on the regular. Fucking around with *souls* is the problem, Sextus … you can’t ever get the full data on souls.”

Palamedes ate a spoonful of mush very deliberately and thoughtfully.

“So you think I trust myself too much,” he said.

Pyrrha said, “I think that you can’t be your own checks and balances, and you shouldn’t try.”

“Sometimes you remind me of my mother,” he said.

“A woman I’d kill to meet,” said Pyrrha.

“Let’s hope you get the chance,” said Palamedes. “Then again...”

Nona teased a soft, swollen sultana to the top and mulched it between her teeth, trying to eat it very delicately. The mush wasn’t bad, only too sweet and a little gritty, but she always had to decide which bits of it she could eat without either bringing it back up or anyone else working out what she was doing. She said, “Are you two fighting now because everyone else in the city is fighting?”

Both Pyrrha and Palamedes looked a little hunted and guilty.

“Don’t get too cute to live, *kiddie*,” said Pyrrha, but after all she had said *kiddie*, and given one of her plaits a twitch. “We’re stressed, that’s all. Eat your mush ... God, this stuff’s awful.”

Funnily enough, Nona didn’t mind it too much; it was so different from normal food that it was easy to swallow as much as she possibly could without thinking about it, which got her cheap praise from Pyrrha and Palamedes both. Palamedes ate his with a mechanical fury—“Can’t starve Cam,” he said—and then once he had just about finished with the bowl his timer beeped and he said, “Thank God! I did it,” and then there was Camilla. Camilla looked at Nona and said, “Update?”

“Palamedes hates mush,” said Nona.

“We had mush?” Camilla looked down at her plate, and then looked up at Pyrrha, who had reserved all of her sultanas for last and was spooning them into her mouth. She said, “What happened to the food money?”

“I’m not fighting over this twice,” said Pyrrha.

After that there was still lots of time before school, so they did one of Nona’s favourite things. Nona got to stand on Pyrrha’s feet as Pyrrha and Camilla both lay down and did their morning crunches, their sit-ups, and their stretches, with Pyrrha helping Camilla to stretch both her legs to the point where Nona was afraid she would go *snap*—and then they ruthlessly stretched out Nona too, making her touch her toes, making her stretch out on one leg, stretching *her* out too until she *did* hear a lot of little things go *snap* and felt brief, bright sizzles of pain. “Got to keep your muscle up,” said Pyrrha, “this is brute-forcing it.” At the end she got her back and her calves rubbed, which was the best part. She felt breathless and sparkling by the time they started downstairs, more tired than she dared admit, but by the

time they hit the street and wandered past the big steaming vents with the rest of the crowds Nona felt better.

They went down the street all the way and didn't take any turns until Pyrrha said at the park gates, "Too busy. Let's go around," and so Nona took Pyrrha's hand and they went around. They turned left at the dogleg around the park, past all of the braver stall owners and merchants setting up their wares, smoking cigarettes, setting down long untidy cables attached to exhaust fans to blow smoke away from their shoppers. Nona hung back a little on Pyrrha's arm to see all of the rows of thin synthetic shirts and plastic-coated boots until Pyrrha said, "What d'you want from the cheap-jacks, No-No?"

"Oh, nothing—except it *is* my six-monther soon," she reminded Pyrrha.

Camilla said, "You can get a present once it's been a year."

Nona was alarmed; if she didn't get a present *now* there was a good chance she would not get to have one later.

But Pyrrha said, "God, you think she's ever gotten presents? I visited her hometown back before Anastasia got settled, and it was grim as fuck *then*. Just spooky caves all the way down..."

This interested Nona, except Cam said sharply, "Don't lead," and Pyrrha said, "No leading, ma'am, I understand. What do you want for a gift, Nona?"

Nona seethed in a welter of greed.

"I want a pack of coloured rubber bands to tie my hair up with so that you can put one colour on one braid and another colour on another, like Beautiful Ruby has."

Pyrrha said, "I said a *present*, Nona, something that costs something."

Nona was puzzled. "That's why I picked it, it's cheap so you can probably get it even if you have to pay the demo crew half your money. You don't earn much in the first place."

"Domestic life," said Pyrrha to Camilla, over Nona's head, "is immensely depressing and has a lowering effect on the ego."

"Sometimes," said Camilla unexpectedly.

Once they went down two streets and back to where the park cut-through usually led them, Pyrrha kissed the top of Nona's head and said, "Be good," and to Camilla said, "I'll be home for dinner, honey, so don't go out with your girls and get your nails did."

"Try to bring home something useful this time," said Camilla.

Nona felt a pang to see her go, sauntering off with her lunchbox and her helmet and her spare jacket, whistling a tune like she was any other worker. Then Nona was turning right with Camilla, hustling through an alley, past the building that now had the hole in it because of the very big gun. There was only one change, in that Camilla picked a different road to go down because she spotted a pair of legs sticking out underneath a parked car and decided to go a different way, and then Camilla and Nona got buzzed into the school building by the nice lady teacher and stood in the vestibule shaking their boots. Nona was just in time; the move around the park meant she wasn't early at all. Cam stopped before Nona went to mount the stairs.

"I'll come to pick you up at the usual time," said Cam.

Nona said, "Aren't you coming up?"

"Not this morning." Then Camilla was gone.

Which was a little puzzling; but as Nona stood in the cloakroom and unbuttoned her sand jacket and unrolled the sleeves, her attention was caught by the voices of her friends already in the classroom, and that of the nice lady teacher. When she peeked in, the nice lady teacher was leaning over Honesty and applying a cloth to one side of his face, with Kevin and Born in the Morning gathered around. A cluster of tinies who had come early were watching the proceedings in fascination

"Hi, Nona!" Honesty bawled, in some agitation, when he saw her.
"Miss, let Nona do it—Miss, this is hurting my dignity."

The nice lady teacher was plainly stressed. She looked at Nona with relief and said, "Nona, could you come and hold this? I don't trust Honesty to keep it still."

"It's too fucking cold is why," said Honesty.

"Language, thank you," said the teacher coolly.

"Sorry, miss," said Honesty, "only it *is* so f—f—it's cold as hell is what it is."

The teacher removed the cloth as Nona approached, fascinated. Kevin said, "Honesty's face smashed in," and Born in the Morning hastily said, "It's nothing, it's just a black eye."

But *what* a black eye! Honesty's whole eyeball was alarmingly bloodred and the bit around the eye was already turning startling colours, red and purple and blue. Nona was glad enough to take the cold, tingly-smelling cloth and put it back over the whole mess. Honesty whined, "For God's sake," but the teacher said—"Hold it there until the bell goes. Born in the

Morning, wipe the whiteboard, please. The rest of you, give Honesty some space immediately. Books out—things ready—then down on the mat waiting for the bell.”

Awestruck, Nona kept peeking at the eye, then remembering she was a Teacher’s Aide and reapplying the cloth hastily. Honesty asked, “What *is* that stuff?”

“I don’t know—medicine probably,” said Nona. “Honesty, *what happened?*”

“You should see the other guy,” said Honesty, very loudly. Then he said, in lowered tones, “Shut up, Nona. Haven’t you seen a black eye before?”

“Not really,” said Nona honestly. Whenever Pyrrha got hit hard in the face it was better in seconds, and neither Camilla nor Palamedes ever got hit hard in the face, and of course *she’d* never gotten any kind of black eye she could see. She said, “It looks awful—your eye’s all bloody and your cheek’s huge.”

Honesty puffed up at this.

“I guess it’s hideous.”

There was no sign of Hot Sauce, not until the Angel came in with her tie on squiff and her shirt buttons all done up into the wrong holes, still wearing the same trousers that she had been wearing yesterday. She wasn’t late today, but she looked more tired and lined than she had the day before. Somehow she even looked shorter, more hunched and defeated, but she rallied magnificently when she saw Honesty. She paused in front of him and Nona and said, “Go on, let me have a look at it.”

Nona peeled away the cloth to reveal the damage. “Nasty!” said the Angel appreciatively.

“Think I’ll get a scar?” said Honesty.

“No, it just looks disgusting,” said the Angel, looking him over. She reached over to probe gently at one of the swollen bits as Honesty flinched. “It’s going to hurt like fury, though.”

The main teacher came over with a relieved expression, having seen off a parent.

“Oh, thank goodness you’re here. I wouldn’t have the first clue what to do. Does he need to go to the clinic?”

“No, nothing’s detached or broken, as far as I can tell,” said the Angel, draping the cold cloth back on his face. “Once he’s had ten minutes with

that we'll get him an icepack wrapped in a towel. What in living memory hit you, Honesty? This wasn't a fist."

But Honesty glared at her truculently out of his other eye.

"How do *you* know? You weren't there. It might've been a fist. Might've been two."

"Honesty, she's a doctor," said the nice lady teacher.

"Well," said the Angel, straightening her lapels in a funny way, "I am *adjacent* to being a doctor, and I'm getting a good crash course in, er, triage. Anyway, Honesty, if you don't want to talk about it that's your lookout. I don't like violent stories myself."

"I'm not squealing to anyone. I'm not Kevin," said Honesty.

"Sure. Nobody here minds. Be good for Nona, she's doing you a favour."

The nice lady teacher looked as though she *did* mind, but she followed along in the Angel's wake, chatting inconsequentially about traffic, which left Nona to hold the damp cloth to Honesty's eye and shield him from goggle-eyed tinies until the bell was rung to start the school day. The Angel got him an ice pack wrapped in a staffroom dish towel and he seemed quite glad to hold it to his face, really.

Hot Sauce had trailed in behind the Angel at a suitable and careless distance. She passed by her own seat and ousted a tiny who sat near the window, and when questioned about it the tiny peeped up that they had *wanted* to swap with Hot Sauce anyway, so all the main teacher could say was that they would swap back please after the break. Nona rather doubted whether this would happen, and in any case it was a silly idea to pit your will against Hot Sauce's. Hot Sauce was always going to win and the whole class knew it.

This was illustrated at break. All of the gang were inclined to fawn over Honesty with his wound—Nona's fruit had been promised to Born in the Morning but Born in the Morning didn't even raise an issue when half that portion got slid along to Honesty—and most of the class had clustered around too, out of their seats when they weren't meant to be, asking him if his eye was going to fall out. Hot Sauce told them, "Scatter," and they scattered.

Then she said—

"Who did this to you?"

“You don’t have to go apeshit, Hot Sauce,” Honesty said sulkily. “I don’t want to talk about it. I *can’t* talk about it. I promised.”

Hot Sauce sat down on the cushion in front of him. She waited, resting her elbows on her knees and her hands in her lap, and she stared with her eyes open, not blinking, not watering. She did the thing she only did every so often, and only when they all begged her to—made her eyes go very wide and the corners very white. Because the stiff greyish-roseish ripples of her burns didn’t move when the other bits of her did, this made her suddenly lopsided and terrible with waiting. Born in the Morning and Beautiful Ruby and Nona all stopped eating and got very quiet. The only one who kept eating in perfect serenity was Kevin.

Honesty swallowed and said, “Come off it, boss.”

Hot Sauce said, “You keeping secrets from me, Honesty?”

Honesty shrivelled. “Nah.”

“Okay,” said Hot Sauce.

Even shrivelled, Honesty still wavered, which Nona found impressive.

“Boss—maybe not in front of, you know, the kids—”

“We don’t have secrets from each other,” said Hot Sauce.

Honesty swallowed again. He bent his head toward the rest of them and stared at the floor. At this cue they all put their heads together, even Nona, despite the fact that Camilla had said not to do that if at all possible because of nits.

Honesty dropped his voice so low that they almost couldn’t hear it. Then he said what had hit him. Nona, who was good at hearing whispers, didn’t have to strain to make it out, but Hot Sauce said, “Say that again,” probably because she didn’t believe it.

This made Honesty go red, and he hissed—“A *streetlight*. I’m not fucking kidding you here.”

Born in the Morning’s voice was shrill with astonishment. “My man, how’d you let a *streetlight* hit you?”

“Keep it quiet,” Honesty said, and Kevin said, “It fell on you.”

“No, I ran into it with my face, so hard I fell on my ass and blacked out and when I woke up some wino who felt sorry for me had dragged me into their alley, so that’s how low I fell, I got babied by a tramp,” said Honesty. Then he said more reflectively, “Probably saved my life though. They were good tramps. Didn’t understand what the fuck they were saying. They kept checking my eyes and my mouth and miming going ‘Ahhh’ and fucking

biting at the air. Wonder if they were on something new, I gotta know for market economics.”

Honesty was talking very fast. When he had taken a couple of breaths and put a piece of fruit in his mouth for comfort—it was tiny sprays of green berries, the slightly soggy kind you had to suck off the stems—he said, “Anyway, I was out of my fucking mind scared.”

Hot Sauce said, “The job?”

“Yeah.” Honesty fidgeted with the empty spray and picked between one of his teeth with it, which seemed to give him courage. “It was a fucked-up job. I’m not doing odd jobs with those guys anymore. Well … can’t anymore even if I wanted to, come to think of it.”

Now Hot Sauce was very quiet and gentle when she said—

“Tell what happened.”

Honesty took another spray to fortify himself. It was one of Beautiful Ruby’s sprays, but Beautiful Ruby didn’t even complain.

“I thought the job was to go down into the tunnels and get the stuff off the pipes, but it was van guys,” said Honesty, very fast. “I said no sir, not if we’re knocking off a gun vehicle, but they said no, they were gonna grapple for air-con units off the tops of megatrucks—you know, circuit boards and coolant and shit. They said the trucks don’t even notice until the next pit stop if you do it right, the driver just thinks a gasket’s blown or something. I dunno, one of the old chicks explained it, but I didn’t get it. And I wasn’t gonna be grappling, I was gonna be put in one of the overheads holding out the net so the grapplers could get back up. I don’t get sick around heights.”

He suckled one of the sprays completely free of berries and chewed them. This close up there was a little bit of saliva so everyone went, “Ugh,” and leant back, but then they leant back in.

Honesty said, even more quickly now, “It was a neat job, right? They drop on the van from the top of the tunnel, they unscrew the unit, then down the end of the street we’re there with the net and we scoop up the guy *and* the unit. The timing’s sweet as hell.”

He looked at Hot Sauce, implacable and opposite, and he swallowed again and said, “Worked fine first two times. Then they were like, let’s do a third, let’s do a third, and their guy in charge was like, well we don’t have a timetable but okay, we’ll get into position and if something comes along we’ll do one last run. So the guy gets in position and so do we…”

He stopped.

“Keep going,” said Born in the Morning urgently. The rest of them shushed him, Hot Sauce included, and even Kevin. Honesty didn’t join in. His eyes only met Hot Sauce’s eyes now.

“Then we heard the noise,” whispered Honesty. “I thought it was an earthquake, I—I just about pissed myself. Just about. I saw them go beneath me—the heat nearly fuckin’ roasted me and the other guy, but we’d skinned up and I always slop extra thermal, like you tell me, I’m the good boy, I burn like fish in a rowboat, don’t I. We had on masks so we didn’t choke, even me, they’re professionals, but—but the guy had fuckin’ *dropped* for them. I don’t know what the fuck he was thinking, why did he drop? Why did he drop for *that*? Fucking nuts man, fucking nutter, just braindead, just out of his ears.”

This was all pretty incoherent and Nona didn’t quite follow it, and Honesty’s voice had risen in a kind of strangled way and broken a little too and nobody had even made fun of that either. Then Hot Sauce reached out and put her hand quietly and firmly on Honesty’s shoulder, and that calmed him down, but he was sweating, he was warm. He smelled like overheated animal.

“So we pick him up when he beeps us. We get the net out,” Honesty said, more slowly, more methodically. “We get him up and he hasn’t even got shit. He’s like, go. Go. Lead guy’s like, get out, get back to the car. So we climb up the pipes and we get out to the vehicle and we stash everything else and I get in. I’m in the car with the guy, and his boss is there over the radio, and this guy—this guy’s fuckin’ crying. He’s a grown man. He’s all like, I fucked up, I fucked up, and the boss is like, who did we hit, and he’s like, I dunno, and then he tells us this fucked-up story—says he dropped onto the back and it was real sophisticated, he climbed down into the vent pipes to get the unit, pay dirt he said, real good stuff, but then he … he pulled up a vent, and he saw down into the cargo trawler, and he said he saw…”

Honesty broke off. A shiver ran down Nona’s spine. Nobody asked him to continue.

“People with no eyes,” said Honesty.

Born in the Morning said unsteadily, “He was bullshitting you.”

Honesty ignored him. He said, “Said the eyes was all white. But he said he was moving quietly, real quietly, and these guys—they’re all just sitting around—they all look up … they all look at him … with these white-out

eyes ... they all look up *at the same time*. They look at him. He kept saying that," he said suddenly, breaking off. He said, "Kept saying, they saw me, they saw me, oh my God."

His voice took on a more normal cast and he said, "Then he said that someone in the van behind started taking potshots at him so he called for pickup. The boss was all, calm down, calm down. But then ... then the driver said we were being followed ... and the guy goes crazy sobbing and apologising, saying he fucked up, he got us in trouble, and then one of the old chicks is like, get the kid out, and ... and they stop the car and there's another two big trucks pulling up behind us, militia trucks with guys, and..."

For a moment Honesty couldn't talk. They all sat there together and breathed as one, Nona matching her breath to Hot Sauce matching her breath to Honesty and Beautiful Ruby and Born in the Morning and even Kevin, all in one tight and sweating circle.

Then in a completely normal and even brassy voice, Honesty said, "Then I ran like fuck and I bonked my head on a pole so bad I probably got brain damage, so you have to all be very nice to me."

The whole group absorbed this. Nona reached down for one of the empty sprays and chewed at the ends, wanting *something* to chew on, if not to eat, liking the way the tough fibrous stem felt between her teeth.

Then Born in the Morning said, "You just said like forty-two swears."

"Oh my God, man, shut up," said Honesty.

"It's not fair if I swear and get in trouble with Nona and Honesty doesn't," said Born in the Morning.

"Shut up, Born in the Morning," said Kevin.

And because Kevin never told anyone to shut up, Born in the Morning shut up. But that was okay—that broke the atmosphere. Hot Sauce kept her hand on Honesty's shoulder and said, "You think they're following you?" and Honesty said, "Nah. Nah," and then: "I'm your boy, right, Hot Sauce? I'm your best boy?"

"Yes," said Hot Sauce gently, "you're my boy. I'll take care of you."

Then there was the main teacher standing over them, and they looked up guiltily from their huddle, but she was only smiling at them in the way teachers did when they thought they knew what was going on and didn't really.

“Group meeting, is it?” she said, kindly. “Honesty, here’s one of the shelter pamphlets, okay?”

Honesty was so affrighted that he just said, “Yes, miss, thank you, miss,” and took it.

“Don’t worry about a thing,” she said. “Clean up, everyone, it’s nearly class time. Nona, could you ring the bell? Then you’d better leash up Noodle. I want to mark some books.”

Nona jumped up immediately. “Yes, of course.”

But she didn’t go *right* away. She went back down into a crouch as the rest of them picked up fragments of stem and crushed berry from the floor—not so many crushed berries, they weren’t stupid—and she volunteered, “I’ll take care of you too, Honesty.”

“Who wants you to take care of me?” said Honesty cheerfully, getting to his feet. “You’re dumb as a box of hair, Nona.”

Nona was indignant, but Hot Sauce said, “How many vehicles?”

“I dunno,” said Honesty. “I wasn’t counting the whole way and the guy picked the middle one, middle-ish. Over ten. Could’ve been twenty. Megatrucks, all of ’em. I tell you what,” he said, and he brushed his trousers off, and he said heavily: “I know what it was. I hang out with you lot. I know the deal. Nobody ever asks poor old Honesty … Honesty could’ve told him not to try and knock off the goddamned Convoy.”



8

HOT SAUCE APPROACHED NONA before the Hour of Science and said, “You’re still on lookout.”

What with all the fuss about Honesty it had completely escaped Nona’s mind that someone was watching, or that Hot Sauce was investigating. But that was Hot Sauce for you; Hot Sauce never forgot.

Nona said, keeping a weather eye on the Angel, chatting to some of the smaller kids as she got out a bucket of ice cubes and socks (they were finishing off a unit on temperature): “She still *looks* tired.”

“Yes.”

“I should make her a coffee,” Nona said decisively. “I’m a Teacher’s Aide, I need to look after the teachers too.” And: “Did you know she was a doctor?”

“Yes,” said Hot Sauce, without explaining. And: “When you’re out there today, I want you to pretend to do something.”

“Okay. What?”

“I want you to pretend you’ve got a radio,” said Hot Sauce, “and you’re making a call.”

As Nona had never used a radio nor made a call in her life, she said dubiously, “It’s not going to be very good. There’s nothing out there shaped like a radio so it’ll have to be a pretend radio, and I’m not like Honesty, I can’t do mime or anything.”

Hot Sauce tapped her foot impatiently, her gaze still outside the window for some reason.

“Pretend it’s small. Hand sized.”

“What do I say?”

“Make something up. But hide your mouth.”

When the Angel approached with Noodle’s leash in one hand and what looked to be six weird little cups in the other, she said, “Don’t stay out in the sunshine any more than you have to. He’ll want to walk, so can you put his pattens on? My old man doesn’t need burns on his feet. Noodle’s used to the shoes, but tell him to stop if you see him chew his feet and he’ll stop. I’d keep him inside, except we’ll be using the hair dryer today and he always cringes at the sound. Thanks, Nona, you are my hero. Hot Sauce, can you set up the stations?”

Nona left the Hour of Science behind her and went down the stairs. She checked to make sure the light above the door was still red, which was one of her jobs, as the nice lady teacher always warned her that people would try to come in if the door was unlocked, and they probably wouldn’t be dangerous but if they had *another* teaching building get taken over by squatters she simply had no idea where they’d go after that. Then Nona tried to put the shoes on Noodle. It was by far the most difficult thing she had ever attempted. It would have been easier to do the weird bone things that Camilla and Palamedes loved her to attempt. Noodle *didn’t* want to have his pattens put on. He kept staring at Nona over his shoulder every time she wrestled a tiny, dirty white foot into a patten—it was like a little sock over a plastic grate—and there were *six* of them, she even had to do the legs he often stuck up or folded in at the middle. At one point, Noodle cunningly wriggled his way out of one shoe using another foot and Nona could have shrieked. She said, “Noodle, how *dare* you?” and he didn’t look guilty at all.

When the pattens were on, he clattered out into the courtyard. He sounded like one and a half horses. He bucketed disconsolately around, smelling things, doing his business, and then drinking from the bowl of chilled water that Nona poured for him. Then he politely clattered away to lie under the big stone seat in the shade, panting.

Nona ambled around the dusty courtyard for a bit herself until she simply felt too hot to live. The heat and the sweat were making her feel faint. She squatted in the shadows close to Noodle’s seat and listened to him breathe, and then she tried to pretend she was taking a very tiny radio out of her pocket. She cupped her hand to one ear, and she walked out into the sunshine, because she loved Hot Sauce and wanted to do it right. The heat made the backs of her knees panic.

“Hello, hello,” she said into her hand. “I am having a conversation with Crown.” Nona remembered that she was meant to be covering her mouth, and did so. She said aloud, “How are you, Crown? Things are fine over here. I wish you were around more. You haven’t come to see me outside of meetings for months and months. I know you said you visited me before, but I was too young and I can’t remember it so it doesn’t really count. Would you like to come to my birthday party on the beach? If I don’t get really mad it’ll probably still be able to happen. You don’t have to bring me a present, but please wear your hair down. Anyway, I love you, so, bye.”

This was as much conversation as she could think up. She pocketed the fake radio and took her hand away from her mouth, then she settled down on the bench in the shade to think. The smoke had cleared and so the air outside wasn’t making her cough, and there were little insects haunting the nearby dead-brown bushes, murmuring busily. There was no bird song, but every so often there was the nice comfortable noise of a car backfiring. Nona put one foot down on the ground to anchor herself, and worked the other foot out of her shoe, and only felt slightly guilty that she was allowed to do such a thing and Noodle wasn’t. It was so hot, and her eyelids felt very heavy, and the stone beneath her was very cool.

JOHN 15:23

HE SAID: ON THE FIRST DAY A— BELIEVED. On the second day so did M— and G—. By the third day everyone believed, because of my eyes.

He coughed wetly and, once he had recovered, said: A girl in my high school once told me I had pretty eyes. I was puffed up over that until I was like thirty. You wouldn't believe how stupid guys get over compliments on our looks, I was vain as. But my eyes weren't anything special—light brown, not even hazel, yellow on a sunny day. The morning after the lights went out they lightened to dark amber, then they went the colour of new lager, and on the third day they were gold.

P— said I looked like a Māori TV Pink Panther. C— said I looked like Edward Cullen from that old *Twilight* movie, if Edward Cullen had the body of a history teacher. A— said I looked cool. He was the only one.

He said, And all around us, those corpses refused to rot.

In the dream, they were hiking up a big hill of brown, sun-blasted grass, crunching like paper beneath their feet. Below them the waters were rising, but they ascended without hurry, unpanicked by that bubbling, churning, brown morass: those stupefying eddies frilled around the edges with trash of all kinds—broken trees and big sheets of steel; bobbing, groaning constructions of tires and frames that he had pointed out as cars. He had spent some time pointing at things that were being claimed by the water, though she felt less that she was being taught their names and more that he was naming them for himself. Someone's Honda. Someone's Mazda. Someone's four-wheel drive. Someone's shed. A Macca's sign. The rain would turn on and off. The clouds were strange, and in the far distance, a twister danced on the neon surface of the sea.

They found a bench to sit on, though they didn't need to catch their breath. It was warm despite the rain, and the air around them was moist and prickly. It made the skin on her ribs sweat. And he said, "There it all goes again. I can't stand it," and for a long time he cried, unashamed.

Once that squall had passed, he said: In the beginning we moved those corpses all over the place ... M— was so frantic to prove something in the science had gone wrong, or right. I think she thought if we'd achieved some scientific breakthrough, I'd get a job again and everything would go back to normal and we'd keep doing cappuccino Tuesdays. We picked two of them —two people, different sexes, different deaths, one got their neck snapped

in a car accident and the other was smoke inhalation. Same age though, for control; they were born twenty days apart. Then we played dolls with those two kids for a week.

He said, They wanted to see if we could make them rot. We left them in the boiler room. Left them in the morgue. Left them outside overnight, exposed, all over dew in the morning. Nothing changed. Their internal temperature stayed regular the whole time. It wouldn't change even with A— and C— holding hair dryers over their damn bodies or us wrapping them in solar blankets and putting them in the sun. Poor C—. You should've seen her heave every time we unwrapped the blanket. She was a good sport about it, but it wasn't in her remit. Contract law doesn't set you up for rolling a couple bodies into a pond.

He said, But she didn't need to worry about it. They didn't change. Not one thing about them changed. They were perfect. All those corpses were perfect.

He said: I'd been sleeping in the facility already. I refused to go home. A— and M— moved in with me, and G— set up outside; he was sleeping in his ute. C— was staying with N—, long days. She left us early in the morning and came back the next day with sausage rolls for breakfast. I didn't realise it at the time but she'd already gone AWOL from the stakeholders. She was doing freelance for us: so translated, she was unemployed. But she was the reason we could even stay in the building. She'd massaged all the contracts and told the cops we needed to be in there to make sure disposal and records were handled properly, which gave us a grace period of a whole month. How we got through that I'll never know. I don't know if we would've got away with it if we hadn't had our pet cop. And if the whole world hadn't been freaking out every time you did something unexpected and people thought you were going to kick the bucket early. Nobody was looking at us back then, and we got lucky. It worked.

He said, more to himself: Fuck, it was a weird time. I wasn't eating much. I only wanted to be with my bodies, like if I took my eyes off them the magic'd stop. I started knowing what room they'd been stashed in even if no one told me. C— said it was psychological clues in their body language, but I wasn't convinced. I could feel them—I could feel everyone in the building—it was like having the lights turned off. You hear all the sounds outside. You hear all the cicadas in the grass, you hear the dogs in

the next town over barking. You hear the moreporks in the trees and the possums skittering over shed roofs. It wasn't that I hadn't been able to hear them before, but I couldn't separate the noises. Like hearing a chord without knowing what notes go into it.

He said, A— was trying so hard to bring me back down to earth, trying to get me to pay attention to the outside world. He'd swapped with M—. She'd stopped freaking out, she didn't ask me where my pills or the drink was anymore. She just took notes, helped with all the trials I wanted to do, squabbled with A—. At least that made me feel normal. That was their usual double act. It was only when they felt the same thing that I knew it was serious.

He said, I just wanted to be in the lab. It felt like I could sit by those two bodies, those two kids, and make time go away. I could sit next to them for six minutes, I could sit next to them for six hours. Just listening. They were my moreporks and possums. I was hearing their bodies in all that silence, all the bacteria that weren't growing ... what wasn't building up in the gut, what wasn't pooling at the joints. They were my silent night. I should have been doing paperwork and closing reports, but I hadn't opened the computer in days. I couldn't stop thinking about their palms, their hands. I touched their hands so often. I'd touched their hands before, but not like this. Even when I wasn't touching them I could feel their skin on my skin, that temperature that wouldn't change. I kept thinking I was touching them when I wasn't. M— said I should probably get tossed in a rubber room, but she wasn't scared I was nuts. She was scared I wasn't.

He said, You know, I can't even remember how it came together now. There was no catalyst, no revelation. I was too far gone for *revelations*. It was like I'd been dozy and now I was waking up. So, my two kids, the guinea pigs, they were U— and T— on their certificates, you know, their old names. I thought about using those but it didn't seem appropriate. They weren't around to say yes or no. I was starting to really care about that. What they would've thought, what they would've wanted. My two kids with their frozen brains and their perfect internal temperatures. There wasn't a place on the poor bastards I hadn't breached with a thermometer, and now I was knocking before I came into their room. Yeah, I was nuts. But I was waking up.

He said, I can't remember how or why I brought M— and A— into the room. I was like, *Hey you two, I want you to meet someone*. I wasn't trying

to be a dick. I think I hadn't slept for two days.

So I brought them into the room with the bodies and I was all, *Let me introduce you to ... Ulysses*. *Let me introduce you to ... Titania*.

He thought about it and added, I better say that it was Titania from *Midsummer*, Shakespeare, but Ulysses was for a dog my nana had when I was a child. I worshipped that dog. He was the bravest dog I'd ever met. Half Chihuahua, half pug. Nan called him Ulysses S. Grunt. Died from eating too much pizza. The dog, I mean. Nan died of pneumonia when I was a teenager.

She said: "But what about the bodies?"

He said, Well. When I said, *Ulysses*, I moved each of his fingers and his thumb into a fist, curled them into the palm. And when I said, *This is Titania*, same thing, I placed each of her fingers and her thumb into a fist.

And I was laughing and laughing like I'd kicked out a chair before someone sat down. Like, good joke. But M— threw up.

"Because, Harrow, I'd done it from the other side of the room."



9

NONA JOLTED AWAKE with a start when she felt a tender slobbering on her ankle. It was Noodle's terrible lickily tongue investigating the bit where the bone of her foot made a bump, which he obviously thought was a friendly gesture. She could have only been asleep for a little while—the sun hadn't moved and the big hot blue shadows of the courtyard were shimmering in the same position they always had—but she startled herself upright anyway, freaking out that she had snored away most of the Hour of Science without taking care of Noodle or even looking for whoever was watching the building. She checked Noodle to make sure his pattens were on, retrieved the bowl and the bottle, and took the dog inside.

She was very relieved to hear the Angel's voice coming through the door and floating down the stairs, explaining why the ice cube in the sock had melted more slowly than the ice cube not in the sock. She sat down on the stairs and began assisting Noodle out of his pattens. Nona had assumed Noodle would be grateful, but he still turned around and showed her the whites of his eyes despite the fact that she was now taking him *out* of the pattens rather than putting them *on*, and he wriggled. The cloakroom door opened and out came Hot Sauce.

"What did you *say*?" she demanded.

Nona was bewildered. "What did I say when?"

"Out in the courtyard."

"Oh—nothing," said Nona, barely able to remember. "I wasn't good at pretending to talk at all. I just pretended I was talking to someone else and I only talked for like ten seconds because I felt silly."

Hot Sauce did not look convinced. "Better come inside early. We've used the hair dryer."

“What happened? When I talked on the radio?”

Hot Sauce hesitated, then said: “The watcher took off.”

“Well, that’s good, isn’t it? Right?”

“I need to investigate.”

“But it’s useful to know, isn’t it?”

But when Hot Sauce shrugged, Nona could tell she thought Nona didn’t understand, knew that Hot Sauce was keeping things back: something she didn’t mind as *much* when Hot Sauce did it but still minded a *little*. It was shitty being able to tell when people were holding back from her. Hot Sauce just said, “Come inside.”

It wasn’t a great end to the school day, and it seemed to jinx everything from there on. Nona, sitting at the back with Noodle, found she couldn’t follow what was happening in the Hour of Science, which culminated in a lot of ice cubes removed from strange places to triumphant shrieks from the crowd. And *then* there was the familiar *pop-pop-pop* from the street, really close, so they had to close all the blinds and the nice lady teacher had to go downstairs to make sure everything was locked up and they did everything sitting down away from shot lines from the window. They’d all done gunfire drill a million times and hardly any of the tinies got scared, even when the dreary siren started up outside. It was more boring and hot than it was terrifying. Even the Angel only seemed annoyed.

“That’s too close for comfort,” she commented. “Probably a one-off.”

But it wasn’t a one-off, it kept happening. They cut off any plenary time and mopped up ice water and the main teacher read to them from a book after a vote. The tinies outvoted everyone to select a book that wasn’t even good, a soppy tale about some children who went to the beach and weren’t eaten by anything. Another sign of the afternoon being cursed, Nona thought dolefully. At least school was nearly over for her.

People’s parents snuck in despite the fact that there was still shooting going on a couple streets away. Some of them said that it had been like that for hours and their child wouldn’t come back for afternoon school, even though both the Angel and the nice lady teacher tried to get them all to stay until it was better. They were still arguing when Camilla came to pick up Nona, and even though the lady teacher’s eyes brightened to see Cam—Nona could see her pamphlet hand twitching—Cam bundled her out of there before she even got a proper goodbye. The last thing she saw was Hot

Sauce sitting by the blinded-up window, thoughtful and still as a statue in the park, only her head was still on of course.

Camilla led Nona by a *very* circuitous way home. They stopped at the street their building was on, and Cam ducked into a bakery and came out with a warm and probably radioactive paper bag of pastries that had been under the bakery light the whole time. When Nona asked how she got the money, Cam said, “Never mind.”

Nona was annoyed.

“You can just *say* you stole some, Cam, I don’t mind.”

“I sold something,” said Camilla.

Light dawned on Nona back home, after she had choked down some of the meat roll. She tried not to complain about it, but did the thing where she drank water until she said, “I’m full,” and Cam said, “Then we’ll wait. You haven’t had any protein today,” and she had to eat it anyway. She peeled off the casing and ate the stuff inside and hated the experience, but at least then it was over. While Cam was cleaning up she checked the secret drawer and found that the cigarettes were all gone.

When Camilla came back in to tack up the blackout curtains, Nona said, “You sold her stash. Pyrrha’s going to freak out.”

“Pyrrha will deal,” said Camilla. “Start stretching.”

Which meant it was time for swords. When Nona said passionately, “I hate swords, you don’t even teach me how to use them,” this just got written down on the clipboard as though even her complaints were only useful for research. Nona felt very bitter about life.

But her bitterness slowly ebbed away, as it always did, and turned into something a little more like misery. Pyrrha was late coming home that evening. It had used to be that after the bones and the swords Nona would spend sultry evenings out at the harbour, to swim if the beach was empty and if there was nobody there to see, or to dig clams and cockles out with a stick if there were people. Walking made her tired, but she could swim in the salt water for hours and never get enough of it. It was comfortable and private. Unfortunately, these days if she said, “Cam, can’t we go swimming?” Cam would say, “Remember what happened the last time,” and won every argument that way. That was because what happened the last time was that Camilla had got sick, and less important, Nona had got shot.

What had happened was that after the bones one day Palamedes said she looked peaky and made her eat crackers and spread until Nona worked herself halfway to a tantrum. In the end Palamedes had to promise her a swim for a whole twenty minutes before she would do anything, eat anything, or agree to anything. It was bad behaviour, but Nona *had* been a whole month younger. Promises made, Palamedes got to go away, saying, “Tell Cam I said it was a water cure,” to which Camilla remarked that Palamedes was an enabler. It didn’t matter to Nona. She had already got her towel and the old shirt she used to swim in—much easier to go naked, but the others had all objected to this, and Cam had said it would make her a sniper target—and her jandals, and then after masks were tied and hats put on they walked to the beach in the low dusk.

That evening they had walked around the long way, which meant it took fully half an hour to get there, but often they walked different routes to throw off anyone who might have gotten interested and tried to follow them. On this walk they ended up spending a little time by the city graveyard. All the concrete tops had been sledged open and the buried coffins had been dug up, piled high, and burned. The smoke still clung to the sides of the buildings and made Nona gag. Pyrrha had told her this was business as usual; Pyrrha said the first thing that happened was all bones got burned, whether they were moving around or not.

By the time they had gotten to the beach Nona was depressed, but it only took her feet being in the salt water to make her happy again. Camilla never came in with her. This was because there were heaps and heaps of jellyfish in the harbour, with their beautiful bodies transparent at the crown and deep indigo at the very tips, and they weren’t at all afraid to come up near to you and brush you. On Nona, this made the place they touched tingle a little, but nothing else. That was why Nona had always swum at dusk, because Cam said the jellyfish sting killed most people within minutes. The water seethed with them because the harbour was closed, and nobody was fixing the barrier nets.

Instead Cam sheltered near the concrete pillars of a jetty out of sight lines with a beat-up paperback book. It had been earlier in the spring, and night had fallen fast. There was no electric light, so she had a little torch. The first time Nona had asked to swim they had let her without cavil: she had barely known how to explain herself, then, but her hunger was so terrible that she had made them all understand. For security, Camilla had

taken handfuls of rocks and sailed each one up into the centre of the lamps that shone down from the pier, with a terrific smash of plastic and the brief snappish yowl of a busted wire; and nobody had come around to fix them since. They wouldn't have had time—the blue light had appeared in the sky soon after.

It had been high tide that night. Nona had gone wading out into the shallows immediately, picking her way over the big pockmarked rocks and the slippery seaweed clumps floating haplessly in the surf, until she was up to her thighs, the shirt billowing around her. Then she plunged into the salt water. She let herself go under and felt the huge, rocking cradle of the waves rolling her forward to the beach, nearly weeping with relief—like going to the bathroom when you were really desperate, or drinking when you were really thirsty, or hearing the door open when you were really lonely. The black water sank right down to the roots of her hair, right through the braids, and made her ears go *pop* as water blocked up the canals. Bubbles rippled across her face as her laugh came out as oxygen. She kicked up to the surface and her hair and her shirt floated all around her in the water, and she bobbed there, in the dark, avoiding the inviting yellow squares of light that the other jetty lamps made on the roiling surface.

Then she had clung to one of the wooden legs of the pier—bubbled all over with barnacles and crusted with salt and plastered with dried-out fans of seaweed—and watched as blue jellyfish moved about her, squirting through the water or drifting there, looking dead, until suddenly they would undulate forward in delicate blue squiggles of movement. She *did* get stung, but the sting only gave her pins and needles in one foot, which was soon over. She pushed off from the pillar again and into a wave, and let the tide carry her forward, slowly, to the rocky shore.

Salt water had always relieved her: salt water made her feel as though, if there was someone in there with her, she would suddenly know the words to tell them everything. The sea was so kind after a hot concrete-smelling day, and she knew the water had runoff in it but it seemed so clean anyway. The sea was a big, grinding, unchangeable machine. The only terrible part was an awful longing to let her head go below the surface, to lose all buoyancy and lie at the bottom like a flat fish. Nona didn't want to die, but she wanted to sit in the water and drowse, which she was forced to admit was the same thing eventually.

That fatal evening she lay with her arms and legs spread out and her middle only a little submerged, shirt plastered flat to her belly and chest. She stared up at the glowing blue circle in the night sky: it crowded out the stars and looked much like an incandescent jellyfish itself, crowning in a black ocean.

Nona had been very happy when she turned around and kicked back toward the jetty and the shore, slipping among the waves and the foam and the floating plastic rings people used to keep bottles together. It felt so easy to be good when you were happy. Nona had been ready to eat as many meals as Camilla wanted her to, so long as the number was less than three. She had made it to the end of the pier and Camilla was clear in her view, and a big shock went right down her spine when she saw her: not because it was Camilla, but because she was not alone.

There was a little cluster of figures in tatty coats spread out on the beach on the side they'd come in on. Nona counted six of them. They looked black-headed, but when Nona squinted she saw that they were wearing goggles and caps or wraps around their heads. One of them was holding one of those little motorized bikes that you often saw going *plut-plut* down the streets of the city. It was turned off now except for the lamp, which was on full brightness. The suds and the waves filled her ears and she could not make out what anyone was saying—if they were saying anything. It was impossible to see their mouths. Easy enough to see Camilla, silhouetted in the lamp of the *plut-plut* bike, strung across one of the supports beneath the pier like a sinuous night animal. The beam was hot and white and bright, and Camilla hovered within it like a moth.

Nona assumed it was the police. Only the police got to have those bikes but still couldn't afford good jackets. Each one had a shoulder holster, which meant each one had a short gun, and they stood in a kind of triangular gaggle with one right at the point before Camilla. Nobody's guns were drawn, but the holsters were out in the open, each a kind of glittering mechanical bulge at the top of the chest.

Camilla had put her hands out in a beseeching *no guns here* kind of a way. The light made the wrist-strap watch on her arm glitter. She swung her legs down off her pillar to land in a little puff of sand, with one hand still raised; she rummaged around in her pocket—threw something down on the ground—backed off. One of the figures ducked forward and picked it up. Nona kept the water right up to her eyes and began to approach—made it to

the next pole in the jetty, and the pole after that—but Camilla tucked her hair behind one ear, as though she was nervous, and flashed her palm out to the jetty. One thumb tucked in; four fingers spread. That was the sign to *stay put*.

Nona hesitated, then stayed put. There was a lot of discussion in the triangle about whatever had been picked up. It could have been a perfectly ordinary conversation, albeit a conversation between six people with guns in a triangle and one person with her hands up. Camilla was so bad at staying still: even as they talked she stretched in that cold white circle of light, one foot pressing down into the sand and then the other, slowly and deliberately and liquidly. Nona swam to the nearest pillar, found her footing on a big metal screw, and waited, buffeted by the waves and the brushing lappets of three comfortably stinging jellyfish.

She still couldn't make out what they were saying. One of the police (?) had thrown the object back down into the sand in front of Camilla. Nona could see it better now; it was Cam's wallet. Had they asked for papers, or something? Camilla didn't retrieve it. Then all at once, one of the cops at the back drew their gun—Nona threw herself forward into the water—and shot. The muzzle flashed.

Camilla hadn't fallen down. She hadn't been hit. The bullet had gone wide past her shoulder and she hadn't moved, hadn't ducked, hadn't done anything except keep her hands up. Nona kicked silently to the pillar in front, where she could hear snatches of conversation—

“—said *scare her*—”

“—did what y—”

“—speak House,” Camilla was saying.

The figure at the front made their mouth look different and said, exaggeratedly loudly and clearly, “Try again. Unjust Hope says—” but the waves took the rest.

Camilla said something Nona didn't catch at all. The cop turned around and said, mouth different again, “—ut a bullet in her this time.”

The one with the gun responded, sounding garbled, but the first figure said clearly, “Get the knee. I'm sick of this—” and something else.

Nona had broken. Her only use was translating, and there she was, listening to the most important conversation that had ever been had, and she was not translating. She had surged out of the water and shrieked, “*Run!*”

They're going to *shoot you*," and instead of shooting Camilla, the cop with the gun aimed right into the dark water, and shot Nona.

It felt like someone had punched her in the shoulder—hard. Nona did as Pyrrha had taught her, and went completely limp. For a moment her shoulder felt hot and awkward, and there was a hot burst of blood over her arm, feeling weird against the cool salt water. A yellow light shot through the waves like a dropped egg, and she writhed in its silhouette briefly before deciding to sink right to the bottom. The light arced back and forth, swinging around, never finding her.

She counted to twenty, glad she had taken a big breath, waiting there at the bottom and clutching the black rocks. It was very murky. Every so often a questing jellyfish would bob into view, and she had to bat it away from her face. She thought she heard a brief report, coming thickly from far away, as though maybe someone had pushed the part of the bike that went *honk*. Then there were weird white lights—quick, darting, moving lights, like very small fireworks—but Nona kept what Pyrrha called firing discipline. Only at the end of the *long* twenty seconds did she kick away, launching herself forward along the rocky bottom until she hit one of the jetty pillars.

By that time the pain and the weird feeling were over. The bullet had gone clean through the topmost part of her arm, which was good, and there wasn't even a hole to show where it had been. She felt a little sick, but that was all. Nona had never been shot before. She inched up the pillar until her head broke water.

The beach had gone very quiet. The *plut-plut* bike's headlight still shone out in her direction, blinding her a little. As Nona's eyes adjusted she saw Camilla, squatting on the sand. Everyone else was fanned out, lying down around her, as though they had all decided to take a schooltime nap.

Nona waded through the water, heart racing, struggling through the surf—thrashing upward through the shallows, pulling herself to stand. Her feet felt numb, but looking back that was probably the jellyfish. Each and every single person who wasn't Camilla was down on the ground. Their unholstered guns were still clutched in their hands or scattered loosely near them. The sand underneath each one was oily black. It hadn't been that hot, but wisps of steam curled up from the dark, wet sand.

Camilla was crouched down, wiping her knives on one of their jackets. When she looked up, Nona was electrified. One of her eyes was a pale,

pearlescent grey; the other one of her eyes was a deep, cool stone colour. Nona understood in a sudden shiver what she was looking at.

“Stay calm,” said Camilla-and-Palamedes. “Five breaths, if you need it.”

Camilla-and-Palamedes’s voice was strange to her, cool and efficient, distantly kind. But Nona wasn’t angry. The air smelled strongly of smoke and burnt meat. It made her deeply unhappy and very hungry, even though she had forced down all those crackers.

“I thought if I played dead,” Nona began, and stopped, because a big lump had come into her throat. She felt stupid; she felt she was being ungrateful; when Camilla-and-Palamedes smiled that strange new person’s smile, she suddenly felt very shy.

But Camilla’s clockwork interrupted with a series of urgent beeps: the *BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP* of a timer alarm, faster and more panicked than the usual time’s-up sound. Camilla-Palamedes got up all of a sudden, as though they wanted to get *getting up* over and done with as quickly as possible, and swayed backward and forward a little. The blood on the beach was steaming. Their hands were steaming. Nona struggled forward to catch her—them—the new person; but then Camilla straightened and blinked furiously, and it *was* Camilla. Her eyes were pale grey again and she shuddered like herself.

She said, a little hoarsely, but in quite normal Camilla tones: “Not your fault.” Then she equally normally set to putting her knives away—sticking them in the bands down her thighs, inside her trousers—and normally seeing that made Nona want to laugh, but that night she felt as though she might vomit instead, which would have added insult to injury.

Camilla said, “Shoulder?” She didn’t sound angry at all, but strangely quiet and tight.

“It’s fine—I’m fine. Cam, what did you *do*?”

“No questions. They didn’t have silencers. We need to go. Get the bike.”

Nona wasn’t able to help herself. She burst out with, “What did they *want*?”

“Intel. They were Merv Wing. Turn the lights off.”

The spotlight was still shining out over the ocean like a very small moon. Nona righted the *plut-plut* bike and turned off the headlight, which left the beach blue and cold. She kept looking at the fallen cops—at their

necks and at their chests—but Camilla gently drew her chin up and away, urging her forward, putting the towel around her wet shoulders. It felt nice and dry and scratchy. Nona mechanically wheeled the bike over the sand. Cam threw down her jandals and she squeezed her feet into them, the sand gritty on the bottoms of her heels.

Camilla didn't say anything. She had zipped up her dark jacket even though the night was still warm, and Nona thought she understood; she was cold too, colder than she ought to have been even when wet. Camilla kept her arms folded tight over her chest as though she was thinking. Nona was too sodden with regret and self-hatred and sea water to think anything but that Cam must have been very angry with her for calling out, and so she was blind to the truth of the situation until they wheeled the bike off the ramp and weaved it through the poles that were meant to prevent you bringing bikes onto the beach and Camilla suddenly staggered to a halt. She leant hard against the wall and shuddered. Nona nearly dropped the bike.

“Cam?”

“Towel,” said Camilla, very calmly. And: “Don’t scream.”

Nona was about to be indignant, but then Cam unzipped her jacket, and she nearly screamed. Cam’s thin cotton top was sodden with blood. The tops of her pants and her whole jacket were already black and wet from spray, so it hadn’t really showed the blood coming through. The worst part was that the blood was coming from *everywhere*, with no wounds, or bullet holes, or stab marks. It was coming out of her skin.

Cam rubbed the towel down both of her arms, briskly. The towel came away bright red. “Blood sweat,” she said, unsteadily.

“Get Palamedes,” was all Nona could think to say. “Get Palamedes—he can fix it.”

“No,” said Camilla. Nona noticed that her lips had gone the same colour as the skin around them, a sort of ashen rosy brown, instead of either skin or lips being normal. Cam’s voice was still very even and calm, but it was quiet, and came out strangely punctuated as she took in breaths. “He can’t. Not this. Make it worse.”

“But—”

“Get us home,” said Camilla. “You can do it. On the bike.”

The *bike!* Yet it was not to be borne that Nona would say, “But my car sickness”; if Camilla said anyone could do anything, they could do it. It was not the kind of thing she said often, or at all. It was more buoyed by the

sucker-punch of Camilla's belief than through her own confidence—she suddenly needed to go to the bathroom, which Palamedes always said was her displacement activity—that Nona got on the bike. Her courage had nearly failed her when Camilla got behind her and wrapped her arms around Nona's middle, very tightly. Nona had realised then that Cam was worried about falling off.

Even thinking about it now, how Nona drove Cam through those black streets she did not know—ignoring all the traffic signals, slowing down laboriously to turn into the little side alleys, the lone truck breaking curfew that chugged along the street next to her like a massive animal of hot wind and noise—but she did, and it took both forever and no time at all. Camilla was very warm and solid behind her with her arms unflinchingly tight. She never released the grip, which was nice until Nona realised that half the warmth was the blood seeping through the towel. She was about to guide the bike into the garage beneath the Building before Cam said, “Dump it. Here,” in a voice barely more than a whisper.

Here was behind a big rubbish cache next to the Building. Cam stood herself against the wall and Nona wheeled it into the gap behind the cache and the wall, then covered the gap up with boxes. She was pleased with the neatness of it until she came back to Camilla and saw the deathly pallor of her face: the stillness that was not Palamedes, but Camilla conserving all of her blood for silence. In the black nighttime of that alley the towel around Camilla's middle was black with blood, and the sea water and blood had dried on Nona's clothes. She put Camilla's arm around her shoulders and they crept into the garage, each breath from Cam's mouth high and tight. It was so strange to hear Camilla breathing at all.

Somehow they made it up the stairs—of course the elevator didn't work—and Nona was almost too slippery and panicky to knock. When Pyrrha opened the door all Nona was able to say was, pitifully, “No, no, no,” like the baby she had been: but what a relief it was at the time, to give things over to Pyrrha. Pyrrha had carried Camilla to bed in her big brown arms like Cam weighed nothing, was less than Nona. Pyrrha said, “What happened?” and Nona told her, and Pyrrha wasn't even angry, but when Nona told her about Cam's eyes she looked at Nona and said a completely new swear word. It was such an unusual swear word that later on Nona was able to swap it to Honesty for five whole cigarettes, he was that impressed.

Pyrrha sat down with Cam's head in her lap and pinched her awake, and then made her drink little sips of water. Cam's eyes were almost closed, like an animal's when they weren't quite asleep.

The water brought her around a little. Pyrrha kept saying, low and steady, "Don't black out, kid. You're in thanergy shock. Stay awake, come on." After about five minutes of that treatment, Cam's eyes opened all the way, and she drank the rest of the water mostly on her own. She let Nona give her a painkiller, but just a cap, not a needle.

In the end Pyrrha said in a calm, dead voice—"You can't do that ever again, Hect, *never*. Synthesis is a one-way ticket—I walked the Eightfold, I should damn well know. I'd give Palamedes the hiding of his fucking life if he wasn't renting an ass with you."

Camilla, cradled in Pyrrha's arms, with all the towels bright red, looked up at Pyrrha like Nona wasn't even in the room. Her eyes were chill and grey and gleaming. She whispered—

"Don't tell him I was weak."

"He's going to know, Hect. You're killing each other."

"It's our choice."

"He's going to ask."

"Do what you're good at," said Camilla. "Lie."

"Hect, you're not listening. It's killing him too—"

"It was good," said Camilla, and her eyes closed. "It was good. We were happy."

Pyrrha stayed put until Camilla fell asleep. The expression on her face was one Nona had never seen her wear before. Nona stayed too, except to go occasionally to the bathroom out of prolonged stress. Finally Pyrrha told Nona to go make up her bed next to Pyrrha's on the fold-out part of the couch, and when Nona asked if Camilla was going to be all right, Pyrrha said—

"No."

But when she saw the expression on Nona's face she put on a smile—produced one, like she would produce sweets or coins or little magazines—and said, "Don't worry about it, junior. I don't mean we're going to find her dead in the morning."

Then she had gone to the kitchen and poured herself a little glass of clear grain alcohol. She crossed to the taped-up window, bottle and glass in hand. To Nona's awe, she twitched the blackout curtains aside—stood

bathed in the hyper-blue light from the sky as Nona held her breath—and she said to the window, “Here’s to Camilla Hect, yet another of devotion’s casualties,” and knocked back the glass.

Then she said to the light, quite gently, “No, I don’t blame *you*, man ... He was always looking for things to throw himself on.”

Then Pyrrha settled down on the bed she had extended for Nona and knocked back two more little glasses of alcohol. She let Nona taste a little bit of the second glass when Nona asked, but Nona thought it was awful: it tasted like petrol and felt like sunburn. When she lay down, she kept wiping her lips to take the taste away.

“If Cam’s fine,” she said, “why did you just say goodbye to her?”

“How’d you know it was goodbye?” When Nona opened her mouth, Pyrrha said: “Don’t answer that. Go to sleep.” And after that, there had been no more swimming.



10

GOING TO THE *BEACH* THOUGH, if there was still lots of light and plenty of people, was another matter. Nona tried her luck.

“No beach,” said Cam, drying dishes at the sink. “I didn’t like the city today. Two people got shot in the centre while I was there. Someone else got dragged out of the river.”

“Drowned?”

“Strangled. Neck snapped—all the way around.”

“Gross,” said Nona. And, struck by an idea: “Cam—can’t I go back to school for the evening?”

“School? Why?”

Nona tried to think up a really intelligent and persuasive reason. “Hot Sauce is worried about something,” she said. “She said someone was watching the classroom and she wouldn’t tell me about it. I want to make sure they’re all okay.”

It wasn’t that Camilla didn’t take this seriously: she could see right away that Cam had taken it a little *too* seriously. Her dark brows drew together a fraction, and she placed another plate in the rack, and one of her legs folded up beneath her so that she was standing on one leg and resting the other foot at the top of that thigh. “Not in the dark,” she said. “Not after the gunfire today.”

“But it’s not dark yet. And the sky’s always sort of light now.”

“It’ll be dark enough by the time school’s over.”

Nona grew desperate.

“But I’m a Teacher’s Aide. I’ve got a responsibility.”

“I know,” said Camilla, lowering the foot, then raising the other. “It’s also your responsibility to keep yourself safe. Responsibilities clash.”

Nona felt hot and cross.

“It’s hard to feel responsible for the other two people I might be,” she said, knowing she sounded crabby and not knowing how not to. “I don’t know them. But I feel *very* responsible for Hot Sauce and Honesty and Ruby and Born and even Kevin, and I’ve only got so much time, you know. Maybe the other two people I am would feel incredibly responsible for Hot Sauce and the others too, Cam.”

“Oh, one of them, definitely,” said Camilla. “And maybe the other. I don’t mean you’ve got a responsibility to *them*. You have a responsibility to me and the Warden and to Pyrrha.”

In desperation, Nona flung herself down on the soft mat on the floor she and Cam had been using for stretches.

“Cam, responsibility just means you can’t ever do anything you think is really important.”

“Yes,” said Cam simply. And: “Let’s stop waiting for Pyrrha and go pick up dinner.”

They walked to the fish shop so that Nona could look longingly at the ocean, and listened to the fishmonger explain the latest about the port riots so that Nona could later translate for Cam. Nice girls with no guns needed to stay inside, urged the fishmonger. The space elevator had gotten breached about an hour ago because too many loyalist soldiers had been rerouted to the barracks siege, and the old workers had busted through with a key card trying to hijack a shuttle off-world. Most of them had been shot, and there were no shuttles there anyway. There were no shuttles anymore.

When Nona relayed this to Camilla, she said: “Hope Pyrrha takes the back roads.”

“Will Pyrrha be okay, Cam?”

“Pyrrha’s a survivor,” said Camilla.

But she let Nona slip her hand into hers and they walked shoulder to shoulder all the way home, with the plastic foam container of spicy rice and oily fish hot and steamy in the crook of Nona’s arm. It had been very cheap; people weren’t eating the harbour fish, because they said that the blue light got into them. They said the blue light got into the air too, and they wore masks for that, though Palamedes said that was nonsense. Cam ate most of the fish and rice as Nona picked at the edges, and then there was all the fruit

they hadn't eaten for afters. Nona's plate was left still mostly full, despite one genuine effort to eat and two not-so-genuine ones where she faked it.

"You can eat three more mouthfuls, or two and drink some water," said Camilla inflexibly.

"But I've eaten so much today."

"You ate gruel and a sausage roll."

"But I'm full, I'm really full."

"Have you been eating sand again?"

"I haven't eaten sand in months," Nona protested, then more truthfully: "Weeks," and more truthfully than that: "One week."

Nona eventually took the deal where she drank a glass of water and ate two more mouthfuls; as it turned out though, she never had to eat the second, because the special knock sounded—five short, two long, which they changed often—and Cam unlocked and unbarred the door for Pyrrha.

Pyrrha looked terrible. Her deep skin was powdered with concrete dust and shiny with smoke, splotched with rusty patches on the front that it took Nona a moment to realise were blood. She reeked of petrol and sweat. Cam recognised the red stuff immediately and started trying to check Pyrrha over, tugging at her overalls, her arms—Pyrrha said swiftly, "It's not mine," and dropped into one of the chairs at the kitchen table.

Nona got up and went to pour her a glass of ice water from the covered jug. Pyrrha said, "Thanks, Nums," and drained the whole thing. Nona, fascinated, watched the brown column of her throat move as she swallowed. There was already a fine dark rust of stubble beneath her chin, amid the dust and the dirt, and when Pyrrha caught her looking, she felt there with her hand and said, laughing, "I know, I know ... Gideon always had a five o'clock shadow at three o'clock. Sextus, can't you fix it? If you kick the sebaceous glands back a notch you can interrupt the hair cycle. Quick injection of thanergy below the root'll freeze the growth."

Pyrrha's eyes were hot and shiny and her pupils blown wide. Nona hadn't even seen Cam and Palamedes switch. Palamedes was busy rolling up one of Pyrrha's sleeves, examining a slimy patch of scabbing-over blood, and he said briskly: "No thanks. I had the joy of working on a ... on a body like yours, the once, and I don't want to repeat the process for anything smaller than a brain haemorrhage. What hit this forearm?"

"Vehicle shrapnel. They were taking pot shots at the police, and the police took pot shots back, with a munitions launcher." Pyrrha held the

glass out beseechingly to Nona; Nona went and refilled it. “Don’t worry. I squatted in a public bathroom and forked everything out myself. It’s mostly closed up already.”

“Did you...?”

“Saved who I could, left the rest to be buried,” said Pyrrha. “Or burned. Lots of ‘em were burning. Couldn’t do anything for them ... People notice when you don’t burn, is the thing. There was an audience. Others have been killed for less.”

Palamedes said nothing; he pushed at a pair of glasses that didn’t exist, made a noise of annoyance, and swept his hand lightly over the arm. Nona, fascinated, watched the blood peel away and frizzle to nothing, leaving a long zigzag of clean open meat on Pyrrha’s arm that was wrinkling shut as they watched.

Nona said, “Was it the port riot? Were you there?”

“You heard about that, kiddie? No,” said Pyrrha. “It’s just aftershocks. I was on that side of the city, is all.”

Palamedes said, “Is it finally kicking off?”

“Not yet.” Pyrrha curled her arm inward, examining the disappearing wound, and took the cool glass from Nona’s hands. Her fingers had left dirty fingerprints on the glass. “I know that sounds ridiculous, but not yet. Even though they’re chucking bombs at the cops and yelling shit about *No deals, no lords, no zombies*, and *Cops love zombie money*. When it kicks off, nobody will be yelling anything. This is anger, not fear. False labour pains ... Do they still do gravid carry where you come from?”

“On the Sixth, only for research,” said Palamedes.

“I helped at a birth once. There’s a lot of noise and run-up before the real thing happens.” Pyrrha necked the second glass of water all the way down and wiped her mouth with the back of her hand before she could think better of it. When she saw the result, she grimaced. Nona fetched a damp cloth without being asked so that Pyrrha could start to clean up. “This has been a *shit* day ... I’m having a cigarette. I’ll smoke it out the window.”

Nona froze, but Palamedes said calmly, “No good; Cam sold them. Said they were our most liquid asset.”

She expected Pyrrha to get very sarcastic. Pyrrha didn’t yell, ever, but Nona experienced so much yelling among her friends that she deeply preferred it. Pyrrha just sighed, deeply.

“How much did she get?”

“Maybe a third of what they were worth.”

“What an entirely haunted time to be alive,” said Pyrrha. “Nona, my sweet, can you draw me a bath? My filth’s got filth.”

Nona sprinted to the bath and put the plug in the plughole and dutifully started grating the soap bar into fine, dusty flakes to put in the hot water, not even minding leaning over the sweaty hot-water tap; but she pricked up her ears when she heard, in the other room, Palamedes saying softly, “I’m going to let Camilla look you over. Tell her what you told me,” and Pyrrha saying, “Wait a moment, Warden. Wait. I want you to hear this first … not Hect. I need you to stop Hect, okay? I need you to hold her back.”

Nona shut off the hot-water tap. It wasn’t as though she was deliberately trying to eavesdrop; she was still carefully holding the paring knife and trying to make the longest unbroken rind of soap that she could, watching flakes disappear and dissolve into white scum on the surface of the water. Her hair was itchy with sweat. She heard Palamedes say, “Oh, God, Pyrrha, just tell me.”

Pyrrha said, “In the chaos, they found some … people … to take to the park tonight.”

There was a very long silence, or else Nona couldn’t hear. Pyrrha said, “I saw them for two, three seconds. In the back of a truck. Three adults. It was dark. Said they’d taken them off the cops. One person I asked said they’d been in the barracks, another one said they’d found them wild.”

Nona couldn’t wait anymore; she ran the cold water tap before she died of being too hot, and let the water run over her wrists and her palms, like Camilla had taught her. Wrists were the best place for cooling down. That meant she only caught fragments, until Pyrrha and Palamedes helpfully made their voices louder—

“You versus *two hundred motherfuckers* with machine guns! *Camilla* versus two hundred motherfuckers with machine guns, Sextus! I know you and she are doing some ungodly tricks with soul manipulation, but what do you think you are, a damned Ly—L-word? You’re not even a fraction of one, you’re only a step in the theory. The poor fools they have probably aren’t even—”

“How many people do you leave to burn tonight, Dve?”

“You say that because you think it hurts, and because you’re frightened,” said Pyrrha coolly. “The answer, my boy, is *multitudes* … so

long as it doesn't include you and me and Nona. We're all three of us in enough trouble as it is. Don't make me repeat myself."

"Pyrrha, they tape their arms to their sides and they put them in those cages and they douse them in petrol, in gasoline..."

"Yes, and then they set them alight, and it's terrible, and usually somebody shoots them long before the fire takes them. There's always some softie in the crowd, Sextus, even for zombies. And it won't be 'zombies.' Listen to me. What I've been trying to tell you this whole night is that me and the boys combed Site C and I found nothing: no bodies, no blood, none of your people. No sign they were even kept there by Edenites. This is the public taking it out on a couple of poor bastards they pick up who are insane, or drug-addled, or who said the wrong thing and gave someone a wonderful opportunity to get them out the way. You *know* that's been the vast majority of the cage deaths since the initial flush. Even if it is one of yours then Number Seven'll have them so out of their tree that they'll hardly notice when—"

"This isn't about House loyalty," said Palamedes quietly. "It's about three people being burnt to death."

There was a big silence. Nona made a number of tiny noises, cleaning the paring knife, cleaning her hands, making sure Pyrrha's towel was dry.

Pyrrha said, "Keep Camilla home tonight. I'll call it quits for the cigs."

Palamedes said, "Do you know she has a half sister? Did she tell you? It's not my secret to tell. They're quite fond of each other. Camilla's ten years younger. Kiki's a member of Oversight Body, junior fellow. She was one of the group that came to negotiate with Ctesiphon Wing."

"I didn't know that, no," said Pyrrha.

"Alongside fifteen other of the finest minds of my House," said Palamedes. "Led here by my conviction and Camilla's hand. My colleagues, my friends. My family ... The people they put in cages will be someone's family, someone's friends."

"*Keep—Camilla—home—tonight,*" said Pyrrha. "That is all I am saying. Keep her home. No heroics. I'm not moved by sentiment. Whatever it takes. Don't feel. Just do."

"Tonight I hate almost all the human race," said Palamedes wearily.

"That's a feeling," said Pyrrha brutally. "Kill it."

Palamedes did not seem to notice when Nona crept back into the kitchen, drying her hands on her front; he had ducked into the bedroom. It

was just Pyrrha, peeling her bloodied shirt off and putting it in the sink to soak; Pyrrha with her naked chest so moth-eaten with scars that even Camilla and Palamedes couldn't guess the cause of. Nona always felt soft and tender when she saw Pyrrha with her shirt off, and liked to rest her head on her back, between her prominent shoulder blades. But tonight she just said humbly: "Can I go into the corridor for five minutes?"

Pyrrha raised one eyebrow. "Does Cam let you do that?"

"No—but I just want to sit outside number three-oh-two. They play the radio, and we don't have one."

"Sounds harmless. What's Camilla's objection?"

"She says they're maniacs."

"Go. Take five. I won't tell her if you don't get shot," said Pyrrha.

Nona unlatched the door and tiptoed outside, even though she had been granted permission. The desire to listen to the radio at number 302 was only a *mild* blind. She knew that if she hung around the question of the remaining mouthful would come back into play, and she wanted a moment to walk by herself and think by herself. The corridor lights were dimmed and the cool linoleum under her bare feet felt sticky with each step, and condensation left perfect Nona-shaped footprints on the squares as she went.

The windows were all blinded and boarded, so she could not crack one and get a breath of fresh air, but she lolled outside number 302. The radio was on, and was playing something mournful she could not really translate; Nona always found listening to the radio much harder to understand, with no mouth and no eyes. She sat there in the moist dim corridor night, thinking escapeful thoughts. She wondered if she *quite* had the bottle to go down the stairwell and down to the garage and check to see if anyone she knew was down there; but that felt like more of a betrayal than she wanted to truck with.

Outside number 302 she found a window that had only been taped up most of the way and peeled it off just a little bit more with her fingertips. The sun had set. The nighttime light was blue from the sphere that hung over the city, and she let the light touch her eyes and her lips and felt better for it.

This was a secret that Nona kept from Pyrrha and Camilla and Palamedes, almost the only one she kept from them, but one too beautiful to tell. She knew the luminous sphere hanging above the city, high in space,

had kicked off all the riots, and was making everyone scream, and had caused the siege in the port, and made people throw themselves in front of buses, and made everyone say the end of the world was coming soon. It was making everybody's lives horrible, and it had given Palamedes and Camilla the same grave, pensive expression, and Pyrrha slapped on an extra nicotine patch every time the fog burned away and it hung like a great blue ball in the sky.

But Nona loved the blue sphere as much as she loved everything else. She, and nobody else, could hear it sing.

"Good night, Varun," she said.

When she tiptoed back down the corridor—the whole building seemed still tonight, as though it were tucked into a dark corner hoping nobody would notice it—she opened the door as quietly as she could. There was nobody in the front room. Nona heard the slopping sounds of Pyrrha in the bath. She walked on the balls of her feet to the bedroom, and she found Camilla in front of the recorder with the single lamp on—Camilla with her arms clasped around her knees, her chin sunk down to the tops of her thighs, staring greyly out into space.

Nona lay down on the mattress. She felt very tired and sad all of a sudden, seeing Camilla tired and Camilla sad. On some impulse she opened her arms, and Camilla unexpectedly lay down next to her and crawled inside them—not quite letting Nona hold her, but letting Nona put an arm around her, putting an arm around Nona in return. It was hot, but Nona didn't mind.

"Cam," Nona whispered.

"What's up?"

"I could go to the park for you," whispered Nona, desperately trying to sort through the words, say the correct thing, communicate the right desire. "I could help ... really. You know what happens when I get hurt. That's got to be worth something."

Camilla said, "Is that your plan? Getting hurt?"

"Well, it might freak them out," said Nona. "And I'm not scared of dying. Really truly, Cam, I'm not..."

"Why not?" said Camilla.

Nona thought about it. "Because I like letting go of the pull-up bars and falling off," she said. "I don't like the part just before you let go and I don't like the part where you hit the floor, but I like the letting go."

“I don’t let go,” said Camilla. “It’s my one thing.”

Nona was amazed at that—the idea that Camilla, who could do so much and do it so fluently, could sum herself up as having *one thing*. Amazed too, a little, that anyone might not love the weightlessness when your fingers slipped off the metal and you hung, unsuspended, in midair. Camilla’s hand wound itself around the end of her braid and held it, as though to find some kind of leash or safety rope, as though Nona really might fall.

She was half-asleep by the time Pyrrha finished with her bath (and rinsed the bath down twice); this meant it was Nona’s turn to take a bath, so she undressed herself half-asleep and would have been all the way asleep in the water once she got in if Camilla hadn’t been there saying, every so often, “Not yet.” Which kept her awake, because it would have been terrifically stupid to drown at this point.

She was three-quarters unconscious pulling on the shirt she slept in, and stumbled out of the bathroom but didn’t quite get it all the way so that Pyrrha had to say, “Tits, Nona, don’t give Camilla a heart attack,” which jolted her awake enough to lie down on the mattress and rebutton her shirt from the bottom. She reached nearly all the way up before she fell deeply and completely asleep.

JOHN 5:18

IN THE DREAM, night had fallen, or what she assumed was night. They were lying atop the hill they had climbed and he was pointing out all the constellations that they would be able to see if it weren't for the thick green cloud and the softly falling flakes of ash. They were lying head-to-head, their eyes aimed at the right part of the sky to see, or in this case *not* see, the Southern Cross. The stars were sweet and familiar, but she did not know their names, though they seemed to be at the tip of her tongue. She asked him why it was called the Southern Cross. He said that was just one name for it, but the stars were in a cruciform pattern and it was only visible from the southern hemisphere. He said when he was little he'd been taught it was the anchor of a ship. He still preferred that, he said. Liked the idea that the Milky Way was pinned down and couldn't go anywhere. Said when he was a kid he hated change, any change at all.

She had quite liked change—mostly. But he did not want to dwell on that. So she asked him about the fingers trick, and he was happier to talk about why it had upset everyone so much.

He said, Keep this in mind: it was the first time anyone had ever done it. You couldn't explain it away. There were no strings or magnets. No illusion of the witch or whatever. I could repeat it for anyone who wanted to walk in and deal with M— dry-retching in the corner. And I did. Everyone had to come watch, the whole gang. And by then ...

He said, By then it was easy. By then I had Titania and Ulysses sitting up. By the end of the day they were walking around with me, sitting down when I sat or standing when I stood. It gave the others the absolute shits. Again, I didn't mean to be a creep. I just wanted them close so I could look after them—it seemed so important. And A— was right, I wasn't operating on a lot of food or sleep.

He said, Everyone had a big fight over what it meant. C— and G— took it fine. Funny in hindsight that *they* were the ones who were the least weirded out. C— had been raised little-England Anglican and G—'s grandparents who raised him had been religious as hell, White Sunday and suit and tie for church, that kind of thing. It was M— who couldn't take it. M— had been hard atheist since she was twelve. But she got over it; she was a walking contradiction anyway. Her best friend in the whole world

was a nun. Also, at some point A— gave her a benzo and a shot of whiskey, so that helped.

He said, But you know what? They *wanted* to believe. All of them. We all wanted a miracle. Everyone wants to believe that God's randomly made them one of the X-Men. We all thought of you right away, what it could mean for you. P— was worried that this was some kind of zombie apocalypse, but Titania and Ulysses weren't zombies. They were ... extensions. Constructions without a soul. They hadn't woken up, they hadn't resurrected in that sense of the word. Their bodies moved when I wanted them to move. And then I stopped having to hold the strings—I could say, *Go here*, or, *Go there*, and they'd go like I'd programmed them to. You had to make sure you told them to stop, or they'd keep walking into things. It wasn't like they could talk or bite you, you know? I wished they could've. But they were just me.

For a moment they were both silent, brushing ash off their faces, their hair. It was falling thick and fast like snow. They took shelter beneath a burnt-out tree and watched the ash hump up against the rocks and branches. Some of it got in their mouths.

After a moment, he said: I *knew* it was fine. I knew I'd touched something, come away with something, that could be used for good. Could be used to fix everything, used for *you*. I only had to figure out how. There was so much to figure out. But I'd got a dream team on tap, eh? People who could think. C—'s N—, she was on board. C— was still pretending they weren't dating—she was an artist, so that was cool. If you have two scientists and an engineer and a detective and a lawyer and an artist you're pretty much sweet as. Sounds like the start of a joke, right? Two scientists, an engineer, a detective, a lawyer, and an artist walk into a bar to help me become God.

He said: They put me through my paces. I was exhausted all the time. We all came up with trials to figure out what I could do, what I couldn't do. There was too much to go on. We figured out early that what really helped was if I was near the dead bodies, if I was in the facility. Back then we thought maybe there was something about the ground, something about our particular patch in the Wairarapas, but if we loaded up the ute with a bunch of bodies and looked out for the cops we could do the same thing anywhere else. The corpses were what mattered. They were my batteries.

He said, So of course, what do M— and A— do, they go raid a fucking graveyard. I was pissed off with them about that. So was P— but, like, mainly because it was illegal and she had to cover it up. But *that* proved it wasn't that we had a load of specific magical corpses on our hands. I could take a body that had been dead for twenty years and do the same thing. Can't believe we didn't get caught.

He said, At that point we knew that was the biggest risk: getting caught. Getting hushed up. Getting flown to some government facility in America. Or weaponised—given to another group of stakeholders or bought by another magnate son of a bitch. I guess we'd seen too many movies. We assumed that we'd all go missing. Get disappeared. Get used for evil.

He said, So we figured that what we had to do was make as big a noise as humanly possible, turn to the public. Find out if anyone else was like me, if there was someone out there who could do the same thing. And there *was* a way we could do just that. It was a different time back then. I didn't want to do it. It felt too—kill switch, too awful to contemplate. Too grisly. Too shitty. But it was the only trick we had up our sleeves.

He sighed and said, "We had the internet. We decided to stream."

She said, "What is this *internet*?"

And he said, "See, I *did* make a utopia."

DAY THREE

A VISIT—CROWN TAKES NONA TO SCHOOL—IMPORTANT NEWS—
HOT SAUCE AND NONA HAVE AN ADVENTURE—THE TWO PRINCES—
THREE DAYS UNTIL THE TOMB OPENS.



11

THE NEXT MORNING CAMILLA pushed the button and said, “Start.”

Nona did not close her eyes this time, but stared hard at the black mould marks on the ceiling, as though for inspiration, and began: “I’m holding something down in the water. It’s the same water, the good water. But whatever I’m holding doesn’t want to stay down, it keeps coming back. To the surface, I mean.”

“What are you holding?”

“The girl with the painted face.”

“Tell me about the girl.”

“She’s under the water. She’s not drowning, she’s lying there. Her eyes are closed, I think. The water’s cloudy. But then there’s the arms still around me … I think. I’m mixing parts up.”

“Show me where.”

Nona wriggled around in an attempt to embrace herself: she rolled over frontways on the mattress and attempted to get one arm slung over her neck, the other over her waist. Camilla said to these efforts, “Demonstrate on me.”

Delighted at the opportunity, Nona immediately sat up—ignoring the brief wave of dizziness—and wound her arms around Camilla. She paused halfway and said, “It’s a bit—are you sure?” and Camilla said, “You’ve shown me before. Show me again.”

Nona concentrated on how it felt in the dream, as strange and multibodied as it was: she was good at the hand and the mouth, she was good at this, but she hesitated. She said, “I can’t do it by myself,” and took Camilla’s arms. She put Camilla’s hand on her hip, put Camilla’s other hand

on her other hip, splayed her fingers, said, “More. No—there,” as Camilla kept up, then reached out to Camilla—like she was drowning; like she wanted to drown. It was nice to be this close to Camilla. Camilla’s hands on her were a little clinical, a little unsure.

“Okay,” said Camilla, once they were locked in this clinch. “Anything else?”

“No. Was that useful?”

“Everything’s useful.”

Camilla detached one hand from Nona’s hip to reach out and depress the button of the recorder, but kept the other in place. Nona liked seeing Camilla up close: liked seeing the lines of her collarbone through the unbuttoned part of her shirt, the naked parts of her arms, her ears. Camilla was so sweetly handsome and good. Nona always wanted to be close to her. Pyrrha said it was puppy love, but Nona knew that puppy love was different, it just made you want to open the puppy’s lips and play with the puppy’s teeth.

“It’s pretty nice like this,” Nona said now, and a little doubtfully. “It’s funny—I never feel like that in the dream.”

“Hmm,” said Camilla, and: “But you’ve said you like it.”

“It’s not *sexy*, though.”

Camilla’s eyebrows went up a little way. “Since when do you use the word *sexy*? ”

“The other day Honesty said he thought nice shoes were sexy, and Beautiful Ruby said what just the shoes, and Honesty said no there had to be feet in them, and Born in the Morning got mad and said that Honesty was just being cheap, everyone had feet.”

Camilla tilted her head, unwound herself from Nona—Nona was a little disappointed, Cam’s hair smelled so much like nice dust—and took the clipboard back. “Okay. What do you think is sexy?”

Nona cheered up immediately at being asked.

“The huge old poster up on the side of the building at the end of the street—the one the dairy’s in. The old poster for shampoo.”

Camilla looked at her for a few seconds too many. “The painting of the two flowers,” she said.

“I think they’re very sexy flowers,” said Nona. “All right, your turn! Tell me what *you* think is sexy.”

“Eating breakfast,” said Camilla.

Nona lifted up her voice in despair. “You don’t. It’s not fair. We’re having a heart-to-heart, I’m sharing deep personal thoughts, and you just want me to eat.”

“Yes. I’m going to talk to the Warden.”

“Well, ask him what he thinks is sexy.”

“No. I already know.”

That made sense. “Tell me! I’ll eat the whole thing if you tell me,” said Nona, enchanted, starting to pull on her trousers but deeply distracted. “Oh, Cam, please, please. I’ve been so good lately. And when I haven’t been good it hasn’t been because I haven’t tried. Yesterday was awful. I need to know—I know it’ll help my memory. It’s like a *deep need* inside of me, it must be my real self *wanting* to know, right? So this is work, right? What does Palamedes find sexy?”

Camilla took up the clipboard and the pen and wrote, serene and tranquil, underlining something once—twice.

“Strong work ethic,” she said eventually. “High test scores.”

Nona buttoned up her shirt and wriggled on one sock, then the other, contemplating this. “Okay,” she said. “Wow.”

“Go get breakfast—tell Pyrrha I’ll be along in a moment. How’s your hair?”

“My braids are still okay,” Nona decided, and then: “Do you know who I am yet? Did that help?”

“Not yet,” said Camilla, and bent her head back to the paper. It was a dismissal.

Nona waited, hoping for another smile like the one she’d got the other day. Camilla did not glance back at her, and no smile came. This filled Nona with sharp pangs of disappointment. It wasn’t as though the smile had kept things perfect up till now—obviously a lot of terrible stuff had happened in the interim—but that smile had been a kind of guerdon, a safeguard against anything terrible touching *them*. Camilla had stayed home. Pyrrha had come home. Nobody had come to hurt Noodle or the Angel. Nobody had come to get her.

Thinking about Noodle and the Angel made her forget about Camilla’s face and how good the day would or wouldn’t be. She fled to the front room where Pyrrha, fully dressed, was whisking powdered milk into a jug of water. Her posture—the way her arms were set; her shoulders, a little stooped—brought Nona up short.

"You didn't go to bed last night," she said accusingly.

Pyrrha looked over her shoulder; she smiled that easy smile that always seemed so strange on her strong-jawed, weather-beaten face, set the jug down, and crossed to close the door to the bedroom very, very casually. "Sure I did, slept like a baby," she said, but her smile didn't crinkle her eyes. They were very alert and brown and watchful. "What were you and Camilla talking about? Sounded fruity."

Nona in that moment remembered that she had not told either Palamedes or Camilla she loved them. She glanced at the plastic jug of pale brown-flecked powder and wanted to become happy again, but there was a shadow over her joy now. Pyrrha saw her looking and said, "Hey, you said you wanted pikelet mix. I *can* be trusted to bring home groceries sometimes, you know."

"Where have you been?" said Nona. "You've been crouching. Your right arm's stiff."

Pyrrha, who had picked up the spatula, set it down again. Nona wondered how anyone would ever believe she'd slept. There was wakefulness in her eyes, in the short dead russet of her hair, in the bunching-up of her shoulders—so stringy in her clothes, really, not a spare scrap of fat or softness to her, but she seemed bigger than her body gave her rights to. Her body was a rubber band, but she moved like an animal—like the big dust-coloured cats that lived on the outskirts, the ones with venomous whiskers and ruffs. She moved to the bottom of her voice, and she towered in front of Nona, and said: "I'm putting you in my circle of trust. Can you do that for me? Is it going to be hard for you?"

"Yes," said Nona, automatically dropping her voice to match Pyrrha's. "No."

"I went to the park."

Nona thought about this for a while. Camilla hadn't smiled at her, and now she was being asked to keep a secret. These flags were serious ill omens, even if there *was* pikelet mix. Even two weeks ago she would have become really and genuinely excited for pikelets: she liked scraping the canolene on them and watching it melt into bright yellow puddles, and they were easy to get down, they were so soft. She whispered slowly, "You know you shouldn't have done that."

"Since when have you been my keeper?" Pyrrha just seemed amused. "I don't think you've ever criticised me before. This is rotten. I was about to

marry you.”

“I wouldn’t marry you even if you asked,” said Nona apologetically. “I love you, Pyrrha, and I think you’re wonderful and very beautiful—” (“Are you kidding?” said Pyrrha. “I look like two elbows.”) “—but I don’t want to be married to you. You’d never act like you were married to *me*. ”

This briefly corpsed the person who went to work for her. Pyrrha leant against the sink and seemed pleased that the question of the park had passed, then shook the jug with the powder and the reconstituted milk in it until they were all mixed together. Then she poured it expertly into perfect circles in the hot pan, each puffing up quickly in the heat, big bubbles swelling like magic in the pale brown batter.

“It’s the job,” Pyrrha said. “You can’t take the woman out of the job.”

Nona kept her voice at its very lowest register. “Pyrrha, why did you go?”

Pyrrha did not answer. Nona persisted, “Did you save anyone? Because you can tell Camilla and Palamedes if you did *that*, you know they’d like it.”

“No,” said Pyrrha. “Not how they’d understand it.”

“Then, Pyrrha—”

“And I wasn’t the only one,” said Pyrrha, flipping one of the pikelets over. Nona stared at its perforated yellow top, which was a little bit darker brown everywhere a bubble had touched the pan. “Don’t ask questions, Nona. But do something for me … Be very careful about those kids at that school, the ones you hang out with.”

This blew all the smoke in Nona’s brain in the other direction.

“My *school*? What’s wrong with my friends?”

“Shh-shh,” warned Pyrrha, then said: “Not all your friends … That kid with the burns, that’s the one I mean. The one with the stupid name.”

It took Nona a moment to realise who was being referred to. None of her friends had stupid names; she had to remember what burns were.

“Pyrrha, I’m not sure I like you being mean about Hot Sauce,” she said, feeling redder and more bewildered and unhappier all the time. “She has a wonderful name with an important and exciting reason behind it.”

“Mean? Not my intention,” said Pyrrha. “Nona, all I mean is, your friend Hot Sauce was there last night at the burn cages and she was keeping some pretty ferocious company.”

The world revolved. For one moment Nona couldn't think, and couldn't feel, and couldn't stop her body. Pyrrha said, more gently, "Sit and take five," so she sat and took five breaths, in and out, and felt better for it. She concentrated on taking deep bruisy lungfuls through the nose and whistling them out her pursed lips, and by the time Pyrrha had counted out, "Five," she was at peace again.

This was due less to the breathing than it was to the force of her belief in Hot Sauce. If Hot Sauce had been at the burn cages she had a good reason for it. Nona was one of Hot Sauce's friends, a member of her gang. She wouldn't even say a thing until Hot Sauce wanted to tell her about it. That was all. She relaxed.

"Are you mad at me?" said Pyrrha. "You know it's okay to be mad at me, right?"

"No," said Nona. "But I'm not going to stop being friends with Hot Sauce."

"I'm not saying *don't be friends*, I'm saying *be careful*."

Nona decided it was time to change the subject. She hated feeling cross with Pyrrha. And there was *getting mad*, and then there was *having a tantrum*.

"What do you think is sexy?" said Nona, in her normal voice.

Pyrrha seemed pleased to think about something different, and waited until the bubbles were getting really big before she took the spatula and slid it under a rising patty, flipping it over. Nona had come up by her elbow to watch.

"Do you want what I *really* think is sexy, or what I'd tell someone if they asked and I wanted to impress them?"

Nona was pleased that Pyrrha understood.

"The first one."

"Landmine people," said Pyrrha, and when she saw Nona's brows cross in confusion, she said: "Some people were put into the universe to rig it to explode, then walk away ... I always fell for that."

Nona thought she got it, but she was unsure on a few points.

"But you can't really tell that about someone when you first *look* at them."

"Oh, you can," said Pyrrha. "You haven't looked for it." She flipped over another pikelet, looked grave and intelligent for a moment, and then said: "I mean, also redheads. *Love* a redhead."

Apart from Pyrrha, whose hair was a very deep dark russet, Honesty was the only redhead that Nona knew, and Honesty had big, pallid blue eyes that he could make float in different directions, when one wasn't smushed. He also had skin like a horrible ghost's. You could see all the veins in his eyelids. Nona said, "Okay. *I* don't think redheads are very sexy."

"What? Hang on," said Camilla, opening the door—no, Palamedes, opening the door, busy buttoning himself into Camilla's jacket—"That's a very interesting thing you just said, Nona. Let me write that down. Is that pikelets, Pyrrha? You're a legend."

Nona wondered how Palamedes couldn't see the hitch in Pyrrha's shoulder, nor all the crinkles in her posture or her clothes that screamed *PARK ... PARK ... PARK*, but took her moment.

"Palamedes, what do you think is sexy?"

"Those little outfits nurses wear," said Palamedes promptly.

So Camilla had been lying, after all.

Breakfast that morning was a dismal affair, pikelets or no pikelets. Pyrrha and Palamedes didn't seem to have much to say to each other, though Palamedes was cordial—he ate Camilla's pikelets, saying, "She said she wasn't hungry," which filled Nona with a new hot envy wishing she had someone to eat food for her. But Palamedes could never stay long, and so there he was resting his hand on Nona's shoulder, saying, "Take care of everyone for me, Nona," which was Palamedes all over. Never *be good*, or even *be safe*, but leaving you in charge, like he really thought you'd be up to it. Nona always loved him for that.

But then once he had gone Camilla was grey-eyed and quiet and wrathful, and breakfast became almost entirely silent and Camilla paid far too much attention to what Nona was eating, which was uncomfortable.

Nona had negotiated her way through one and a half pikelets and a piece of yesterday's melon and a glass of water when the door burst open despite the fact that it had been locked and a gun made that *ker-KLUNK* noise that Pyrrha had explained meant it was ready to spin small pieces of metal through you at high speeds, and a voice, through a tinny layer of plastic, said: "Heads down, hands up. The first sign of zombie shit and I blow your brainstems."



12

THE HOUSEHOLD HAD BEEN very well drilled, even better drilled than her classroom with the gunfire. Nona hit her melamine plate with her forehead and shot her hands in the air, and there was the answering clatter of Camilla doing the same opposite her—of Pyrrha, who had gotten up to refill her glass, hitting the deck, facedown on the floor. Booted footsteps filled the room—Nona knew without looking that it was six sets of feet: they never came with fewer than six—but as she felt her chin jerked up, and felt the rough, dark plastic weave of the hood working over her head, she couldn't help but give a muffled protest: “But I've got to go to *school!*”

But Blood of Eden never cared if you had to go to school, or clean the whiteboards, or examine the psychodramas Kevin was playing out with two erasers that Born in the Morning had drawn faces on.

In the Building people did not come to look when they heard booted feet down the corridor, or a door flung violently open. As had happened many times before, Nona and Camilla’s wrists were taped to their sides with cut lengths of silver tape even as Pyrrha, lying facedown, kept saying calmly: “Cool it, Ctesiphon, you know we’ll do what you say. There are too many of you, we don’t want to get hurt,” but got handcuffed anyway—Pyrrha always got tape *and* handcuffs. All three of them were patted down for weapons in their clothes. Almost all of the knives Camilla had strapped to her got taken away, but not the very hidden knife, or at least the one hidden knife Nona knew about. There were probably more. And no one ever found anything on Pyrrha, which didn’t necessarily mean that Pyrrha didn’t have anything, although when Nona had asked her the once she had said, *What would I have?* and winked. Then they got two people on either side of them to march them down the hallway. All of the doors were shut tight that morning. One door opened a crack, but nobody emerged.

All three of them were taken downstairs via the big concrete stairwell with the fizzing broken lamps, and then came the part that Nona really

hated, when they would emerge in the cool garage space below street level and be bundled into the back of a big white four-wheeled car.

The seats at the back of the car had been taken out, and Nona and Camilla had to lie down and Pyrrha got locked in the boot. This was ostensibly so that if anyone shot through the windows they wouldn't get hit, but as Camilla said the car doors weren't exactly armoured and there was every chance they'd catch a bullet and then things would get interesting. Their hoods got pulled off, and even in the darkness of the garage everything seemed very bright. While they were lying down one of the people in the masks waved a little machine that went *parp!* over them, and another took a temperature measurement from their mouths and under one armpit. Camilla said they did this to make sure that they were alive, and not something else. Nona resentfully reacquainted herself with the carpet flooring on the car. It was made of very scrubby, itchy fibres, and it reeked of the fuel they put in the car engine and the mud on people's boots.

The windows of the car were tinted and hard to see out of. In the early days they had kept hoods on Camilla and Nona the whole way, but this had always contributed to Nona getting violently carsick, so they didn't anymore. Nobody talked. Nona found that if she twisted her head and buried her face in her shoulder she could smell her shirt instead of the car gas, which at least smelled like sweat and the laundry powder Camilla used, and that made the time go away a lot more quickly.

They *did* hood them again when the car finally stopped. Nona counted her footsteps and Camilla's and two other Edenites' as they were walked down a crunchy gravel road. A door was cranked open and they were inside somewhere dark, and then they were sat down and their hoods were taken off, though the tape was left on, and they were sitting in a little waiting room. Pyrrha wasn't there. They never left Camilla and Nona alone with Pyrrha.

It was always a different little waiting room. Nona found them quite glamorous: Camilla and Palamedes, who were both still obsessively trying to work out the route, said in all likelihood it was some old government building. The insides were all brushed steel panelling and clean white floors, and glossy red-and-green plants in pots with thick juicy leaves that Nona always longed to chew on. The leather on the sofa covers was worn and old and shiny, and the metal tubing of the elegant chairs was a little bit

scratched, but she always felt untidy and out of place in those office rooms. It was like a picture from an old magazine.

They did not talk because Camilla had made the little sign with her thumb that said, *Keep silent, we're with strangers*. They did not even look at each other until the door opened and someone said, "Test reports are back. They're clean," and in came Crown, and Nona's motion sickness and vague need for the bathroom went away.

Crown, in her heavy boots and stained zip-up jacket and tough canvas trousers with bulging pockets, was the most beautiful woman in the city and maybe on the planet. She filled up the doorway like a light-up sign. She had skin like amber and wonderful hair exactly the colour of golden sugar, and if she had ever been in a queue to get something from a shop *everyone* would have asked her where she had been all their lives. You could have sold tickets to see her. When she smiled at Nona, like she did now, her purple eyes crinkled up at the corners. She was always happy to see Nona. Nona was regularly the only one happy to see her.

Crown turned to Nona. "Come on, cutie. Let me get that for you," she said, and took a knife from her pocket and cut through the tape holding Nona's arms to her sides. Once Nona had been freed, she hugged Crown. Crown was fantastically tall and big and gave wonderful hugs, the type where she put her arms around you and really squeezed. The only uncomfortable part was that with their height difference, Nona was always poked by the gun holstered at Crown's right hip and the sword scabbarded at her left.

"I'll tell them to use the plastic ties for you next time," said Crown, once Nona had withdrawn and was working the tape painfully away from her wrists, where it took all the hairs off and reddened the skin. "Your turn, Camilla—Oh!"

For Camilla's bonds were already gone, even though both her arms had been taped squarely to her thighs. She must have used the very secret knife. Crown's mouth tightened. Camilla was peeling the last remnant away, not making eye contact. All she said was, "Where'd you put Pyrrha?"

"The others only deal with the Saint after he's scanned. You know that," said Crown.

"She's not a Lyctor."

"Not everyone's got that clearance. And it's not like you know the whole picture either."

“She isn’t hiding anything.”

“You don’t believe that,” said Crown.

Camilla fell silent. Then she said, “You’re still wearing the sword.”

This seemed to put Crown back on more comfortable ground. “Of course. Makes me think of home.”

“You’re not even wearing it for anyone.”

Crown said, smiling, “I didn’t take you for a traditionalist. I don’t *have* to wear it for anyone. Anyway … it’s an aesthetic.”

“It doesn’t belong to you.”

“I’ll give it back if its owner asks, but otherwise, finders keepers,” said Crown lightly. “You sound like the Captain, you know.”

“They haven’t put her down yet?”

If this was meant to hurt Crown’s feelings too, it didn’t appear to hit very hard. She said cheerfully, “If I haven’t put a pillow over her face, they won’t anytime soon.”

“Won’t be a pillow,” said Camilla. “It’ll be head and hands off and the burn cage at the park.”

A silvery laugh. “Ooh, she’d love that. Head and hands, like a Cohort martyr. Can you imagine? Can’t you just hear her say, ‘I regret that I have only one life to give’?”

“You sound like your sister.”

“Do I?” Now Crown sounded gratified. “Thanks. I could use some of her gravitas, honestly. I always think I sound too flighty for command … I feel like a schoolgirl every time I give a briefing. Everyone else around here feels so old, even if they’re three years my junior.”

Camilla said, “Are you trying to disgust me, or yourself?”

Another laugh. “Because *you* know me so well, sweetling—”

“I don’t know you, Coronabeth,” said Camilla. “I don’t know you at all anymore.”

They fell silent. After a while Crown said, quietly and somehow more truthfully, “It’s good to see you, even if you don’t feel the same,” but Camilla didn’t say anything to that either, only rubbed her wrists where the tape had been. Nona’s skin was already back to its nice normal colour, and the fine dark hairs on her forearms had regrown themselves. Camilla’s skin still looked red and sore.

Crown said, “They’re probably finished now. Don’t worry so much. The Cell Commander wants to see you in private this morning. This isn’t

official ... just a chat.”

“I’m missing school right now,” said Nona, reminded of her grief. “I’m a Teacher’s Aide, Crown, and there’s lots of stuff going on.”

“You’ve got to skip sometimes, or they won’t know how much they need you,” advised Crown, smiling—but Nona could tell she didn’t sympathise that much. There was a worry pucker right in the centre of her forehead, and it wasn’t a worry pucker for Nona. “I could write you a note.”

Camilla said, “I am no longer interested in whatever the Cell Commander has to say.”

“I know,” said Crown—and there was that worry pucker again. “I know. But *try*, Camilla ... I know you refuse to see it anymore, but We Suffer’s on your side. We’re not the hardliners. We want the same things you do.”

“You really don’t,” said Cam.

Camilla reached down into her shirt pocket to take out a hard-shell case. She retrieved the pair of worn dark glasses with big smoked lenses, and slid them up the bridge of her nose. Nona didn’t like the way they looked on her face: they made her look like one of the people who would sit in the back of an armoured truck with shiny rifles covered in blazes of orange tape, chewing bubble gum, waiting to get hired by people who wanted to go shoot something up but didn’t have enough friends to scare the militia. Hiring them cost a little bit more than bread. They whistled at you if you had gone swimming and were wearing damp shorts and still drying your hair, and Camilla didn’t stop them the way she stopped other people. When Nona asked why Palamedes said he had made Camilla promise to never stop them, never get their attention, never make a fuss. He said Nona needed to do the same. He said for one thing they only had so many towels at home.

Crown murmured, all her annoyance gone, “Be careful, Sixth, We Suffer’s not stupid,” but Camilla just said—

“Let’s get this over with. I had things to do today.”

“You have no idea” was all Crown said, mysteriously.

Nona had been to “debriefings,” which were always extraordinarily strange and uncomfortable, and they always escorted you to the bathroom nearly into the cubicle, which was hell. But they had never been seen in private before. Crown led them down unfamiliar corridors until they reached the usual long, dusty corridor they always walked down, and the room they were always led to—the tall narrow room dominated by one long

table, covered in wood veneer and cracked in several places, though very clean. There were still pens and loose scraps of paper on the table, as there always were, which gave you the feeling that you were walking into a meeting right as the last one had ended. The ceiling was multi-holed ventilation panelling of a type Nona longed to throw pencils at, to see if they would stick in the holes. The only decoration was a series of portraits, clustered at the far end of the table.

The portraits were of people from the shoulders up. There were little shelves inset at the bottom of each frame where people had left flowers, dried or plastic, and long burnt-out joss sticks in little glasses, or coins that didn't look like any kind of legal tender Nona ever handed over in return for a bottle of milk. What distinguished most of the portraits was that they were paintings, and very old, all except for one: a photograph of a woman with ferociously red hair and an expression that said she was about to hit the photographer. She blossomed out of a thicket of dusty plastic flowers more numerous than those her painted associates got.

Pyrrha was sitting in the special chair they always got out for Pyrrha. It was a hard chair made of bent metal tubing and scratchy matte plastic pads, and they always strapped a thing to her neck that made soft *klik ... klik* sounds whenever she moved her head back and forth. This was because if Pyrrha made too many sudden movements it would blow out her spinal column automatically. It made a soft *klik* as Pyrrha turned back her head to look at them: she had been staring at the portrait of the lady who looked as though she were about to hit the photographer.

There was another *klik*, more of a *click*, as the door locked behind them. This startled Nona; she hadn't seen anyone walking with them and Crown down the corridor. Crown didn't seem to care, but Camilla tensed up.

There were people already in the room when they got there, dressed the way Blood of Eden always dressed. Nona was forever amazed by their get-up. Everyone she ever met at the meetings covered their heads like they were in a dust storm, and wore masks that varied wildly—gas masks and surgery masks and festival masks with teeth drawn on, and welder's goggles that covered the eyes, and dark glasses that let you see in the nighttime—everyone had visored eyes and swathed themselves in layers of fabric so that it was hard to tell what lay beneath. When they talked, their voices sounded flat and muffled, or breathy and tinny if they were wearing gas apparatuses. Some people with bigger masks had voices that did not

sound like any voice that had ever come out of anyone. Palamedes had said they were using tech to hide what they sounded like.

Usually there were a dozen people like this at the meetings; today there were only two.

It was easy to tell which person was the more important. They were sat right in front of the portrait, haloed by that thicket of plastic flowers. A kind of bodyguard stood a little to their left, a long gun slung over their back and a big machete strapped to each thigh. Nona used to think that was cool, but Camilla said it was completely stupid and not cool at all. Palamedes then said Cam was a big hypocrite. The two-thigh-machetes person had their face obscured with an air cleanser toggle mask and welder's goggles, which made them look quite frightening to Nona, like a monster picture. Two-Thigh-Machetes was hooded and wore a long jacket and gloves, so not one bit of their true self was visible.

The sitting person was less frightening in a white mask, the kind they had a box of at home, and quite ordinary black goggles and a deep black hood. You couldn't see any forehead or ears, or any skin at all. This was the commander. In heavily accented House she said, "Please sit."

The soft panel lights at the sides of the room had been dimmed, which made the overdressed visages sitting with them at the table all the more indistinct and weird. It also made Crown's beautiful face more beautiful, lending her eyes a softness and her laughing mouth a tenderness that bright light sometimes took away. Camilla and Nona sat down at the very end of the table and Crown sat on Nona's left. Camilla took one of the click pens from the table in front of her and rolled it between her fingers very slowly, making it flip from knuckle to knuckle, her hips angled forward on the chair.

Crown pressed one hand to her chest in a formal salute and said, "Crown Him with Many Crowns Thy Full Gallant Legions He Found It in Him to Forgive, representing Ctesiphon-3, acknowledges We Suffer and We Suffer of Ctesiphon-1. Troia cell reporting in, Cell Commander."

"Let's not be so formal. I have had three emergency meetings today and I am pretending this is, how you say, a coffee break," said We Suffer and We Suffer. "This is ... a personal discussion. So please consider all information here limited to Troia cell, not to be mentioned in outside chitchat."

"Have you checked the room for bugs?" asked Pyrrha pleasantly.

“Please try to do a little less of the telling me my own business, Ms. Dve,” said We Suffer.

“Just wanted to make sure,” said Pyrrha. “Because this *is* off the log, isn’t it? We’re in one of the old buildings on the southeast, in a district Blood of Eden doesn’t hold. You’re outside your zone.”

Two-Thigh-Machetes drew the big gun from their back and it made the ready noise. They said—“The Lyctor knows too much.”

Only their air-toggle mask had some kind of vocaliser on it, so they sounded like a pissed-off robot suffering an occasional blast of static, sort of THE LYCTOR ZZT KNOWS TOO MUCH.

“At ease,” said We Suffer, not even looking at Two-Thigh-Machetes. Two-Thigh-Machetes did *not* move to being at ease. We Suffer kept her eyes on Pyrrha. She asked, “Did the drivers take the southern motorway, with the bumps?”

“It’s a giveaway,” said Pyrrha.

“Goddamn it,” said We Suffer. She waved her hand again; Two-Thigh-Machetes slowly lowered the gun. She said, “Yes. We are not on our A-game today. Let us move on from playing games with how clever and how old you are. I am not impressed, and they annoy my colleague.”

Camilla popped the nib on the pen and said, “Who armed the dockworkers who busted through Port Authority yesterday?”

Two-Thigh-Machetes said, “Here we go.” This became HERE WE ZZT GO.

We Suffer steepled her fingers together and said, “We have a great deal to discuss and that is not really relevant,” and Camilla said—“Let me make it more relevant. Did you know about the Port Authority assault beforehand, or didn’t you?”

Before We Suffer could answer this question, their bodyguard said intensely: “Did you have an *objection*? (ZZT?)

Camilla said, “Twenty-two people were shot,” and the bodyguard said, “No. Nineteen people were shot, and three zombie loyalists got put down. Get your maths right. Do you care about the nineteen? Or the *three*? ”

Because of the mask it came out very flat, like DO YOU CARE ZZT ABOUT THE NINETEEN ZZT?, which didn’t work at all. Nona longed to point this out, but Crown got in first—“If you question Troia cell’s loyalty you’re questioning *my* loyalty, agent. Are you? Because Blood of Eden states I’ve got right of recourse, and I can take that recourse right here, right

now. How about it? Bet you've never been challenged before. How does it feel?"

Even through a plastic mask and some goggles and a hood We Suffer was starting to look distinctly pained, and when the bodyguard intoned, "JUST GREAT. LET'S GO ZZZT," We Suffer said: "That is much more than enough. You are trained soldiers, not dockside rabble two beers down. There is no right of recourse here. I would rate you both, except that we have no time for that whatsoever."

The bodyguard and Crown fell silent. Crown's eyes were hot and angry, and her lips were pressed together: as per usual she looked great. When Nona was very angry her cheeks went red and her voice got squeaky; she felt deeply envious.

We Suffer said, "Please listen calmly to what I have to tell you, Hect. The negotiator is in orbit."

Camilla stood up.

Pyrrha said gently, "We were expecting this. Get the intel," and Camilla sat down. From the side Nona could see her eyes were angry in a different and less magnificent way than Crown's. They were blank, as though everything Camilla in them had been erased: perfectly grey and glassy and still.

Pyrrha said, "You could have saved yourself half an hour and us a round trip by telling us this back at our digs, Commander."

"What I do is watched very carefully, Ms. Dve," said We Suffer. "So I am being very casual ... very by the book ... so that I can get a chance to talk with my Troia cell, in the normal way, quietly. The negotiator arriving throws us all into disarray. Many factions did not expect them to dare to come, not with the blue madness."

"How's consensus?" asked Pyrrha.

"Currently there is an emergency meeting I am not attending about whether to blow the negotiator out of the sky. The numbers are now not so in favour of that that I am especially worried," said We Suffer. "They are the anarchists who propose this in any case, not the hardcore. They would blow most of the planet up as a middle finger, but they do not have the support. Officially I am willing to be led. Unofficially I am wildly delighted by this. As time goes by ... as we dither and panic here and lose more and more on Antioch ... the antinegotiation sect loses momentum. And this is a huge boon in many ways as far as we are concerned. The picture, please."

This was said to Two-Thigh-Machetes, who crossed to the left side of the table and vented their feelings on a cord dangling from the ceiling, making a length of white sheeting come tumbling down the wall. Then they returned to the other side of the room behind We Suffer and started to fiddle with the projector box embedded in the table, mumbling darkly all the while, which sounded through the air circulator a lot like they were fizzing.

Nona grew vaguely excited, because she did like seeing projector box displays. With Blood of Eden all you normally got to see were maps, or numbers, or pictures of dead bodies dumped on one another, but you took what you could get.

“Thank you. Let us get this thing loading,” said We Suffer.

Crown said slowly, “You didn’t show *me* a picture, Commander.”

“No,” said We Suffer. “I am showing you now.”

The guard flicked the switch. In response, the projector hummed to life and the white screen exploded into greys, but the image projected came into focus so slowly that it was barely a picture at all. It looked as though it was being painted on the screen row by row, from the top to the bottom, every row constantly redrafted with higher resolution and sharpness. Nona made out something lumpy on a darker background, but that was it.

“The limits of technology. Excuse it. We are using shortwave,” said We Suffer, with a touch of impatience. “I knew I should have loaded it before ... I have been in cars all of last evening, all the night, all this morning. I will get a thrombosis. Let me give you a little preamble. You are about to see a stellar craft sighted”—We Suffer looked down at a folder in front of her—“six hours and twenty-five minutes ago. It is in orbit as we speak.”

The grey-on-grey blob resolved into a shuttle. Nona had seen shuttles planetside before the sky changed: big boxy cargo launchers with hooks on top so that they could attach to the space elevator and launch from the geostation. They looked like cake tins with company pictures etched on the sides. This looked sleeker and it wasn’t etched at all. There were bones inlaid in the sides like fossils in a dried-out riverbed: whole skeletons curled up as though they had fallen in the shuttle mould, beautifully and intricately set. And it had windows of dark glass. No cargo launcher had *windows*.

The moment the image came into view Camilla’s fingers had stilled on the pen. She clicked it so that the nib appeared, and then idly doodled on the

paper, except that Camilla was never idle and was physically incapable of doing anything that sounded like *doodle*.

We Suffer said, “You understand that this image caused serious consternation.”

“Should’ve eased your minds,” said Pyrrha. “That’s not a reinforcement craft.”

“I agree. It is not a troop carrier. It is maybe ten metres across,” said We Suffer.

The bodyguard said hotly, “I can cram a battalion into ten metres. Give me time and I’ll cram two.” (ZZT TWO.)

We Suffer said, “Mmm. Perhaps stacking them lengthways?”

“The soldiers will do as I say,” said the bodyguard.

“Then how relaxing it is for the soldiers that we have removed you from active duty,” said We Suffer. “Crown? Let your people comment.”

Crown and Camilla exchanged a significant look. Camilla’s stilled fingers had returned to playing with the pen. Nona snuck a look at what she had been drawing; it looked like nothing more than three squiggles and a tiny heart.

“How long has the Second House installation been abandoned now? Station Red-as-Blood?” asked Cam.

We Suffer said, “Ah. I see where you are going with this, the line of questioning you are bringing. The answer is three months since the troops of the Empire abandoned it. I received word yesterday of an investigation last week. It was reported empty. You are wondering about point of origin?”

“Yes. That ship’s not big enough for a stele. Don’t know if it’s big enough for subluminary travel, even. How did it get here?”

Crown leant back in her chair, staring at the projector screen, head balanced in the crook of one golden arm. Nona noticed that her biceps showed even through her shirt, and that there were rubber bandages wrapped around one palm. She said, “Oh, that’s big enough for subluminary travel, Millie. See the double struts, and the massive exhaust? That’s a *Ziz*-class.”

It was hard for Camilla to hold anyone’s gaze behind the dark glasses, but she inclined her head a little way toward Pyrrha, who was staring at the picture. Pyrrha shrugged and said, “Crown’s the expert. This is all after my time.”

Crown continued, “The *Ziz* isn’t Cohort standard. And it’s not as big on the inside as you think. Look at the windows—see how there’re none on the back end? It’s mostly engine. Not plated either. It’ll get to sublume without many problems … but it definitely doesn’t have room for a stele. Camilla is right. It can’t travel by obelisk anchor.”

Camilla had started writing on her bit of paper before Crown finished talking, somehow managing to write and stare intently at the same time. The bodyguard did not even try to hide their interest in Cam’s paper, craning their head to stare in open suspicion, but did not seem to find anything to be hostile about.

We Suffer said, “Ah! Are you secretly an expert on the stellar craft of your people, Crown? That is a very useful piece to have in our box of tricks,” but Crown just laughed.

“Oh, only secondhand, Commander. I had a massive crush on a boy who was really into shuttles,” she said, and added wistfully, “He had a great body. A dancer. *Loved* shuttles … didn’t look at me twice, so I fell head over heels. Story of my life.”

The bodyguard said, “What happened? You eat him?”

Crown said, “A boy like that? Not all at once.”

“You’re foul,” said the bodyguard.

“Yes. Good. The intel, I mean, not anybody’s romantic history, which I abhor,” said We Suffer. “Let me change my numbers. Lower our estimate to seven to eight metres—yes?—of troop room. That is even better.”

But the bodyguard said urgently, (ZZT!) “Seven metres. Six metres. It doesn’t matter, Commander. It would take five trained zombies to blow a hole in us. The city’s only just starting to get over the fear of having their bones come out. If that confidence gets hit again, we’re pushed *months* back on the barracks, and they’ll regroup. Let me talk to the antinegotiation faction, you know I’ve got pull.”

“Have you forgotten Varun the Eater all of a sudden?” asked We Suffer mildly. “Have you forgotten hive exposure and blue madness, for the sake of your argument?”

“Who says they haven’t come up with a cure for that? Who says they haven’t figured out magic, or a pill or whatever, that stops them throwing up and screaming? Have you forgotten *Assume the worst, ignore the best?*”

For some reason, Pyrrha smiled a little, like she was thinking of something. The bodyguard’s head had inclined briefly to the portrait

hanging behind We Suffer.

We Suffer said: “Have *you* forgotten: *do not catastrophise*? I heard that often from her own lips. I have no time for worst-case scenarios. We must play with the cards we have been dealt.”

Pyrrha said suddenly, “Crown. How’s the fuel consumption on a *Ziz*-class ship?”

“Thirsty,” said Crown, brightening up at being asked. “Its cell would be totally drained after a day in subluminary. It only takes the powerful stuff too—thalergy-enriched, not just hydrogen blend. Hydrogen blend stuffs up the engine.”

“Back to point of origin. Either this shuttle’s derelict, or—it dropped through the River,” said Camilla.

The bodyguard said, “What *River*?” but We Suffer interrupted: “That is above your security clearance. Ignore.”

“Then I should *have* that bloody security cl—”

Pyrrha said, “Then who exactly is the negotiator?”

“That is what we would all dearly love to know,” said We Suffer. “This has delighted many factions, Unjust Hope’s included … they are saying, ah, we have the power, John Gaius is taking us and the matter very seriously.”

“Well, he would, wouldn’t he?” said Camilla. “You’re selling him back the Sixth House.”

There was a buzzing intake of breath as though Two-Thigh-Machetes was going to say something, but Pyrrha cut in swiftly: “John Gaius has always taken you seriously. Commander, what does this mean about the due date?”

We Suffer said, “The Hopers are asking for a progress report.”

Her goggles, buried so deeply beneath her hood, were angled toward Nona. Everyone in the room suddenly remembered Nona existed, and looked at her too; she felt exposed, and regretted everything until Camilla gave her that tiny expression—that smile so minute it could slip underneath a doorway—and she felt better.

Crown said, “But we’ve got months and months. She’s come along wonderfully … Point out we’ve got other ways and means.”

“I point out things to the others continually,” said We Suffer. “Unfortunately, everyone agrees that we have exhausted the ways and are very, very low on the means. I agree on her magnificent progress. But she is not yet what we hoped for, and I include myself here.”

Camilla said, “Tell them collaring Lyctors hasn’t gone so well for you.”

We Suffer pressed her gloved fingertips together. “Well, no, that is not so true,” she said meditatively. “Ctesiphon’s interactions with Source Joyeuse and Source Piotra got us many things. Accurate fleet schematics for the first time in a hundred years. Goodness, that was a day. I was only a young soldier then, but that was exciting. *And* the location of the Mithraeum … very useful. Not to mention a genuine attempt on the life of John Gaius. I know it did not take, but that in itself was important information. We would know nothing about Resurrection Beasts without Commander Wake”—here she and the bodyguard saluted the portrait on the wall, and Pyrrha’s mouth did something strange)—“and her Source Aegis … leading to contact with a House, twenty years ago. A terrible mission failure, we thought. Until the posthumous contact a year ago. No, interacting with Lyctors has not been so bad. Of course, our greatest ally was Source Chrysaor, who taught us all about the obelisks and steles, and who defeated ten high-ranking House personnel and one necromantic monster.”

“Cytherea took out a handful of adults, a handful of kids, and an old science project,” said Pyrrha impatiently. “And she let two new Lyctors through the net. It wasn’t her best effort. Whatever she was doing at Canaan House, it wasn’t helping you out. Come on, Commander. When you say *they want progress*, do you mean they want to weaponise her? Or is she merely another part of their negotiation bundle?”

Camilla said, “Anyone who would describe two fourteen-year-olds as high-ranking House personnel isn’t interested in Nona as a person.”

We Suffer held up a hand. “Camilla Hect,” she said, “I am not trying to be cruel. You must see it from our point of view. When you stand in our shoes, Chrysaor—Cytherea the First—came to us, and identified the crisis of many new Lyctors about to rise, and removed it. There were eight powerful necromancers at Canaan House … to us, the seeds of eight more enemies we could never hope to defeat. Lyctors take out the very flooring from beneath our feet. We cannot see them coming. We can never stop them. When they arrive the clock starts, and another home is taken away from us … our children stateless, our grandchildren perpetual nomads. How many lives, balanced against those ten dead people and that one old—thing?”

“Cytherea didn’t kill ten people,” Cam said. The pen was held very tightly between thumb and forefinger now, and it didn’t move. “She only killed six. The cavalier primary of the Second House killed your monster, and died at its hands. The Eighth was killed by something even we don’t understand. And the Sixth House went out on its own terms.”

There was an unpleasant silence.

“What happened at Canaan House wasn’t your victory, Commander,” said Camilla. “It was Cytherea’s. She was the only person in that whole building who got what they wanted … you just got lucky off the scraps she dropped. And you still think Lyctors are a gun you can wield? What happens if we give you the one you want, right here, right now? In these barracks, at full power, and mad with hive exposure? Assume the worst, ignore the best. And the worst here is pretty bad.”

“You don’t know anything about the *worst*,” said the bodyguard. “You want to know what the real worst-case plan is? I helped craft it. We go over the cowards’ heads, we don’t wait for negotiations. We evacuate who we can, we liquidate that barracks, we carpet-bomb the whole place. We make sure that every zombie on the planet is dead. I think that big blue son of a bitch is here looking for zombies. No more zombies? No more sphere. Isn’t it crazy how you always argue for a plan in which the zombies get to live?”

Crown slapped the table so sharply that everyone jumped, except Pyrrha.

“Oh, shut *up!* Just shut up … I’m sick of your fake bravado and bloodlust. Leave my wing alone. I can’t stand listening to you rark.”

The room fell silent, the bodyguard too. Crown and the guard stared at each other through a layer of air-toggle mask and welding goggles with a hate that was genuine.

“You’re only boobs, hair, and talk, Crown,” said the guard.

“No,” said Crown. “I’m boobs *and* hair *and* talk *and* a hell of a sword hand.”

“Did you think that sounded cool?” said the guard.

“You ignored my warning. Both of you are on bullet duty in your frees today,” said We Suffer. “This is for saying boobs, and for being boobs yourselves. Repeat it again and it is two days, as promised.”

The bodyguard stood so tall and so hard that they trembled, vibrating slightly. Crown fell back in her chair, arms crossed. We Suffer sat back too. The hood fell a little away from her face, and the black lenses covering her

eyes now gleamed beneath the dimmed lamps, reflecting all of them in the glass.

“Troia cell,” she said, “this is an old conversation. It is one we have had over and over again. You know the ways in which I am sympathetic and in which I am not. It is not simply a matter of the sixteen. If I say, ‘The Lyctor experiment is going well in that the Lyctor now talks in full sentences but shows no signs of power,’ then the others will definitely say, ‘Useless. Offer her up with the others.’ If I lie and say, ‘We will soon have a Lyctor on hand,’ the Hopers will want me to prove it. And the Hopers are the ones who are in charge of your people’s incarceration, and I cannot fob them off. Everyone wants to know what we have on the table before the negotiators arrive, and I am expected to say our part later today. Exactly what I say … exactly how I say it … should matter very much to you right now.”

Camilla said, “Thanks for reminding me. I want Sixth House proof of life.”

Crown said, “You know there’s no question of harming them, especially at the moment.”

“Proof of life. Now,” said Camilla steadily. “I want to make sure there’s still sixteen. Maybe the reason they want Nona is to patch up numbers, and hide how many of them have died under torture.”

We Suffer said stiffly, “I was the one who promised them clemency, Hect. There is a no-torture clause. Merv Wing know that.”

“Yeah, well,” said Pyrrha, “you aren’t exactly showing a united front.”

“Unjust Hope is a very crap human being,” said We Suffer, “but my word is still not *nothing* in Blood of Eden.”

Pyrrha said, “How certain are you of that?”

There was a long silence. We Suffer wheezed through the mask, and then said abruptly, “I had intended to give you this anyway … Here.”

She opened up a brown-paper folder, and took from it a little piece of electronics, a fingernail-shaped thing with prongs. She tapped on a space in the cracked wooden veneer on the table, and nothing happened, so she tapped again more violently and it reluctantly opened—a panel in the wood, revealing hard white plastic sockets and buttons. Camilla was still again, chin in one hand and pen in the other, more like a picture of Camilla than Camilla herself. There was a sudden noisy crackle from the speakers in the walls, and then a disembodied voice—“Master Archivist Juno Zeta reporting, remaining as representative of the Oversight Body in lieu of the

Master Warden. I count six days, seven hours, and forty-six minutes since the last recording. In answer to the previous question, the article title is *Heteroscedasticity in Viscus Models for Long-Term Data*. Head count standard. All well within the house formerly identified as Sixth. Awaiting further instructions.”

The pen had scratched a tiny mark into the paper Camilla had been doodling on. Her shoulders suddenly relaxed, and she clicked the pen, and her face minutely bent toward the mark.

“Do you accept this as proof of life?” said We Suffer.

“Yes,” she said. “This is the next proof-of-life question: How many pages in my Scholar’s thesis?”

We Suffer wrote that down. “All right. I cannot guarantee the next drop coming soon under these circumstances, but I will try to make it timely. Please, Camilla Hect, give me something.”

Camilla sat ramrod-straight, very still, in a pose of pure thought.

“Tell them they’ll have a Lyctor, or equivalent, if they wait,” she said.

“Now there’s a grim fucking thought,” said Two-Thigh-Machetes.

We Suffer said levelly, “Then we go with promises? Fine. Is there anything else?”

“Well, I need the bathroom,” said Nona.

“Ah, in the end, all of us are people … who need the bathroom,” said We Suffer, and leant back in her chair.

“You think I am trying to shore up my own failing power base,” We Suffer said finally. She had pressed her hands together so that it looked as though she were praying. “You think I am either cruel and traitorous—that I had thought this was the outcome of the great coming-together that we hoped for—or stupid, that I was naive. I am not naive … I had just never thought we would be given such a terrible scare, or such a terrible chance. I wish for Blood of Eden to fight, and fight beautifully; to win with whatever aid or succour your Houses may bestow. I do not want to run anymore. Now the negotiator comes. What will John Gaius ask for, and what will John Gaius want? And will we give it to him? All I can tell you is I am prepared to give *my* answer … and I feel that Blood of Eden would stand with me if they only knew how, if they were given good reasons. Please help me give them those reasons. We are done here. Let us all go to the bathroom. Dismissed, Ctesiphon-3, Troia cell.”



13

CROWN STOOD, AND BOWED, and tapped her chest three times with an open palm, which was the Blood of Eden way; then she began untaping Pyrrha from her seat, unmercifully, with Pyrrha barely wincing. We Suffer kept her seat as they filed out, Camilla in front, Pyrrha after, and Crown bringing up the rear, and before the door was closed Nona heard the bodyguard say: “Can I bloody well leave now? The package is late for work.” (“PACKAGE ZZZT IS LATE FOR WORK.”)

Crown’s jaw was gritted fast. She automatically started shepherding Nona toward the bathroom down the corridor, but Nona said—“Why does Pash hate us so much?”

Crown was so startled that her jaw relaxed.

“How could you have known that was Our Lady of the Passion?”

“It’s ... it’s bones,” said Nona, struggling to articulate. “Beneath her clothes. The way she moves her bones,” and Camilla looked at her for the longest time.

“Pash,” said Crown darkly, “is what happens when nepotism and bullshit collide. *Boobs and hair...?*! My hair is naturally big and manageable, dickhead! I haven’t been able to condition properly for a year!”

There were two guards waiting outside. They led Pyrrha away to get her collar taken off. Pyrrha went with them much more meekly than Nona expected, and just turned her head to say to Nona: “Remember to stuff,” before the guards shuffled her onward with the butts of their rifles.

As though she wouldn’t. When Nona was locked away in the bathroom stall stealing toilet paper, judiciously stuffing it down her shirt as Pyrrha

had taught her—Pyrrha had a very Blood of Eden mindset, if you thought about it—she heard Camilla outside by the sinks, saying quietly: “Let me see her.”

Crown said, as though casually surprised, “Do you really want to? It’s not a good day. She’s in and out … Moving her has been a royal bitch. We’ve had to keep shifting her between beds ever since we got her here.”

“Okay. Let me see her.”

“If you agitate—”

Camilla said, “You know I can help her, Third. You know I want to.”

It seemed like Crown was going to say a joke or something dismissive again, but then she said, “So long as Dve doesn’t tag along. Your call.”

When Nona rustled her way out of the stall, Camilla looked at her chest, and her mouth quirked in something that might have been the tiniest and most beautiful smile yet. But Crown didn’t notice. Her lovely head was bowed and her sooty eyelashes lowered. Nona said, “Are we going right away? I’m going to be *so* late for school,” but Camilla said, “I want to make a quick visit first. Do you want to come with, or do you want to stay in the waiting room and wait for Pyrrha?”

The waiting room was not an option; Nona would be stuck with some Edenite bodyguard who wouldn’t even talk to her, and no magazines, and nothing to look at. But Camilla loved to give people choices. Nona hated how she fell for that every time: whenever Camilla said something like, “Cereal, or eggs?” Nona would be tricked into saying *Cereal* even though she had wanted to choose *Nothing!!* But this choice was easy; she liked visits.

They took the lift downstairs. Crown said the stairs didn’t go as far as they were going. Camilla asked if the depth was doing anything. Crown said in a don’t-care-ish voice, Maybe, it seemed to, but it stopped having an effect after a while. Camilla said, Makes sense, distance isn’t really an issue, the creature isn’t fully instantiated but squatting in the River, and Crown said, How will we know if it instantiates, and Camilla said, Because gravity will change and the planet’ll break up, and Crown said, Hmm. Nona listened to this with one ear only: the toilet paper was itching.

As the lift went down, she said, with the pleasure of realisation—“Oh, we’re visiting the Captain!”

All Blood of Eden buildings seemed to have big elevators going deep down into the earth. In this elevator Crown had pushed the button to go

down six whole floors. When they exited it was very dark and cool, and the halls were made of slabs of concrete cracked by some past pressure. The lights weren't the pretty panels of up top—they were strung on thick juicy plastic wires bundled up high on the walls, and they swung in distress when Nona and the others passed them. It was a place where if you whistled, your whistle would echo back, and Nona pursed her lips, but Camilla saw her and furrowed her eyebrows, so she didn't.

Most of the doors were open, and the rooms within were dark and full of stacks of abandoned furniture. One door was shut. There was a Blood of Eden person there, wearing a full balaclava and a hood to go over it. Nona wondered if they all kept hats and hoods and things in their back pockets just in case. They gave Crown the salute—three taps to the chest—and shouldered their gun, and walked off down the hall. Crown put her hand on the handle and stopped. She suddenly looked tired.

"Don't worry about volume," she said. "Noise never bugs her."

Camilla said, "Is she part of the negotiation?"

"Ha! She wishes," said Crown. "No. She's our ticket out of here."

Nona hadn't seen the Captain in a long time; not since a little before the blue sphere had appeared. Palamedes had banned Nona from seeing her. Camilla said Captain Deuterons thought the solution to every problem was to act like the problem had one solution that nobody else was tough enough to take, and then to pursue that solution as hard as possible. She had always been very ... intense, with Nona.

Her new room underground was very spacious, almost the size of their kitchen and living room back on the thirtieth floor, and bare except for a bed, a chair, and a table cluttered with injecting needles. The lights had been dimmed so low that all the shadows bled into each other. A pole with a plastic bag of clear fluid was right next to the bed, and a tube passed down from the bag to the Captain, who was lying flat on her back amidst the white sheeting, wearing something that looked a lot like Nona's worst nightie.

Crown made them squirt antibacterial gel onto their hands, and fussed until they rubbed it in. "She gets everything going," she said. Once they had done that, they were allowed to approach.

The Captain's eyes were shut, her eyelids a little swollen, almost purplish, like somebody had hit her. Her deep black hair had been painstakingly braided away from her face, showing the pretty early

silvering at her temples, but that was the only beautiful thing about her. Her skin was dry and her bones showed, especially in the cheeks. Her cheekbones and square chin looked like they were about to stretch her face to the breaking point. She looked so thin and still lying there in that bed that Nona was very sorry, even if the Captain was strange.

Camilla approached the bed immediately. She looked at the bag of clear fluid, and reached out to touch the Captain's dead-bronze wrist and asked, "How are they giving her food?"

Crown said, "By mouth. We've fed her by tube too. It's all fairly primitive, I'll be honest."

"She's dehydrated. Who's nursing her?"

"She's managed to help herself a couple of times, on the best days. When that thing's as far away in orbit as it gets. No one here's as good as you."

Nona peeked around Camilla's arm. The Captain's black brows drew together, and her face took on a hideous expression: a flat tangle of features that scared Nona so badly that she wanted to go to the bathroom again, right until the Captain opened her mouth and droned, punctuated by huge wheezing lungfuls of air: "Dust of my dust—such similar star salt—what they did to you and what they wrung from you and what shape they made you fill—we see you still—we seek you still—we murdered—we who murder—you inadvertent tool—you misused green thing—come back to us —take vengeance for us—we saw you—we see you—I see you."

The wheezing breath turned into a strangled noise, and the Captain's body thrashed upward. She twisted like a fish being drawn out of the harbour on a line. A little green box that Nona had taken for a clock started beeping urgently. Crown shouldered forward, but was told tersely, "Give me room. She's not getting enough blood to her heart," and Cam placed one hand flat on the Captain's chest before pulling the tinted glasses off her face in a fit of impatience. Nona took these and rubbed at the warm steel with her hands: she liked them so long as no one wore them. Camilla asked, "What's happening with her kidneys? What are they giving her for her blood pressure?"

"A medical thinner, but—"

"Thought so. Give me a second." Camilla's hands kept pressing down, as though holding Judith to the bed. After a moment so long Nona nearly bit through her tongue from anxiety and excitement, the Captain went limp.

The awful expression left her face, which went slack, if not peaceful. Crown did not sigh, or exclaim in relief, or anything: she had chewed her lips so badly that they had split and were now red, like lipstick.

Camilla's hands hovered over the Captain's chest, as though waiting to catch her heart. "That'll do. Take her off the anticoagulants. Is the compulsive shouting typical?"

"Lately," said Crown, after another pause. "I'm not sure she's in actual pain ... Palamedes."

Palamedes said nothing, simply made a quite-good Camilla expression —one quirked eyebrow, the mouth not doing much—but Crown smiled and said, "You've been pretty obvious today. Get out of it, Master Warden."

He said heavily: "I hope to God you didn't codge up a medical emergency just to catch me out, Princess."

"I wish we had. I wish I was that smart. Don't panic, we're not being bugged. I knew you weren't in the hand bones the Ninth made anymore. I don't know what you and Cam have done, Sextus, but I haven't told. I haven't told but I *have* known, for a long time. This was only ... confirmation."

"Like hell it was. You guessed," said Palamedes.

"No. You didn't react to *Millie*. She hates it when I use *Millie* now."

"She didn't love it before. Better friends to her than you have been glared at for less."

Crown quirked her eyebrows together languidly, like she was too tired to make too many facial expressions in a row. Nona didn't know why Palamedes wrinkled his nose as though he'd smelled something bad.

"The Captain and Cam and I were stuck together for a long time, you know," she drawled eventually. "I'm not saying I knew from the way you moved or the things you said. You're seamless, I'll give you that! I knew because ... because she stopped being so unhappy. The whole time I knew her she was grieving ... she couldn't hide that. At the same time I was grieving, and the Captain was grieving, and we—she and I can grieve alike enough to fight about it, but Camilla was *gone*. Camilla was gone and then we met Harrowhark, and she came back. That's all it was. What did you do?"

She was interrupted by movement from the bed. The Captain's swollen eyelids had fluttered open, and she coughed. Crown immediately dropped to her knees beside the bed so that she wasn't looming over it. Palamedes

took some wadding from the table with the hypodermics and wetted it, and he wiped it over the Captain's cracked, wan mouth.

"Thank you," she said. Her voice was very low; Nona almost couldn't hear it.

"Don't mention it. I'm going to give your kidneys a clean, Captain."

"No," she said, "I can do it. Let me."

Crown made a noise in the back of her throat as the Captain placed her thin hands over her own middle. It took a little bit for her to find her hands, or her middle. She gritted her teeth, and a grunt escaped as she did—something. It left her gasping, and Palamedes said quietly, "A heroic effort. I'll finish you off, ma'am—don't want that buildup going elsewhere," and put Camilla's hand on the Captain's. The Captain's chill brown eyes closed again briefly. As Nona watched, the dry, cracked patches on her skin disappeared, and some of the pinched look went from her face, and her colour deepened to more of a burnished russet and less like something that had dried too long on a rack.

Nona remembered, and touched Palamedes's arm, and mouthed, *Timer*; he grimaced, and pushed glasses that weren't there up his nose, and nodded.

The Captain coughed again, but less awfully. She said, throatily, "Where am I?"

"You're in the Ur facility, Deuterros," said Crown. "Blood of Eden rescued us from Canaan House, remember? They saved your life, and mine and Camilla's. Remember living shipside together? Remember how they stitched you up?"

Some of the hope wrinkled out of the Captain's forehead. "Yes," she said darkly, and, "Name and rank: Captain Judith Deuterros ... House: Second. Status: adept. Cavalier: Marta Dyas, dead."

Crown said, "Oh, here we go again."

"Service record: seven ... I ... approximately seventeen years. Name and rank..."

"*Judith*. You're regressing."

"Princess," said the Captain, at the bottom of her voice, "there's still time. I know the Cohort will come for us ... even me, the pilot. Walk this back. I'll say what's true. They abused your sympathies. Their methods are sophisticated. It's not your fault. I'll tell them everything..."

Crown's mouth trembled. "Oh, will you, Jody? Will you *really*?"

"You too, Hect ... say it and I'll believe it. Say we were all coerced, and they used our lives against each other. We were hostages. Incidental pieces ... in a much larger game ... played by Lyctors, traitors, monsters." In a different voice she suddenly said, "Where am I? Where's Marta? Where's Lieutenant Dyas?"

Then she threw back her head and howled like an animal. Crown and Palamedes both held her down.

After she had exhausted herself, thrashing, she gasped: "I remember. I'm fine. I'm fine," and Palamedes withdrew, though Crown held the Captain's hand down against the drab white sheets of the bed.

The Captain's chest was heaving beneath the outfit that looked like Nona's worst nightie. She murmured, "Keeping me alive ... intact ... just so I can work their damned stele and get Cohort blood ... all over my hands. Gun to your neck ... blood on my hands ... saints against God."

"Don't talk," said Crown roughly. "You're spouting nonsense."

"You haven't talked sense in months." She burbled with coughing again. "You're the one facing the dark night of the soul, Princess."

"Love that melodrama. Is there Eighth somewhere in your family tree?"

"Gave yourself up ... gave all of us up ... for what? Propaganda and a leash ... promise of salvation without understanding the sin. Hect and the hideous Sixth House mechanism ... and now they are taken too. For *what*? Our lives? Is this living, Corona?"

"You've never lived a single day of your life," said Corona bitterly. "It'd be against regulations."

The Captain said, "Name and rank: Captain Judith Deuterros. House ... Second," and Crown scrubbed at her face with her hand, little licks of hair escaping from their elastic and curling over her forehead like light. The Captain broke off and said, "You think you're walking the tightrope with fast talking and your face ... steeled myself to the talking long ago. But you're slipping, Princess ... can't save you from that ... Hect, my hands are too filthy to save you..."

It was funny to think of anyone wanting to save Camilla. The Captain's eyes restlessly passed to Nona. Sweat was beading on her temples. The Captain focused, and said hoarsely, "Ninth, where is the mercy of the Tomb? Where is your sword in the coffin? Who are your masters now, and who do you master? Where is my cavalier, Reverend Daughter? Where is yours?"

Her voice rose. “Because I saw her in the waves—she was there in the grey water—I saw them all—they hurt me—where is my hunger? I eat and eat and eat without surcease, my green thing, my green-and-breathing thing...”

The Captain screamed wordlessly again. Palamedes put his hand on her forehead, and she cut off midscream to lie back in the pillows. Her eyelids fluttered shut and her breathing was suddenly even, and the sweat all dried away. He said, “Sleep now. You need it. My time’s up.”

Crown said, “Time? Master Warden, what are you talking about?” but Palamedes had put Camilla’s hand on his shoulder and then was Camilla again; shivering briefly, once, staring at the hand on her shoulder as though she didn’t remember how it got there, taking that hand and running it through her short dark crop of hair. She cracked her knuckles and stretched her hands behind her back, clasping and loosening the muscles of her shoulder blades, and said—

“Update?”

Nona said, “Palamedes told Crown he was Palamedes, and Judith woke up and talked a lot, but then she had a bit of a yell and went to sleep. It was all kind of weird, in my opinion.”

“Noted,” said Camilla.

Crown, who had checked the Captain’s neck and then her forehead, noticed Camilla watching and roughly turned away. She said, and not very approvingly, “Palamedes supersedes you, doesn’t he? He takes over, and you’re just—not there?”

“Vice versa too,” said Cam, avoiding her gaze.

“For the love of God, Cam, that’s a slippery slope downward...”

She only said, “Still swearing by God? The Warden shouldn’t have told.”

“He could hardly have bluffed his way out of it, Cam, he used necromancy,” Crown began, but Camilla said sharply, “It’s called *lying*. What now? You spill to your bosses upstairs? Do we become part of the package deal?”

“No. I swear by my sister,” said Crown. Camilla’s shoulders relaxed minutely. Crown added, “It’s not my secret. And I’ve kept your secrets before ... you know that.”

Cam said, “I still don’t trust you.”

“Doesn’t matter. You know, I really am glad you two are together … in whatever way you’ve managed. I’m glad Harrowhark helped you both. I know I said it was dangerous at the time … and I’m sorry that we didn’t believe you when you said he was in there.”

Camilla still did not look at her, but she suddenly said at the bottom of her voice, “Come back with me. Leave the facility. Before the negotiator arrives, come back with us.”

Crown stared at her. For a moment Nona thought she would say Yes and was very pleased. She didn’t mind sleeping in the bathtub. But Crown said, brightly— “I like my prison cells more obvious. And I hate not knowing where my next meal is coming from.”

Camilla said, “That’s not it.”

“Well, you know, the Captain wouldn’t last a day without me, and then how the hell am I getting out of here?”

“You’re a worse liar than Palamedes,” said Camilla, with feeling. “You’re not a good woman, Tridentarius.”

“Not my name anymore, and none of us are good,” said Crown. “Except for Nona, of course.”

“Thanks,” said Nona, deeply flattered.

“What about me?” said Camilla.

“You and I don’t even own our own souls,” said Crown.

Crown turned around and put her arms around Camilla. For a moment Nona thought that Camilla would break just as she had assumed Crown would break: that there was a softness to the way she stood, a hesitation, a not-knowingness to her knees and her feet. And Crown’s hugs *were* so good—so heated and so tender—as though Crown were hugging you solely for her own comfort, as though she wanted your touch more than anyone else’s right then. It was better than lying on tiles that the sun had warmed, which was one of Nona’s chief delights. But Camilla tightened, somehow, and didn’t put her arms around Crown, and Crown withdrew.

Camilla said, “My soul’s mine. You give yourself away to anyone who doesn’t want you.”

“Well, I never like to wear the same thing twice,” said Crown brightly. But she said: “Try to forgive me someday, Cam … that goes for Palamedes too. This is too close to the wire, and I really hate you two hating me. I’m happy for you, believe me. I always had a soft spot for the Warden.”

And Camilla said, “You were part of the lie.”

When they went back upstairs to the waiting room with the juicy potted plants and the furniture, Crown hesitated at the doorway, and said: “The transport team has put Dve in the boot. I’ll come with you, make sure they’re using cut-away cuffs this time.”

“You’re overdoing it with Pyrrha,” said Camilla.

“I’ve heard too much of the Saint of Duty to trust Pyrrha Dve,” said Crown, her mouth thinning and that pucker reappearing. “Don’t put too much trust in Pyrrha Dve, Cam … there’s a lot that you don’t know.”

Nona hated anyone criticising Pyrrha and cast about for a change in topic. She said, “What was the Captain talking about before she fell asleep, and when we came into the room? What’s the water? What’s the hunger, and the green thing?”

When Camilla and Crown looked at her, she realised she could not have said anything worse. Crown looked at her with open bewilderment, and Camilla looked at her with an expression that Nona hated instantly. She looked over at Nona with her big, borrowed grey eyes, so clean and clear—Nona always thought if soap could be grey her eyes would be grey like soap—and she was unsure. She was, Nona realised with a pang that made it all the way down her spine, frightened.

“Nona,” Crown said slowly, “The Captain didn’t say anything when you came into the room. She only screamed.”



14

THEY WERE DRIVEN BACK in the same silence, and given the same tests—just in case they'd left their bodies in the facility, Palamedes always said, and put something fake in the car—but with Crown along, the trip was much nicer. Nona got to sit up on the seat next to Crown—one of the guards said, “You’re taking our lives in your hands,” but Crown said, “Oh, *please*,” and that was that. Nona wasn’t even pressed into the floor, even though she *was* cuffed; and they *did* use plastic zip cords, not the tape, which felt a lot better except that they cut into the skin a little. There were two pink hoops on Cam’s wrists where the ties cut into it. Nona’s went away immediately.

“Stop the car,” called out Crown, and the car coughed to a stop. Camilla stiffened.

“We’re near Nona’s school,” said Crown, and Nona wriggled with pleasure and relief. “I thought I’d get out and walk her. How’s that sound, cutie?”

“Do you mean it?” said Nona, ecstatic. “Please, Crown! I’d love that. I want my friends to see you.”

“The car can drop the rest of you off back at the safe zone,” finished Crown. She was already slitting the ties on Nona’s wrists as the car revved in place.

Camilla said, through a thick mouthful of hood, “No.”

“What, you think I can’t look after her? It’s a hundred metres from here.”

“Nona. Wait—”

But Nona, who was desperate to get out of the car, had hopped out the moment Crown opened the door for her, delighted to get out into the warm concrete-smelling air and breathe in salty lungfuls of traffic fumes and ocean and burning rubbish; she had a massive pang when she realised that the car wasn’t stopping to let Cam or Pyrrha out too, that she hadn’t listened

properly, that she had been selfish, that she hadn't understood the implications. She blurted, "I don't have a hat. Or a mask."

"There's hardly any smoke."

"I still need one, I still need them."

Crown scrounged in her pockets and took out two flimsy softshell masks, winding one around her head and face. She had a hood on her jacket, and she unsnapped it from the collar to settle it around Nona's head and shoulders: "I've got chem screen on," she said, and tucked Nona's arm into hers. "Come on. Let's live a little."

By that point the car had burred to life again and was reversing back down the street. Nona hesitated—but Camilla hadn't used the special safe word, after all, hadn't used any of the codes they'd agreed on that meant Nona *couldn't*. That meant Nona was being ordinarily selfish, not dangerously selfish. And seeing Crown in the city sunshine was fantastic. A couple of people had stopped on the street to gawk at her, hatless and golden, then moved on hurriedly when they saw her gun.

"But Camilla—" she began.

"I've got as much right to you as Camilla does," said Crown, still smiling. "In another world I might have been the one looking after you, you know. And I think Camilla does a bit too much *looking after* ... you're not so much younger than she is, after all."

This resembled some of the darker and more resentful thoughts in the back of Nona's head. She mumbled, "But I love Camilla."

"Do you *love* love Camilla? In-love-with-Camilla?" Crown sounded amused, and weaved her around a little stand that was selling magazines and candy. The streets were thick with people meandering home before the hottest part of the day kicked in, but not hurrying yet, which meant it hopefully wasn't that late. "Maybe you could be the one to melt her icy heart. You're cute... on your best days, adorable. But I'm not sure you're her type."

Nona flushed. Suddenly being treated as an adult made her feel out of her depth, like when a wave knocked her off a sandbar and her feet went out from beneath her. She didn't know what to say or how to act, and floundered toward the shallows: "She's not your type either," she said.

Crown stood back from the road as a barrage of open-backed trucks rattled past. There was a piercing whistle in her direction and she ignored it

with a disdainful toss of her big yellow hair. She looked down at Nona and asked cheerfully, "How do you know my type?"

Nona thought it was obvious.

"It's the way you look at people."

"Tell me," demanded Crown. There was a deep velvety spark of mischief in her eyes, and Nona thought again how lovely they were, like the flowers in the sexy shampoo advertisement. "Come on—I'll die if I don't know. I love being told about myself."

Nona rose quite eagerly to the challenge. "You look at Commander We Suffer like you want her to think you're into her, but you aren't at all, it's just something you're doing with your eyelashes," she said. "But that's no help figuring out your type because I don't know what the commander looks like. You don't like Pash at all, but I don't know what she looks like either. You're scared of Pyrrha, and you *do* think she's nice-looking, but you're confused when you think that so you don't look at her very much. You want Camilla to cuddle you but not in a—a sexy way. I think you want Camilla to look at you like she looks at me. And you're in love with th—"

A hand went over the mask at Nona's mouth. When she looked up at Crown, in that press of people and the clinging smoke, she could see that the eyes above the softshell mask had lost their soft purple gleam and were dark, with the heavy amber brows drawn low over them. She said, in a different voice, "All right, Nona. I've heard enough."

Nona, when the hand was withdrawn, said thickly: "You're mad at me. Shame on you."

The trucks had passed and everyone surged together across the street in one big slosh of humanity. Crown, half-stricken, half-laughing, had put her arm back through Nona's, and they hurried down the street toward the school. She said, "You're—you remind me very much of someone when you make that face. I'm sorry, cutie, I got frightened. Can you forgive me? I won't ever ask you to do it again—tell you what, I'll owe you an ice cream."

Nona was a little bit mollified.

"I don't want an ice cream, thanks," she said, on her dignity. "You shouldn't ask me things if you don't want me to tell the truth about them."

"I know. I do it all the time, I've never learnt. It's awful—my sister says that. I'd ask her how I looked in an outfit and she'd always say exactly what was on her mind, and sometimes all I wanted was for her to tell me I looked

perfect even if I didn't." Crown sighed, the picture of tragedy. "And, horribly, she was always right."

"But you always look beautiful," said Nona.

"That's why I should ask *you* what I look like, and ask my sister what I'm feeling," said Crown. "*You'll* always tell me I look beautiful, and she'll always tell me what I want her to think. This is the school, isn't it, where you work?"

They would have had to get buzzed in, except that someone was already standing there unlocking the door with a key. It was the Angel. Nona flew down the street in a panic that the door would close without her. She cried out, "Wait!"

Nona was completely winded by the time she got to the foyer, with the Angel holding the door for her. Nona bent double and panted, and when she straightened up she was shocked to find the Angel looking even worse than she had on the two previous days, with her coat still on and Noodle sitting patiently on his leash.

"Oh," said Nona, panting, "how late—is over—what time—!"

Despite looking as though she hadn't slept, or if she had, had slept in the clothes she was currently wearing, the Angel grinned. This made her ears go up slightly with the smile, which Nona loved.

"Get your breath back," said the Angel kindly. "They're just finishing up with break—I was getting myself sorted."

Crown had jogged to catch them up, and slipped through the door before it closed.

"You see?" said Crown, not winded at all, filling up the doorway. "What did I tell you? You're fine."

The Angel and Crown sized each other up. Crown was much younger and bigger and taller and more exquisite, and when she pulled her mask down and smiled the Angel's eyes widened, a little bit. Not in a *you-are-so-attractive* way either, Nona noted. The Angel was a bit shocked, like Crown looking the way she did was maybe illegal. They shook hands in perfect amity, but the Angel looked her over and said—"No guns in this building—that's the rule, I'm afraid."

"Oh, I wouldn't ever scare the children," said Crown sincerely, but the Angel said, "No, but nobody's going to be interested in my lesson if they see *you*. We're doing how sound moves today and they'll be bored stiff."

Crown laughed with very white and even teeth.

“I’m sorry to say I sympathise. I was terribly stupid in my lessons when I was a girl.”

“How long ago was that? Five minutes?” said the Angel, and Crown laughed again.

“Why can’t she come up? I want Hot Sauce and the others to meet her,” said Nona, embittered. “It’s not fair. We got to see Beautiful Ruby’s baby. I’ve had a horrible morning and I want them to look at her.”

“Nona, I’ve had a horrible morning too, so have mercy on me,” said the Angel candidly. “It would make teaching soundwaves impossible if anyone got a glimpse of your—your friend. Can’t she come back afterward? Are you family? Do you know Joli? I’m afraid I’ve never met you before,” she added, to Crown.

Crown had crouched down and was scratching Noodle between his ears. Noodle was responding by thumping two of his hind legs at once and opening his mouth and panting.

“Oh, I’m Camilla’s partner. But I can’t stay.”

“I see! Lovely to meet you,” said the Angel, unaware of how her eyebrows betrayed her, like everyone else in the world to Nona seemed unaware of how their eyebrows betrayed them, by immediately saying plain as day: *Camilla?? Really??? Camilla????* Which Nona thought was unfair: Crown was really very nearly pretty enough for Camilla. “Nona, can you take Noodle for a moment? I’ve got to get the tuning forks and he’s going to make the most unrighteous howl, he can’t stand the things.”

When she had passed the leash to Nona and gone through the door with one last look at Crown, Nona crouched to give Noodle her hand to lick, and said accusingly: “If Camilla hears you said that, she’ll be furious.”

“That’s probably why I said it,” admitted Crown, with genuine contrition. “I have a ripple of evil running through my soul—I *know* I do. But it wasn’t that bad a lie, was it, Nona? Don’t you think it’ll raise Cam’s status? Don’t you think I’ve done her a favour?”

Nona thought about it.

“Camilla doesn’t need raising. You could have raised *my* status by saying you were *mine*,” she added. “They would have believed it—we’re both very attractive.”

Crown laughed in her lovely, husky, rippling way. “And there you go, reminding me of someone completely different.”

Then she dropped to a crouch again, but instead of dipping low and scratching Noodle, she gently pressed her thumb to the underside of Nona's chin; she was smiling now, but she was smiling as though Nona had said something a little sad, and her eyes didn't sparkle anymore. They hadn't gone hard as they had at the roadside, but they were shadowy.

"You darling, I know what you are, even if they refuse to see it," she said softly. "All I can say, sweetheart, is I envy you more than anyone else in the universe."



15

BUT WITH THIS BOMB DROPPED, Crown refused to stay and tell, and Nona crouched there too open-mouthed to run after her. In any case Nona did not have to mourn long the fact that she was late for work *and* none of her friends had got to see Crown; Honesty had seen Crown leave from his window seat, and she was gratified when Born in the Morning and Honesty gave each other rabbit punches over who got to ask Nona how old she was and which of their names Nona had to mention to her in the future. Hot Sauce also came over to stroke Noodle and said, “Good. You’re here. Don’t want you to be dead,” which was a lot for Hot Sauce to say.

Nona recalled what Pyrrha had said about Hot Sauce. She looked her over carefully. It wasn’t as easy reading her as it was reading Pyrrha. Hot Sauce constantly stood as though she were disconnected from her own head. Her body and her mind seemed to actively ignore each other. And her burns sometimes made her look rigid in a way that scared the tinies and foxed Nona’s senses. Now Hot Sauce stood like she hadn’t slept very well, but Hot Sauce never stood like she’d slept very well. Her eyes were wrinkled like she’d squinted them a lot, maybe against bright light—or smoke.

“Would you be mad if I died?” said Nona.

“Yes,” said Hot Sauce simply. “You’re my crew.”

This made Nona deliriously pleased, but then deeply anxious.

“Hot Sauce,” she said timidly, “I don’t want you to be sad or mad if anything happens to me. Promise not to be sad—I don’t like it on your face.”

There was a flicker of surprise across Hot Sauce’s eyelashes. But then the others ragged her at the idea that *anyone* would be sad if she died, and

they got into an argument about who would inherit her share of fruit that day as it hadn't been bagsed, which turned into another fight between Born in the Morning and Honesty, who had not forgiven each other for the rabbit punches and both of whom started promising their worldly goods to anyone who wasn't each other. Honesty had recovered, although his eye looked even puffier and more multicoloured than it had the day before. The teacher had given him some painkillers to take but he had cunningly spat them out and dried them for resale, so *he* was entirely happy.

Nona came away promised, on Born in the Morning's death, a pen that wrote in three different colours, and on Honesty's his collection of paper throwing stars.

Hot Sauce didn't say anything after that, just sat by the window alternately watching the Angel—packing little metal pins away into a box and chatting to the main teacher after the Hour of Science, looking fragile still but more rested after teaching and a coffee—and the window.

Nona did not have to wait to ask Hot Sauce what she was going to get told. The teacher, obviously relieved to see her—Nona said she hadn't been able to get to school that morning for “unexpected reasons” and the teacher gently and compassionately didn't ask, which made Nona cross again because she could see she was thinking about Pyrrha—gave Nona the job of taking down the old paintings from the peg on the wall and putting up fresh ones that had been done last week. Nona had to stand on a chair, and Hot Sauce quietly held the chair for her, and everyone else was busy taking out the mats for naptime. It was bewildering how quickly the day went, when you had had the morning taken away from you.

Hot Sauce said, “The Angel was dropped off in a car today, at the end of the street.”

“I didn't see. I caught her in the doorway,” said Nona, taking her focus away from balancing, then refocusing so she didn't fall off the chair. She unclipped a piece of brown sheeting and admired the painting on it briefly, and then she said—

“Is her being in a car good or bad?”

“When the school building watcher saw she wasn't here this morning,” said Hot Sauce, “he left.”

“Okay.”

“He came back twenty minutes ago. It's an organised watch.”

“By who?”

"I don't know. But she's being protected. Her vehicle had a *grille*," said Hot Sauce.

Nona had to admit that she did not understand the significance of the vehicle having a grille. Hot Sauce explained it was so that you could drive it through rocks or people.

"So what do we do?" Nona wanted to know. "I guess someone's looking after the Angel already." It was beginning to dawn on her that this level of care was strange when directed at someone whose contribution to the world was Noodle and the Hour of Science, which was truly wonderful but only really important to the refuge school. She added doubtfully, "Why is the Angel so special?"

The main teacher materialised behind them. "Nona, aren't you going home for lunch?"

It was then that Nona realised that nobody had come to pick her up.

"I don't know," she said. "Can I stay here until Cam comes?"

The nice lady teacher looked troubled, then tried to hide it. Because she really wasn't that much older than Camilla, Nona didn't think the hiding worked. She was really just a baby herself, Nona thought suddenly.

"Of course you can. Why don't you take one of the lunches and get yourself a mat? There's plenty to go around. It seems like everybody's eating at home today."

Hot Sauce said, "They're raising a broadcast, is why."

"What?" This startled the teacher. "Do you mean from the government building? This is the first I've heard of it." But when Hot Sauce stood there stolidly not elaborating, the teacher said, "And here's us without a working radio. Hi, Aim! Do you know anything about this?"

The Angel came over. She had another coffee clutched in her hands and was stirring sugar into it vigorously, despite the fact that it was deep into the heat of the day. She said, "Heard what?"

"The children—I mean, Hot Sauce and Nona—say there's going to be a public broadcast. I thought they ran out of money for that a year ago. I've certainly heard nothing but pirate radio for months. Is it going to be about the port? Do you think they'll start arrests?"

The Angel took a blistering sip of coffee even though she must have known it was much too hot; she was holding it gingerly, through her shirtsleeves. She sipped anyway in order to draw the moment out. Nona

was interested that the Angel didn't even seem surprised, that she only looked extra sodden and tired.

"I *have* heard something about that, yes," she said. "Who knows?"

"It's strange. They would always put out a paper notice, before."

"That was in the old days. I guess they must've been in a hurry."

"Does that mean—are we finally going to hear about—"

"Joli, little pitchers," said the Angel.

"Come talk to me in the kitchen."

When they had gone, Nona said to Hot Sauce, "Should we go listen to a radio too? There's one down at the dairy."

"Don't need one," said Hot Sauce. "I know what they'll say. Who's here?"

The teacher had been right and mostly everyone's parents *had* come to take them home, or the children had drifted off at a prearranged signal. Younger Brother Father had come to retrieve Born in the Morning, and Beautiful Ruby had gone home too. There was nobody to come and get Honesty, but he had taken his packed lunch and slunk off to sell his pills—Nona disapproved; it was too hot for drugs. This left Nona, Hot Sauce, and Kevin. Kevin had arranged six mats in a pile and curled up knees to nose in the debris of a hastily eaten lunch: all the good bits out of the cold noodles, the centres out of all the sandwiches.

Nona reported this.

Hot Sauce said—"You'll stay, Nona."

"Yes," said Nona, who would sooner have died on the spot than refuse, and amended after a thought: "Unless Cam comes to get me, that is. I don't want Camilla to worry about me today."

"Sure," said Hot Sauce.

Nona didn't want the packed lunch, but anyone who might care about what she ate was off in the kitchen, so she got to do exactly as she pleased. She sucked on ice cube after ice cube and then, in a gluttonous excess, chewed half a pencil to splinters. She loved the cool sandy core of grey stuff and the painted, painful crunch of the wood, which came away to bits in her teeth. Hot Sauce watched, mild and unafraid, and drank a tiny sweating bottle of strawberry yoghurt drink.

After that they lay down on two mats each, piled atop each other, in the shadiest part of the room closest to the water pipes. Nona found that she was very tired: she just wanted to lie down, not to sleep, but to push her hair

out of the way of her neck and try to become cool. She was always a little afraid of sleeping now. She lay down on her side, where her hip bones could be relied upon to stick into the mat and hurt a little bit, and hoped that would be enough. Thankfully Hot Sauce showed no signs of sleeping either. She lay there on the mat, on her side, and did not take her cone of vision away from the little staffroom door that the Angel and the main teacher were ensconced behind.

“Hot Sauce,” Nona said softly, trying to keep herself awake, “what’s the broadcast going to be about?”

“Necromancers,” said Hot Sauce.

She waited for Hot Sauce to elaborate. Hot Sauce refused. Nona said, “Something *good* about—you know what? Or something bad?”

Hot Sauce said, “It’s never good, with necromancers.”

“You shouldn’t call them that.” Hot Sauce didn’t respond, in either praise or censure. Nona struggled to explain why and ended up with the pathetic, “It’s not nice.”

“Zombies then.”

Nona didn’t think that was much better.

“How do you know about it?” she asked, already halfway to knowing.

“Heard about it last night.”

Last night at the burn cages, Pyrrha said in her brain. Nona picked the long white filaments off her fingernails until some of them went red and started bleeding, and then she tucked her hands underneath herself so that nobody would see them stop bleeding just as quickly. She did not say, *From who?* Instead she said, *very* hesitantly, “Last night—in the park?”

But Hot Sauce did not get angry, or even really surprised. She didn’t react in the way that Our Lady of the Passion might. She stared at the door unwaveringly instead. She blinked once, slowly, and that was it.

“Were you there?” she asked, in a slightly different voice.

“No.”

“Don’t go to the park at night.”

“I don’t want to,” said Nona fervently.

“Not good for a girl like you,” said Hot Sauce, like she wasn’t fourteen and like Nona wasn’t nineteen, or more important, six months, just about.

“Did the—” What to call them? “Did the *you-know-whats* die?”

Hot Sauce misunderstood her question. “They can die,” she said. “They die like anyone else, so don’t believe they can’t.”

“But did *these*—”

“Yes. Too quickly,” said Hot Sauce. “Someone high up … took them out before they burned … sniper rifle … stupid, when people think you have to destroy the brain or they don’t go … don’t really die, not even if you burn them.”

Hot Sauce, when making long speeches, always ran her sentences into each other, as though they were piled up in traffic. Nona sat up, feeling a little bit dizzy and hot, and made it look as though she were checking on Kevin. She didn’t quite know if Hot Sauce bought it. Kevin after a good feed was reliably dead to the world for at least forty minutes. But when she lay back down on her side, facing Hot Sauce, Hot Sauce didn’t look suspicious or pitying or anything like that. She stopped watching the door and stared up at the ceiling instead, the shiny glassy crinkly bits showing where her shirt rucked up in the middle and where it peeked out at her neck.

Hot Sauce said quietly, “Your people at the park?”

Nona swallowed.

“One of them, I think.”

“Okay,” said Hot Sauce.

“Are you—do any of the others—” Nona didn’t know how to ask. She didn’t quite know how to say, *Are you in Blood of Eden?* But Hot Sauce simply touched a finger to her lips for *shhh*, then raised three fingers, then pointed to herself. Nona was proud that she was long past counting on fingers.

“You,” she whispered. “And Honesty. And someone else.”

Hot Sauce nodded. Nona guessed again, “Born in the Morning.”

“You mean *Born in the Morning*,” said Hot Sauce.

“That’s what I said,” said Nona.

Hot Sauce said, “Yes. One of his fathers is active.”

“Blood of Ed—?”

But Hot Sauce pressed her finger right on Nona’s mouth. Nona, seeing the flinch of alarm in her face, obediently tried to clamp her mouth shut before Hot Sauce had to shut her up, which had the effect that she nearly bit Hot Sauce. But Hot Sauce said fervently, “No. Never.”

“Why—”

“Traitors,” said Hot Sauce vehemently. “Fat cats. Zombie lovers.”

Nona was a little bit tickled at the idea of Pash and We Suffer being called *fat cats* and *zombie lovers*; she didn’t like Crown being called either

a fat cat or a zombie lover though, and certainly not a traitor. She said, “Not all of them. Some of them are good.”

Hot Sauce said, “Are you...?”

“No,” said Nona swiftly. “They sometimes ... talk to us, my family,” she added. Hot Sauce only said, “Yeah, well. They sell us guns.”

Lying there, faces close, Nona had the comfortable feeling that she and Hot Sauce had crossed another barrier; just like the time she had been asked to join the gang, and the time she had told Hot Sauce she loved the city. It was painfully sweet lying there whispering—even if it was half-truths, or quickly shut-up truths, spoken softly so that Kevin and the teachers didn’t hear you—sweet enough that she reached out and touched Hot Sauce on the hand without thinking, without remembering all of Camilla’s warnings not to touch anyone. But Hot Sauce didn’t mind. She put her fingers over Nona’s, and Nona thrilled to it.

Hot Sauce said, “You’re nice. I wish you were my sister.”

Nona’s cup of joy was full. “I’ll be your sister if you like.”

“Never had sisters. Only brothers,” said Hot Sauce.

“Younger or older?”

“Older.”

“Were they nice?”

“Yeah.”

“How did they die?” asked Nona.

Hot Sauce thought about it. “Don’t know,” she finally said. “They were setting up the turrets. One of the minions made it through with a sword. They’re nuts about swords. Wild. I practise with one. So I won’t freak out like my brothers did. We couldn’t get close though. Afterward. Thought they might be scarecrows.” When she saw that Nona didn’t understand, she added: “Dolls. Lures. They look like normal bodies lying down ... or sitting or standing ... but when you go too close they explode. Bones, everything.”

Nona squeezed one foot, and then another. Her toes got terrible pins and needles, but she liked the sensation when she unsqueezed, that sudden sense of relief.

“What happened after that?” she asked.

“Our base? We surrendered. White flag. Let them in,” said Hot Sauce. “My cousin put all the fertiliser we had in a truck. Drove it into their troop. They don’t sense tech. Don’t believe what they say. Engines or anything ...”

He got a bunch of them when it exploded, minions, wizards, both.” After a pause, she said: “It got him too.”

Nona said, “I wish nobody had been got.”

This time it was Hot Sauce’s turn to not understand. “It’s okay. First necromancer who gets in range, I shoot,” she said.

Nona shuddered again, all the way from her hips to her toes. Hot Sauce patted her hand and said pragmatically, “You have air-con sweats.”

“No,” said Nona, and it was the first time she had admitted it to anyone, or at least anyone who wasn’t herself. Some deep well of need and terror welled up in her, and then—before she could walk it back, and without even really wanting to—she did it.

She told Hot Sauce the Secret.

Hot Sauce thought about it. She looked at Nona, and then she thought about it again.

“There’s a clinic in town,” she said. “The Angel works there. Not always. Some evenings.”

Nona clapped her hands together softly in sheer delight. Pyrrha always said it was her most disgusting habit.

“That’s how you knew she was a doctor,” she said. “That’s why she helped Honesty.”

“Yeah. I went to see her once,” said Hot Sauce, a little grudgingly, as though she didn’t quite want to share. Then she unbent and said, “I’d been shot at.”

That explained a lot.

“Did you have a bullet in you?”

“No. It missed. Broke my collarbone when I dodged.” Before Nona could say anything else, Hot Sauce said: “Your problem. Talk to her.”

“It’s not going to help,” said Nona.

Hot Sauce flicked her nose thoughtfully. “There’s an organ market,” she said. “Sometimes they’re cheap.”

“No, no. Don’t worry, Hot Sauce. Please. And don’t tell the others my Secret,” added Nona in a hurry, alarmed. “You are literally the *only one who knows*. You know … in case something happens … You have to keep this between you and me, you have to promise. You have to promise right now.”

“Okay,” said Hot Sauce. Then: “I promise.”

“Okay,” said Nona.

She was very touched when Hot Sauce got up and wriggled out of her jacket, and made to put it over the thin slippery blanket. Nona said, “Don’t, give it to Kevin,” and so Hot Sauce put it over Kevin. Kevin did not move, and for a moment Nona panicked that Kevin had died from eating the insides of five sandwiches. But Kevin made a sort of puppyish snuffling sound and wriggled underneath the blanket where the jacket was, so that was all right. Nona felt a great sense of peace and calm when Hot Sauce came and lay back down beside her: she let her eyelids flutter down, and was annoyed when they did not want to flutter back up. She struggled heroically to keep them open, even using her fingers, until Hot Sauce stopped her.

“You can sleep if you want,” said Hot Sauce. “I’ll be here.”

“You won’t tell, will you, Hot Sauce?”

“No,” said Hot Sauce. And: “I’m here, Nona. I’ll look after you.”

“I love you, Hot Sauce,” she said.

Exhausted, Nona felt Hot Sauce touch her hand, very lightly, very gently. The last thing she heard before falling asleep was Hot Sauce saying, “Don’t be soppy.” But it didn’t sound like she meant it.

JOHN 8:1

THE ASH NEVER made them feel too sick for long, but sometimes they blacked out together. Only for seconds, really no time at all, but he didn't like it. He'd never liked losing control. He'd never liked losing consciousness. In the dream she knew he could not be coaxed to sleep unless she stood in the doorway, or in the worst times stroking her thumb between his eyebrows, down the bridge of his nose. In the dream she did not fear sleeping, but she did not know how to do it herself. Her body was a mystery to her. She did not understand what it meant or signified. She would suddenly collapse and sleep where she fell, shocked into unconsciousness by exhaustion, and wake wherever he put her, in whatever makeshift bed he had been forced to cook up: sometimes old stained mattresses, sometimes baby-soft skin hammocks.

They had to trek all the way back down the hill on the side where the waters weren't rising and back up the road to a crumble-down concrete building he'd found. All day they transferred their things. Their meat. Their buckets of water. Their soggy blankets that they pinned up to dry so they would have somewhere to sleep. It took them multiple trips.

They didn't bother to start a fire. They weren't really cold. But it was dark, because the ash kept falling, and he set up a long line of torches, putting them on windowsills and balancing them upward so that their thin yellow light was strung across the room. This highlighted his face in strange ways. It made his brown skin bluish, and the white ring around his black iris a satiny gold.

When they were settled he said: We got some attention up-front, 'cause people thought we were trying to get media jobs with some excellent deepfakes. They thought we were playing a game or giving people a puzzle, maybe doing some branding. Branding, *then*? Talk about late-late-stage capitalism, right? How far can consumption as praxis go? But I mean, fair enough. It didn't look real.

He said, Result was that nobody turned up to take us away to Area 51. Almost nobody even noticed us. We were just one voice in the wilderness, and all the other voices were louder. It was original, at least, you know? We got a handful of conspiracy theorists, some sceptics, and some locals who thought it was a joke. M— said, *Invite them in to see*. So we did. Taped them. Said they could do whatever tests they wanted. Showed them

everything, got it on camera. Managed a crowd of about five. Five plus us and Ulysses and Titania and all the other corpses I had up and walking around. More people there were dead than alive.

He said, Two of the audience members walked away afterward. One didn't say anything. One freaked out and said he was calling the cops. Only one of them accepted it. Turned out he was one of those Flat Earthers who still believed despite the Mars installation. Nice guy. Drank a beer with us before he left.

He said, *Then* we took off. Thread after thread on message board after message board. People wanting proof. People asking what the fuck it meant. People talking about the LUCIFER telescope and saying we were aliens. People calling me the Antichrist, which was a trip. People writing up these long posts on how the trick was done, how I got the meat into the pie. Was I fake? Was I real? If I was real, what did it mean? Suddenly there were hundreds of people, all there at our front door. They came in caravans, they were sleeping in their cars or putting up tents. A hell of a lot of them had flown out internationally.

He said, Some of them wanted to see the miracle. Some of them wanted my help, like, *Oh, you're the magical death man, can you do something about my body? Can you fix my fibromyalgia?* Thing was, I could. That surprised me. I could take out their tumours. I could fix their macular degeneration. Big damage was easy, unless they'd actually lost the limb or whatever. Couldn't grow those back. But I spent hours and hours a day playing Jesus. That was nice, those were some of the nicest hours I got to spend.

He said, But when you're doing the whole *Go, my child, your knee cartilage is fixed*, you're going to get a *lot* of visitors. I had to turn people away because I had to eat, I had to sleep, even though I didn't want to. M— had brought in her best friend, the nun, and I was worried I was going to get the Antichrist bit from her too, but she was just like: stop doing this! Read your Bible! This was Christ's whole problem!

I was like, What are you talking about, Jesus cured the lepers and everyone was all, Hooray, thanks man. M—'s nun was all, *Are you kidding, Christ never said no and never asked anyone to pay and got way too much attention and brought the heat down on everybody. Christ didn't keep to office hours*, she said. *Don't do that.*

He said, So we limited Jesus stuff to one hour a day, and I always had to eat breakfast. But by then the whole world was on our doorstep.

He added, We knew it was going to be a big problem. You've got this guy with an army of upward of forty walking corpses that he acquired legally but was meant to bury a while back, it's time for some hard conversations. He's curing cancer, that's great, but he's bookended by two zombies that they've dressed in outfits, that's bad. You've got a wizard out in the wop-wops who's now got blanket bans from nearly every video upload site and a whole bunch of people have entered the country because of his YouTube channel, the government isn't all, *Love that small-business entrepreneur spirit*. The government says, *This is a cult*.

He said, They came in thousands—pilgrims and tourists and sceptics and believers and CIA plants and wannabe stars and priests and oddballs. And here we were squatting in this building, trying to prepare a gambit for every eventuality, but we were in the middle of a shantytown and an international controversy and we knew any moment a riot squad was going to bust in. And we were all living in three rooms together and we were scared. Turned out to be a huge fucking blessing that we had a nun on cast as she bought us some breathing room. She applied to the Vatican to argue about whether or not it was a miracle because I'd been baptised. Didn't mention that I'd only gone to Parachute 'cause of the underage drinking. But she was a lifesaver. And then A— brought in his little brother who was a hedge fund manager. A— Junior was useless but he was a darling, I couldn't fault A— for adding him to the mix. All of us were getting frightened. We'd bit off more than we could chew. We were gathering the people we loved and closing the doors.

He said, At that point the government asked us to come in quietly, with our hands up.

He said, We didn't want to. We always said, they want us, they have to come get us. We're not getting separated. We're not getting disappeared. Brave words. But stopping them was on *me*, you know? You've got two scientists and an engineer and a nun and a lawyer and a banker and a cop and an artist. That's not a defence force, that's a cop and six different kinds of nerd. P— was great, but like, Ministry ties or no Ministry ties, a big part of her career was going around to the local high school throwing blue-light discos and telling the drugs kids that they shouldn't be doing drugs. She'd

won medals for competition shooting back north in Hamilton, but we're not talking Jesse James. We're talking Hamilton.

He said, The cryo lab was about a hundred metres across, concrete and steel and cladding sat on two acres of repurposed farmland. I had forty corpses on hand, and a lot of them were in a state, with partials from earlier testing. We had a lot of flash-frozen brain matter. I couldn't harvest anything from Ulysses and Titania. I refused. A— and M— were making black jokes about taking volunteers from the crowd for the skeleton army.

One day we ran out of time before those jokes could become suggestions. P— called ahead. She'd betrayed the police for us, told us the riot squad was about half an hour away and they were carrying big guns. She chose us that day, not her career. I always loved her for that. She'd adored being a cop.

He said, I knew what I needed. I needed to cut the place off. Wall it up. Do something impressive to buy us time. Let them know we couldn't get pushed around. So I pulled up walls close to three foot thick, what you'd now call perpetual bone, staked six feet down. G— ran the numbers for me. I didn't listen to his warnings about plumbing so I busted the outside water pipe, but that was the worst that happened. The cops arrived in half an hour and tried a battering ram, industrial cutters, everything. They worked for hours, but nothing even penetrated. It was perfect. Except that I'd forgotten to do air holes, so I had to make some of it permeable up top, but, like, fine, we caught it early, nobody suffocated.

He fell quiet.

After a while she prompted, You made it from your bodies?

He said, Nah. I decided I didn't want to touch any of the bodies, not only Titania and Ulysses. They'd all been through a lot.

It was at this point that he had the grace to look embarrassed.

He said, I'm not proud of this. But, well—like, we were on farmland. With farm animals. Big things with mass to spare. The field just over the road from us had over eighty head of cattle, field over *that* had a lot of sheep, and the bush was full of old bones. I had to—get creative. We had to lock C— in the kitchen when she found out so she could throw up in private for a while, and we wouldn't let her look at it. Thankfully it was dark, so there wasn't too much to look at.

He said, It wasn't clean. I had to unsleeve them to get two piles to work from, softs and bones, and it was not beautiful. But it worked. A three-foot-

thick shield of meat, bone, and sinew spread over two acres of Greytown land. You could see it on Google Earth. Kind of pretty, from far off. Sort of pink.

He said, And *then* the government was like, *Okay, let's talk.*

He said, It had worked, and we were all okay. And the rest of the world knew too, you can't erect a two-acre cow-and-sheep shield without it making the news, though I think they censored the close-up pictures. They took us seriously after that. Some of them wanted to talk to us, to see who we were, and some of them didn't want to talk to us because we were evil, and some didn't want to talk to us because we were forcing their hands. Sure, I'd cured a bunch of people of cancer, but I was freaky. They treated us like we'd done some kind of huge crime.

After a pause, he said: I mean, I had kind of done a huge crime. I'd turned several hundred animals inside out and made them into a big art installation and I hadn't complied with the cops, *but* extenuating circumstances, okay? There were extenuating circumstances. It wasn't my fault that turning several hundred animals inside out makes you look like the bad guy. They were beef cattle and mutton; my way was a hell of a lot quicker than the abattoir. But it's hard to be all, *Let's listen to magical inside-out animal-shield man. He obviously has some good ideas.*

He said, I didn't care what they thought, I wanted the attention. I wanted to break my NDAs. I wanted to let them know about the cryo plans and how we got shut down. I wanted to talk about you. About how we'd been going to save the world and then the cash dried up for no reason. And now we had a platform, so maybe the cash could come back, somehow. But we'd scared a lot of people. We also had more enemies than we'd ever had before.

He said, I guess you could say ... we had beef.

When she did not laugh he said, "I can't believe nobody's ever going to laugh at my jokes again. I can't believe it. It's all gone, I'm the only one left. It's just me and you and no more jokes."

She said, "I still love you."

And he laughed and said, "That was a good one." Then he wept again.



16

NONA AWOKE WITH A START right before the door crashed open, like she had an extra sense for crashing doors. Honesty ran into the room, not even taking off his outside boots or his sand jacket, and he shouted: “They’re coming—they’re here *now*. They’re setting up that ole video screen in the square tonight, they’re gonna screen some video, at half five o’clock. It’s *them*, it’s zombies, they’re back! Holy shit!”

“Language, Honesty,” said someone else. Nona rubbed her eyes and struggled to sit up; she had been about to say the same thing, but all that came out was “Wharrgarbl.” It was the voice of the Angel, who had taken up position quite near the big whiteboard, one knee folded over the other.

“I’ve got to swear, sir,” said Honesty. “You can’t let me not swear about this. It’ll give me inhibitions. Anyway”—struck by fresh inspiration—“with zombies here, sir, I’m not going to bother with school anymore. There’ll be a war. I’ve got to deal full-time.”

“Then you better attend maths lessons, at least,” said the Angel drily. “I’ve seen your multiplication, Honesty. You’re going to get stiffed.”

“*Maybe* maths, if I feel like it,” allowed Honesty, and he turned to the mats: “Hot Sauce—Hot Sauce, what’re we going to do?”

Hot Sauce was sitting up on her mat, knees drawn to her chest, arms loosely dangling over her knees. “Wait and see,” she said.

Kevin was waking up too, elbowing sleep out of his eyes, and largely decorated with crumbs. Honesty said, “War, Kevin! It’s gonna be war!” and Kevin just said, “Ugh,” and lay back down in bed, completely unmoved by war.

Desperate for someone’s approval, Honesty dropped to his haunches next to Nona, and bawled: “Nona—what do you *think*?”

Nona, still feeling as though her ears were stopped up with dreams, wriggled her nose so that she wouldn’t yawn. Her mouth tasted like pencil. She said, with perfect bewilderment: “Who’s here? *What*’s going to be on the screen?”

“*Necromancers*, stupid,” said Honesty.

Then he did have the grace to look at the Angel, as though he were expecting a punishment; but all the Angel did was shake her head and say quietly, “Try not to scare Kevin or Nona, Honesty.”

“Okay—okay,” said Honesty, a little abashed. Then: “I don’t know—the militia’s setting up, all wearing their old uniforms, all getting the netting out. I went to the square and nearly got my head shot off, honestly, they’re all jumpy that people are taking potshots at ‘em. I saw some old lady wailing in the street that we were all about to be lined up and executed. Well, they won’t get *me*.”

The door barrelled open again. It was Born in the Morning and Beautiful Ruby, who had obviously raced each other up the stairs. They were panting like dogs, and Beautiful Ruby had to lean over and brace on his knees and still looked as though he might throw up. Nona was completely awake now. Born in the Morning said, “I won,” and Beautiful Ruby said, “You didn’t—I won on the stairs,” and they squabbled right until Honesty said—

“Boys, really, is this the *time*?”

“Mum says they’re setting up the screen to tell us which resettlement to go to,” panted Beautiful Ruby.

Born in the Morning said, “They can’t tell us anything—the sky’s still blue. They’ll go crazy. They’re lying.”

“Mum says, doesn’t matter, do it anyway.”

“What does your mum know?”

“At least I’ve got a mum and not only a bunch of mouldy old dads,” fired back Beautiful Ruby.

“Don’t fight,” begged Nona, just as they started to clasp each other around the neck in strangulation positions. “It’s not fair. Too much is going on and I don’t want to think about your fight *and* the square *and* the screen.”

The boys untangled from each other, but very reluctantly. It was at this moment of hesitation and surrender that the Angel stood up and said, quietly but in a voice that brooked no rebellion, “Sit down on the mats. All of you.”

This wasn’t hard for Nona, who was sitting down on the mats already. Same with Hot Sauce and Kevin. Born in the Morning and Beautiful Ruby and Honesty all came and flopped themselves down on the mats one by one. It didn’t seem like any of the other kids had come back, only their gang. Nona was grateful in a way; she thought the tinies all ought to be at home.

The Angel said, “I want to ask you to promise—all on your honour—that none of you will go to the screening tonight. If your families want to go, fine. But that’s not going to be a place for children.”

Honesty said, “Who’s a kid?” and the Angel said, “*You* are. Keep in mind, I’ve seen this before, House overtures. Tempers run high ... there will be people who make decisions before they really think about them ... and if you’re there, and one of you gets hurt, that’s going to add to the fracas. I don’t want to see your bodies paraded through the streets and your mugs up on photographs, for one cause or the other.”

They were all silent. The Angel said, “Promise me, kids, please. I know you’re an honourable bunch. Especially you, Honesty.”

Honesty was touched.

“I am—so I won’t,” he said. “I swear. I mean, I could make a killing, so you’ve got me by the balls here.”

“Please never say that again,” said the Angel.

“I won’t go either,” said Beautiful Ruby, and Born in the Morning said more reluctantly—“Younger Brother Father might want me to go, he sometimes does.” Then Honesty gave him a really good burn twist on the arm so that the skin went dark red, and he yowled and said, “But I won’t! Stop it!”

Hot Sauce said, “I won’t.”

And that seemed to be that—the Angel didn’t ask Nona—but Nona was a little bit troubled. She was sitting at the back as the oldest, and she was very close to Hot Sauce, so only she could see that Hot Sauce had crossed her fingers.

Then Hot Sauce said, “Why a video screen?”

“Well, why do you think a video screen? Why not just stand up there and talk through a loudspeaker?” said the Angel.

Nona, who thought about this kind of thing a great deal, immediately said—“Oh, they don’t want to get shot! They’d probably get shot by *someone*. ”

“Yes. Well done,” said the Angel.

The others were all immediately chuffed for her, and demonstrated it. They slapped her on the back and said, “Good one, Nona,” and “You’re smart, Nona,” until Nona preened, but then a few seconds later she felt a little bit patronised, and she said: “Well, I wonder who it is, who’s going to speak.”

“You’ll find out. Why hurry?” said the Angel. “Look, I’m the only teacher left here—Joli has gone home to make sure her parents are all right. Let’s cancel school for the evening and do something fun, why don’t we? I don’t feel like teaching anything very scientific. I’ll get out the drawing paper and the paints and we can draw for a while. We’ll leave the blackouts up and turn on the lights early.”

Born in the Morning said, “My dads said to come right back or they’d come to pick me up,” and the Angel said—“A quandary, is it? Well, I don’t want to contradict your fathers, but why not let them come and pick you up? I don’t feel great about letting you walk alone through the streets right now. They’ll be jabbing and temperature testing everyone in sight, even if they’ve seen you before, to make sure you’re not House. If you want a needle jabbed in your arse, go ahead.”

It was so funny to hear the Angel say *arse* that everyone lost it—Nona included—and even Kevin giggled, even though he was normally very serious. Hot Sauce smiled too, but a little distantly, like she was thinking of something else. She was happy enough to go with Nona to get out the big brown sheets of drawing paper, and the nice-smelling boxes of fat wax crayons and chalk. The Angel was at the light box flicking switches and saying, “Draw your favourite animal, go on, I’ve got a book of pictures if you want help,” but as it turned out everyone only wanted to draw Noodle.

Noodle was asleep next to the teacher's desk on one of the abandoned mats, and Beautiful Ruby and Born in the Morning and even Honesty and Kevin squatted there to sketch his outline in chalk. Funny to think of Honesty drawing Noodle, really, when he'd just said no more school.

That had hurt Nona's feelings a little bit; she didn't want to think about anyone leaving school. She sat back at one of the tables, feeling her weight as a Teacher's Aide—doodling a little bit on one of the big brown pieces of paper but not *quite* joining in—and Hot Sauce perched on the desk next to her, still staring out the window. The Angel went around closing them all, but she shouldn't have bothered, Nona thought: the outside was weirdly, deadly quiet. You couldn't even hear honking.

Nona sketched some ideas of animals—what she thought animals should look like, on best principles—and once satisfied with her work, put down her pencil and looked around instead. It almost seemed normal inside the classroom, though not as noisy as it would be any other day. Beautiful Ruby could create enough noise for ten children at least, but everyone was busy, heads-down and content with the chance to do some art. She saw that this troubled the Angel; whenever she looked out over them she seemed to be cheerful, sometimes saying something like "Only *six* legs, remember, Ruby, he was bred to have a single arboreal pair," but there was a sorry quirk to the corners of her thin, freckled mouth, like them all being so well-behaved was miserable in a way. Every so often she would stick her thumbs in her suspenders and whistle a note or two, like a back-of-truck seller on the street, and to Nona those notes didn't sound cheerful at all.

At one point Honesty stretched his arms out and cracked his neck and his knuckles, and he sidled over to the curtains to twitch them open to take a look at the street, and the Angel said so sharply, "Be sensible, Honesty," that he dropped the curtain like he'd been shot. But it was too late, he'd twitched it; the look Hot Sauce gave him physically staggered him. He went back to his painting so meekly that on any other day Nona would have screamed with laughter, but not right then.

Nona looked up at the clock, gave it her best shot, squinted herself cross-eyed, then gave up.

"Yes, Nona? You don't have to put up your hand, y'know," said the Angel. "You do work here."

"What's the time, please?"

"Getting on five o'clock," said the Angel.

Camilla always came to pick her up before lunchtime; that meant it was over four hours that Cam was overdue. Camilla had never been overdue in Nona's whole life. Something very obvious must have happened on her face, because the Angel said a bit hastily, "Nona, can you take Noodle out? He hasn't been since before lunch, and it's not fair on the poor creature. He's got ageing kidneys."

"I'll go too," said Hot Sauce.

"Me three," said Honesty.

Hot Sauce said, "Stay put. Two's enough." Honesty didn't even argue.

Nona was happy enough to take Noodle's lead, and Noodle was even happier; he even whisked a bit. He was always good at sensing feelings. Nona thought she and Noodle were very alike in some ways, except she sadly did not have an arboreal anything. She and Hot Sauce shrugged on their dust jackets and buttoned up the sleeves in the cloakroom, and Nona clipped the leash to Noodle's collar and led him down the flight of black and cool and quiet stairs, Hot Sauce following behind, and once they were one floor down she said—"Camilla hasn't come for me."

"Sleep at mine if she doesn't," said Hot Sauce.

This idea quite startled Nona, who had never slept apart from Camilla. She was homesick thinking about her. She had thought Hot Sauce would maybe say something sympathetic or understanding, like, "Don't worry about it," but the problem with Hot Sauce was that she was a little bit like Cam. When you came to her with a problem she gave you something to do about it. Nona didn't know what to say, so she blurted: "You crossed your fingers when you said Yes to the Angel."

"Didn't want to lie," said Hot Sauce. "Just in case. Of it becoming a lie."

"You always do what the Angel says."

"Wrong. I always keep my promises to the Angel. This time I didn't promise."

Nona thought of Palamedes, and said: "That's not really the spirit of the law, even if it *is* the letter."

"What's that mean?"

"It means that even if technically you're not breaking the rule you sort of are anyway, in your heart."

"So?"

Nona had no idea how to counter *So?* By then they were down at the bottom floor and Hot Sauce was carefully checking the dust-and-concrete yard where Nona had so often taken Noodle for his lunchtime bathroom trips, peering through the glass-panelled doors where such a short time ago Nona had burst through with Crown. The red light still flashed above the double doors, which meant they were locked. Nona searched for ways to dissuade Hot Sauce and said, “You said earlier the Angel came in a truck, with a grille.”

“Yes. Never seen her come in a car before,” said Hot Sauce. “Come outside, we’re clear.”

They opened the heavy doors and the heat hit them, as it always did, like putting on wet clothes. Even though it was later in the afternoon than Nona was used to, it was still hotter than hot—the kind of heat that prickled her all over, even underneath her hair, and made her shudder inside her dust jacket. Nona knelt down to unclip the lead and Noodle, aware of his dignity, trundled out of sight to do his business behind a broken slab of rock. They watched his exit in silence.

“But doesn’t that mean the Angel’s being looked after, and we don’t have to worry?” said Nona after a while.

Hot Sauce didn’t look so sure.

“Her driver stopped the car, and someone got out after the Angel had gone into school,” said Hot Sauce. “Checked the doorways. Of both the buildings opposite. And the alleys. Professional.”

Nona was enchanted.

“Maybe the Angel’s rich and important.”

“She’s vulnerable, with us. We have to keep her safe,” said Hot Sauce, “more than ever.”

“Because … of war?”

“Because of war.”

Noodle came back to them and self-importantly kicked dirt behind him with his backmost legs. The middle set, the arboreal set, stretched out all the way to the middle of his body as he elongated himself. Then he yawned in a nice way, to show that he was agreeable. Both Hot Sauce and Nona spent a little bit of time scratching him beneath his collar and on the bump where his tailbone started. Then once he had had enough scratches he sat on his haunches and they clipped the lead back on. When they went back into the foyer Nona noticed that Hot Sauce lingered there a little, staring out into

the street through the smeared glass. As Nona moved to mount the stairs Hot Sauce said suddenly—“Wait.”

Nona waited. So did Noodle.

“They’ll be starting the broadcast. Soon,” said Hot Sauce.

Even if Nona had not been Nona, she felt that she would have been able to easily translate that stubborn set of Hot Sauce’s shoulders, the readiness in her hands. Her whole body was turning to face the street, like wanting was somehow magnetic.

Nona hedged, “But the Angel won’t know where we’ve gone.”

“Write a note. Give it to Noodle. He’s smart.”

Nona was thrilled with the idea of leaving a note on Noodle, and was sorry they hadn’t struck on the idea before—to leave messages for the Angel or for anyone else—but was deeply unhappy that the discovery had only been made in this particular situation.

“But I can’t write,” said Nona.

“I can,” said Hot Sauce. Then she amended, “Enough.”

“But Hot Sauce, the Angel won’t trust us after this...”

“The asset doesn’t have to trust you,” said Hot Sauce, sounding all of a sudden very grown-up and very professional and very much like Pyrrha. Nona was so cowed that she didn’t even ask what part of you the asset was. Hot Sauce followed this up with, “I’ll go alone. If you don’t want to.”

“I’m a Teacher’s Aide. I’m meant to look after you.”

“Then look after me. Unless you’re scared.”

“I’m not scared of anything,” lied Nona, but added urgently, “You can’t let me get hurt.”

Hot Sauce just shrugged expressively at that, like, *I wasn’t going to*, and Nona wished she could have made Hot Sauce understand somehow. But it was all happening so quickly. She said helplessly, “Even like a sunburn or if there’s a dust storm,” but Hot Sauce was ignoring her to rummage through what had long ago used to be someone’s front desk, finding a bit of scrap paper, getting a pen and seeing if the ink had dried out. She began printing laboriously. It took her such a long time that Nona was hopeful the Angel would get curious about where they were and come down and rumble their plan, but it was not to be. Hot Sauce knelt down by the dog and tucked the note into his collar, unclipped the leash and hung it up in the foyer, wedged the paper in tight so that it wouldn’t fall out. Nona hoped devoutly that the Angel would check it.

"Noodle," said Hot Sauce, in the voice of command, "go upstairs."

Noodle looked at Hot Sauce in much the way that Nona wished she could look at Hot Sauce—a sort of *Why aren't you coming with me? Are you dim?* expression—but when Hot Sauce repeated, "Go upstairs," he wagged his tail a bit, then turned away and started mounting the stairs.

"Go," said Hot Sauce.

Nona and Hot Sauce made for the doors. Hot Sauce held the locking apparatus down and Nona shoved through—they were heavy fire doors and they took some pushing, though Crown had breezed through them like they had been feathers—and Hot Sauce flew after her. The door went *click*—locking itself behind them—and Hot Sauce said, "Hood up. Go go go,"—and seized Nona's hand—and like a loosed bullet, ricocheted off down the street.

It was all Nona could do to cling to her, her heart beating fast, regretting all of the decisions that had led her to that moment. Then she told herself sternly, *Stop it!* If she was going to do it, she thought, she might as well *do* it. She had some vague notion that when you committed to a thing you had to do it all the way. Who had said that to her? Who had taught her that? *Once you've stepped in*, said the voice in the back of her head, *you're in. This isn't the Hokey Pokey.*

She had remembered something—she had finally remembered something! Only she didn't have anyone to tell.

Nona was saved from being seriously out of breath by the fact that a few streets down, they caught up with a crowd of people shuffling forward. There was no talking, just the noise of moving feet; a truck chugging along keeping pace with the pedestrians; a baby shushed in someone's arms. They were all hooded and jacketed, and without hesitation Hot Sauce merged with the mass. It was incredible the way she moved. The moment she joined that crowd, her shoulders were flung back—she straightened up a whole inch—she swaggered with her hips. She aged fifteen years, no longer a child among that throng of people. Nona dropped her hand and tried to do the same, straightening her back, softening her hips, and Hot Sauce beneath her breath just said—"Keep it up."

They glued themselves shoulder to shoulder in that slow queue. They were being streamed into the big eight-lane street in front of the civics building, where militia officers directed people from the backs of trucks or on their putt-putts, each one in a helmet, each one with a stick, most of

them so badly frightened that Nona swore she could watch them sweat. They were turning some people away. The person with the baby was told to stay at the back of the crowd. The officer said in a low voice, "If they stampede, you'll be hurt," and the person with the baby said tonelessly, "Who cares? We might as well die."

One older man in the crowd turned around and said quite clearly, enough that people flinched from the raised voice, "Don't you give them that—don't you give the zeds that pleasure."

"I don't care. We're probably being kettled."

"We aren't—we aren't," said the old man. "You see the trucks with the gates? You see the ladders? We aren't."

"Just don't bring that baby in," said the militia officer. "No kids, no cars. That's the rule."

"You and whose army?" scoffed the person; but the old man said, "Don't be a fool. You know whose army. Stay back here with me, sonny, stay back here with me."

Nona was grateful that she and Hot Sauce passed unnoticed beneath the officer's nose; there was already a cross-faced collection of kids and teenagers in the back of a militia truck, grumbling and swapping cigarettes, some of them significantly older than Hot Sauce and looking a lot older than Nona. She ducked her head a little bit more inside her hood and tried to walk bigger.

The crowd was thick and tall. Hot Sauce grabbed Nona's forearm and beelined between the people—Hot Sauce never cared who she jostled—until she stopped dead by one of the traffic lights, right next to a raggedy trash can. It was the kind of traffic light with a pole stuck through it crossways to hang signs off. Hot Sauce said, "We're light enough. Come on. Here," and suddenly there was a cradle for her foot, and Nona found herself boosted up the pole—she wrapped her legs around it and wriggled upward more out of fright than skill—to sit on one of the crossbars. It squeaked a little, but it didn't feel as though it was going to immediately give way. Hot Sauce shinned up the other side. She sat beside Nona on the bit that stuck out opposite and they laced their arms around the central pole and huddled there to watch the screen, head and shoulders above the rest of the crowd, their legs dangling.

There was a huge noise of breathing—feet shuffling—coughs and sneezes, and the ignition and exhaustion noise of motors, but nobody was

talking. Every so often someone would raise their voice and everyone around them would converge, as though they had all agreed beforehand that nobody would talk. Nona looked at the faces of the crowd, hooded against the heat and the dust, wondering briefly and hopefully if Pyrrha and Camilla or Palamedes were somehow among them, or Crown. It was like looking at the sea—grey colours, drab green colours, every so often a paler moving blotch of dun or tan. It made her feel a little sick to look at so many people, so many sets of shoulders and crossed arms, so she stared at the screen instead.

It was still unfolding—they had set up the big metal frame, and shiny skin made of tessellated hexagons was slowly being stretched over it by people attached to guy lines. They had gotten nearly all of the way and were fixing the ends now, but a corner would come loose, and by the time they could re-pin it an opposite corner would go. Nobody seemed to find this funny. Eventually the pale grey shiny hexagon stuff was taut before them, as high as the second storey of the school building, seemingly five times as wide. A trembling rectangle. They clipped power lines to the sides, and every so often white light would popple over one of the hexagons.

There was a murmur from the crowd now, the first one that wasn't interrupted. People were looking at their watches, they were looking at the screen. The broadcast was late.

At first nothing happened, and for a moment Nona wondered if the broadcast hadn't been all some big joke or prank—if nothing was going to happen at all. Then one hexagon close to the corner rippled again.

Each of its neighbours rippled, and a cascade of white light burned over the surface of the screen. There was an enormous screech from the collection of speakers piled untidily at the bottom of the screen—the crowd shuddered at the sound, and Nona's teeth set on edge—and then a voice suddenly emerged. A strange, low voice, speaking what everyone called House, caught halfway into a sentence.

“—esolved through official government channels. We will, of course, be happy to facilitate local elections to ensure the populace feels represented in those committees and resolutions. Under these conditions, no population-wide penalties will be levied. There will be no effects on resettlement. No legal ramifications will fall on groups or individuals, unless they are found guilty of terrorism in the aforementioned tribunal. Definitions of terrorism will be agreed on via elected representatives. All households and

individuals can make a plea for restitution, which will be answered not through local authorities but by the Emperor of the Nine Houses.”

For a moment Nona could barely make heads or tails of it. It was lucky that it was House, which she and Pyrrha and Palamedes and Camilla spoke anyway, but not having anyone to *look* at foxed her. The voice was also saying a lot of words she had never before heard, in context or otherwise. She looked at Hot Sauce’s face instead, half-hidden beneath its hood, taut with listening.

“This agreement,” the voice echoed over the crowd, “is, as I speak, being transcribed and will be displayed in public in official local languages —how many do we have of those? Seventeen? Well, someone’s in for a long night—displayed in public across the city as soon as translations have been finalised. The agreement will, without further negotiation, be considered legally binding. However—as I mentioned at the start of this broadcast—there are conditions that must be met. Any individual or group who violates these conditions renders the entire agreement, I’m sorry to say, null and void. The population *will* consequently represent a legal entity that has damaged property, acted unlawfully, committed or been accessory to murder, and performed a coup. This is per the contracts drawn up between you and the Emperor Undying over seven hundred years previous when this settlement was created. His offer of a break in that contract … is entirely contingent on what you do now. Ah. Give me a second. It seems we’ve fixed the equipment. We were using it in a … barricade? How exciting. Anyway, we should have screen capabilities now.”

The hexagons writhed in agony, then resolved into a picture—what she was looking at, Nona could for a moment not tell. The heinous light bathed the crowd in white and rainbow colours. The screen made all the hues garish, ten times more saturated than they should have been: as though they were drawn by someone who only had certain colours in their pencil box. The camera swung back and forth a few times, which made Nona nauseous —there were brief flashes of boots and legs: of whites so white they looked yellow except where they were splotched with reds so red they looked orange, a multihued melange of faces and walls—before it settled on a desk. Seated at the desk, looking mildly annoyed but perhaps like that was their normal expression, a person came into focus.

Nona was charmed immediately by the clothing. The other boots and the other shirts and the other legs had looked dirty and shabby, from what

she'd briefly seen, but not this person. *Their* coat was so spotlessly white that on the screen it looked blue; so was their neckerchief. The camera jumped a lot closer, focusing on this figure from the waist up now, and Nona could see that the neckerchief had a pretty gold pin sparkling in the folds. The person themselves was frighteningly pale of skin, and their hair alarmingly perfect in shape and form. Nona had never seen hair like that before. It was as though it had been sculpted, not grown. It was a rich middling brown, thick and shiny even beneath the strong lights that had been aimed at it. Most people under such lights would have shown at least a little scalp. The expression was one of intense boredom; their body language betrayed more interest. And their lips were a little too pale to be lips, but shiny like the hair, as though someone had applied gloss.

But their huge, screen-magnified eyes were quite pretty, Nona decided: blue, with brown bits. She had never seen eyes like that before.

"Good evening, New Rho," said the person.

Nobody responded. The young, well-dressed, dead-white person didn't seem to wait for them. They said instead, "Citizens, settlement refugees, and all other residents, here is a list of the Emperor's conditions. One:

"That all violence of any kind directed at Cohort facilities ceases immediately, both the barracks and the surrounding residential area;

"Two, that all attacks on Cohort soldiers cease immediately, whether they are inside Cohort facilities or outside;

"Three, that all casualties belonging or suspected of belonging to the Emperor's Nine Houses are surrendered and brought to the barracks gates;

"Four, that all members of the group calling themselves Blood of Eden cease operating in this area, and that anyone who comes into contact with Blood of Eden refuses succour, materiel, or weapons from them;

"Five..."

Here the beautiful pale person paused for the first time, though it seemed that it was less for not knowing what to say and more for the sake of waiting.

"That any member of House personnel who has left their post—disappeared into the population—arrived after the siege and failed to make themselves known to the authorities—that anyone who serves the Emperor, Cohort or otherwise, and who has made themselves absent without leave, present themselves to me immediately, at the barracks, during the next twenty-four hours. This is the amnesty period. Take it or leave it.

Remember that it is in your power to turn Emperor's Evidence and be granted the mercies of the King Undying."

Their eyes unfocused a little. They looked at someone beyond the camera, not at the gathered crowd. Whatever was being said, or gestured, it caused the speaker to quirk their perfect dark eyebrows in a kind of *oh, for goodness' sake* moment of impatience.

"For those of you not privy to the beginning of the broadcast," it drawled, "I will inform you, again, that the Emperor cares deeply for New Rho—that he has no desire to see the end that, I can assure you firsthand, has come for the rebels of Ur. He wants to see resettlement and supply begin afresh ... and believe me, the current—disturbance—in the planet's atmosphere is no barrier to the graces *or* the punishments that the Nine Houses can distribute. I say this with all the authority invested in me as Prince Ianthe Naberius the First, the Lyctor Prince, the Saint of Awe."

For a moment the crowd was silent. The speech had to be translated for some people, anyone who didn't have really good House. But then the word spread through the crowd—*Lyctor—Lyctor—Lyctor*.

Prince Ianthe Naberius said, "I hope you find *that* ... comforting."

Nobody found it comforting. The word was picking up—*Lyctor—Lyctor—Lyctor*, like a wind.

The person—Prince Ianthe Naberius—drawled, "Yet that's not all," and made a brief and strange expression. It was one Nona had never seen, one Nona couldn't parse. The Prince crooked their finger at someone Nona couldn't see, and the camera wobbled and pulled back to reveal that someone else was sitting right there, at the same desk.

The first person sat beautifully, while this second person sat with ramrod posture. They were dressed in the same bright white jacket as their counterpart, with the same tie. Their skin was rendered pallid in those hot lights, with the same weird, waxy quality: warm-coloured skin that should have been a similar brown hue to Nona's, except that there was something wrong with it. Their crooked mouth was set in a serious, bloodless line, and their face held no expression at all. It was a grim mask on a forbidding face, with about as much animation as the portrait in We Suffer's office. The only alive thing about this second person was their hair, neatly arrayed with a wreath of fingerbones and white, springlike blossoms: wildly red hair, red enough to make the electric hexagons struggle with it. It was the face of the girl in her dream.

And their eyes—

After that first, astonishing moment, Nona stared without seeing in a wild paralysis of recognition. She was trembling. The face on the screen was the face of the girl in her dream; it was the picture of the face that Camilla and Palamedes had drawn for her; but so much more serious, so lifeless, so slack, like the girl was sleeping with her eyes open, that for a moment she thought she must be mistaken. Yet there she was—it was her, the girl in her dream. For a moment Nona panicked, convinced that somehow the broadcast could see her too, that the girl was looking at her. But she had imagined it. Broadcasts didn't work that way.

"The Emperor has sent no intermediary to vouchsafe you," the first person said. Nona could barely hear for looking. "All these promises are made by no lowlier personages than myself and Her *Most Serene Highness*, Crown Prince Kiriona Gaia, heir to the First House, the Emperor's only daughter."

Nobody said anything. Prince Ianthe Naberius continued, "The Emperor Undying has sent nothing less than his own Tower Princes, as gracious tokens of his extreme *love and concern* ... his unimpeachable authority."

There was something irrepressible hovering at the edges of the person called Prince Ianthe Naberius's mouth at *love* and at *concern*—like a struggle not to smile, or not to explode in a fit of temper. Nona had rarely seen those two feelings go to war before. But it only lasted a second. The camera waited on the other person—the other prince—as though waiting for them, for her, to say anything. She didn't. She was as stony and as cool and as uninterested as she had been before. Curiously, Nona noticed, she didn't even seem to be breathing.

"Anyway! Back to me, Prince Ianthe Naberius," said Prince Ianthe Naberius.

The screen nauseously wobbled back and closed in. The Crown Prince, the dream girl, disappeared from view.

They said, "I will broadcast again, exactly twenty-four hours from now, with new instructions. What those instructions are will depend very much on you.

"Hail to the Emperor Undying, to his Nine Houses, and also to you, his respected pactmates, beneficiaries, and allies."

There was a pause.

In quite a different voice the person said, “*That’ll* fix their little red wagons. Is this still on...?”

The screen flickered and a disembodied voice said, “This broadcast will repeat at five o’clock tomorrow as a recording.” Then it all went dead.

The hexagons flared white. One sparked at the end of the frame. The sun had sunk a little lower behind the buildings, so when the broadcast stopped it all seemed extraordinarily dark, like nighttime had come early. Nona clung to the pole with slippery hands, feeling all at sea; she focused in on Hot Sauce’s breathing—which was very shallow and very soft, but there. Nona looked at the way Hot Sauce’s nostrils flared deep inside her hood, at the rise and fall of her chest. She wanted to make sure.

The silence had broken. Some of the militia had taken over the loudspeakers, telling people to go. They repeated, “Disperse, disperse.” But nobody seemed to want to disperse. The noise grew and grew and grew. Someone right under Nona’s pole said, “This city’s over. I’m going into the desert. We won’t survive another one of these.”

Someone in the crowd was yelling. They were being pulled away by two other people. Nona saw their face as the crowd pressed and the crowd parted. They were saying, “Liars! Liars! Ur is fighting! *They’re* losing! Liars!”

The megaphone was still bleating out *Disperse, disperse*. One of the militia trucks had turned on its alarm so that Nona couldn’t hear individual voices anymore; it was a horrible sound, a long dying whine punctuated by a whirring *WHEE-ooh WHEE-ooh* noise like when the poison cats were fighting. She clung to Hot Sauce and the pole. Some people tried to throw things at the screen, but other people were pulling them away. The crowd’s fear had changed and mixed them up; they were surging this way and that, forming rivers and currents, some people refusing to move, others struggling to get away. One of the militia trucks was slowly chugging into the crowd, people pushing to get out of its path, as someone on the back of it yelled and gesticulated: “Everyone on this side of me, go down the broadway. Everyone on *this* side of me, back toward the motorway. Come on...”

No shots had rung out, at least. There were scuffles among the people, but most sets of shoulders Nona saw seemed more depressed than anything. She looked at Hot Sauce and nervously joggled her elbow. Hot Sauce didn’t seem inclined to move. She whispered, “What now?”

Hot Sauce looked at Nona. Her pupils had gone small and dark.

"They're not people, Nona," she said. "They're not people."

Nona ventured, "They seemed strange..."

"Because they're not real," said Hot Sauce.

Her lips were a little wet. She was terribly afraid all of a sudden, Nona could see, filled with the fear her body spent so much of its time rejecting. Nona thought about her tantrums and, buoyed by the courage that had brought her here, reached out to seize Hot Sauce's wrist that wasn't holding the pole. "Listen to me," she commanded. "I'm your Teacher's Aide. Breathe with me ... I'll squeeze your hand for *in* and let go for *out*. *In* through the nose ... *Out* through the mouth ... Not so quickly. Don't hyperventilate," she added, knowing she sounded exactly like Camilla.

Hot Sauce acquiesced. She took five breaths in—five breaths out—all the while the alarm blared horribly and the crowd surged and billowed beneath them. Her face still looked strange and rigid, as though she might puke. Nona realised that although Hot Sauce was still her leader, she had to help Hot Sauce, she had to be the one who was nearly nineteen. She started to caterpillar herself back down the pole—her long career as the worm with problems had taught her the movements she needed to lower herself—and when her feet touched the bottom, jostled by people on her elbows and shoulders all the way, she called: "Come down, let's go."

Hot Sauce came down. Nona held her hand as they joined the crowd. She had scanned over the top of people's heads and thought, a little desperately, that she knew where the crowd was thickest: she was very grateful in that moment that she knew about movements. She hurled herself and Hot Sauce into the current and dragged her toward where they had come from—changed her mind in a moment of stillness, joined a rivulet heading east, wriggling into their midst and saying loudly, "My sister's going to be sick," which got them a tiny opening, enough to move through. The crowd extended all the way up the back street. She could smell the smoke where the old water treatment plant was still smouldering. They had barely made it into the artery going up the street before a shot rang out in the crowd behind them. Everyone screamed and cringed, and then everyone ran.

At the noise of the bullet, Hot Sauce seemed to come online again—she dragged Nona into a tiny alleyway, away from the stampede. She said, "Go!" and Nona was grateful to have her back, grateful to let her take the

lead. They had to climb mounds of leaking garbage sacks, and Nona cut herself terribly on a jaggedy old can. She squealed at the pain, but stuck her hand in her pocket to hide it. The noise grew terrible: alarms, yells, backfiring trucks. They scrambled up and down fences—the wires cut their hands—they skidded and fell down in broken and half-demolished buildings. It seemed like the sound was always right behind them and they couldn't get away from it.

“Nona!” called a voice. “Nona! Hot Sauce! Girls!”

This voice came from a truck with a grille. This truck had mounted the pavement and other cars were honking at it. It was the Angel, sitting in the passenger’s seat. She had the window rolled down, and she was twisting herself into a knot to open the back door. She bawled, “Get *in!*”

Hot Sauce and Nona didn’t need asking twice. They threw themselves at the truck, scrambled up into the rough, potholed back seats, and shut the door behind them, panting. Noodle was there lying in the bit where your feet went, looking baleful at all the noise and interruptions.

The Angel said to someone, “Drive.” They were separated from the passenger seat by a fine black mesh, but the Angel had peeled it back so that she could look at them. She said sharply, “Are you hurt?”

“Nona got cut,” said Hot Sauce, grimy and dirty and bloody herself.

“No, I didn’t,” said Nona quickly. “*I thought* I did, but I didn’t.”

“You’re covered in blood.”

“I’m fine. I’m fine.”

The Angel, having ascertained that neither of the girls was bleeding out, said—“Buckle yourselves in. Both of you deserve to be bloody pancakes. Kevin was in hysterics.”

“How did you know where we were?” asked Nona, wrestling with the seat belt.

“I’m not stupid—I’ve been doing doughnuts around the school building for the last half hour waiting for you two to turn up.”

Nona was amazed that she and Hot Sauce had gotten as far as the school building, but also that they had not gone further. It seemed as though they had been running for ages.

Hot Sauce said, “Where are the others?” and the Angel said, “Safe—the moment I knew you two had scarpered, I decided to pull everyone back in case they got the same idea. Go left,” she said, to the unseen driver. “For

God's sake, don't use the motorway, everyone's driving like maniacs. Don't take anything that feeds onto the Civic. And don't rear-end anyone."

"Who is driving this fucking *car*," said the driver. They had a low, terse voice and surprisingly good House.

"You, so make sure we have a car to drive by the end of the journey," said the Angel. She turned back to the girls. She had fixed her face into steely, teacherly disapproval, and Nona writhed beneath it. She said, "Hot Sauce, I'm driving you to the shelter."

"No shelter. I'll bunk with Honesty," said Hot Sauce distantly.

"As if. I dropped off Honesty myself—you know where Honesty lives, and you'd be going back in the wrong direction, inside that mess."

"No shelter. They're autocrats," said Hot Sauce.

"Okay. You can sleep in—a place I know. It's mine, but I'm not going to be using it."

The driver said, "You're not?"

"If I don't go home with you, you're going to crouch outside my door all night."

"Don't make it sound like it's my idea," said the driver.

Hot Sauce subsided into silence; Nona watched her face flatten, which meant that she had no argument to make. The Angel turned her sights on Nona instead and said briskly, "Nona, where do you live?"

Nona told them. The driver tried to crane their neck around to look at her, but it was simply impossible; there was too much grille and they were wearing a thick desert muffler round their head. The Angel, who *could* crane, had craned immediately. She said, bewildered: "I thought Joli was funning me. The *Building*? Inside of it, you mean?"

"Yes," said Nona, who was about to elaborate on exactly where but remembered Palamedes and Camilla's warnings, and shut herself up in time. She said, "I do live there, really truly."

The Angel righted herself in her seat. She said, "We'll go there first, then."

"Thank you," said Nona meekly. Now that the adrenaline had passed, all the fight had left her; she just felt frightened and shivery. When the Angel said, "Hot Sauce, how badly is she hurt? Nona, have you had your stonemouth jab?" she couldn't think of anything smarter to do than tuck her hands inside her jacket and say, "I'm fine! Not hurt at all!"

“Horseshit,” said the Angel. “You’re all over blood. There’s a first-aid kit beneath your seat, Hot Sauce—”

“Really I’m not. It can’t be my blood. It must be someone else’s. Maybe it’s tomato sauce. Who knows? It could be anything. But *please* don’t worry about it.”

Not, as Pyrrha would have said, her best effort. But maybe the rising pitch of hysteria in her voice convinced the Angel, because she only said, “I’ll check you out tomorrow. If you start to feel faint or get a fever, let someone know, all right?”

“I will. I will. I promise.”

The person in the driver’s seat muttered, “I can’t believe this.”

“Yes?” said the Angel. “Were those your dulcet tones making commentary?”

“If people knew this was how you spent your time, Aim—”

“They should hope to God they spent their own time half so usefully,” said the Angel wrathfully.

“Pretending you can bandage bipeds? Teaching snot-nosed kids about particles?”

“None of us have snot,” said Nona, deeply offended. Then she thought about it and said more truthfully, “Anyway, it’s not Kevin’s fault.”

The driver didn’t say anything. Hot Sauce spoke up—“We love her.”

The driver said, to the Angel and not Hot Sauce, “Now I see. Chance to be *her*, huh? A little independent living for once?”

“It is my enormous privilege to be *they*. Just drive,” said the Angel crisply. “I don’t pay you for your opinions.”

“You don’t pay me anything,” said the driver. “I’m here for my bloody sins.”

The drive would have been extremely exciting had Nona’s carsickness not warred with her homesickness. Around twenty-six highly unusual bad things had happened to her today, and she had assumed she only had room for six unusual bad things before she had a tantrum; it must mean she was growing up. The driver gunned the ignition and drove in all the places cars weren’t meant to drive. Thankfully a lot of other cars were doing that too. Many times there was a huge bump as the car went onto the pavement, or had to swerve suddenly, or rattled down along a little road that didn’t have the type of terrain meant for a car. Most terrifyingly, the car once drove down a whole road that had been closed to cars due to the crevasses and

potholes, right through a plastic snapper that had an illustration of a car falling down a huge hole, and Nona couldn't help uttering tiny shrieks every time they drove close to those huge black lightless wells. Noodle uttered tiny *aroo ... aroo ... aroo* sounds with her, as though in sympathy, even when the Angel said without any particular heat, "Shut up, dog. We've been through worse." Nona felt embarrassed that greater courage was expected of the dog than of her. Hot Sauce settled back in the car seat, and Nona noticed with absolute disbelief that she had fallen asleep. Nona closed her eyes and put her feet close to Noodle.

And then it was suddenly *their* road. The Building loomed high above the car window, and tears smarted in Nona's eyes to be finally home after such a long and hideous day. They had to wait until the gate opened before pulling into the deep garage. Nona didn't even question why the truck that the Angel was being driven in was allowed access to the gate: maybe whoever was manning the gate saw the grille and thought better of stopping them. The lights had all been turned off in the underbuilding where the other cars and trucks and motorcycles went, and it was astonishingly dark, all except for the truck's big headlights.

There were people next to idling trucks, next to cars, people with their dust hoods up, people with their guns out, or people standing and talking quietly. When they saw the truck they turned their heads, then immediately looked away again. The driver turned off the lights—it was now so dark inside the car that Nona could barely see herself—and the Angel said, "Will you be all right from here?"

"Yes," said Nona. "Yes, I think so."

"School will be in session tomorrow," said the Angel.

The driver said, "No, it won't," and the Angel said, "Yes, it will. Can I depend on you, Nona?"

"Am I going to be in trouble?"

"Least said," said the Angel, "soonest mended."

Even in the dark Nona could see her teeth, her tired smile, the soft set of her shoulders. She reached out a very calloused hand and patted Nona on the head, just as though she were Noodle, and Nona felt better. She knew from that touch that she wasn't really in trouble. Hot Sauce spoke up suddenly, in the darkness, and said, "It was my idea."

"Yes, I was aware," said the Angel wearily. "Tomorrow, Nona—it'll be safe at the school."

Nona pushed hard on the big truck door and slithered out of the vehicle. Outside the truck it was a little easier to see. There were lights from people's cigarettes, lights from the reflective sprays on the backs of the trucks, lights from the landing. She said, "Thanks—I love you," and then darted away into the elevator well as fast as she could, feeling red hot with embarrassment. She hadn't meant to say it—it was like the time Born in the Morning had called the Angel *Dad*—only she did mean it. She *did* love the Angel, after today.

Nona took the stairwell up because the elevator stuck so much. Her legs were wobbly and tired, and she had to wait on the landing every time her calves and her feet got too stiff. Thankfully that sensation never lasted long—it was like a brief twinge—and she was able to keep climbing, up all thirty-three flights, though after the thirty-second she gave up and went on her hands and knees. By the time she was on her own dear scrubby-carpeted thirty-third floor with the cop below and the militia guys above and the adjacent crying baby (which was not making itself known) she nearly kissed the floor, only she thought that Palamedes would say that was the easiest way to bring on a serious virus.

The last few metres were the longest. Fumbling around beneath the mat for where they had glued the spare key and thumbing the right number into the numlock pad took all she had left. She turned the knob, and flung the door open, and wailed in a big excited hurry: "I'm home! I'm safe! You don't have to worry!"

Camilla rose from the table, empty waterglasses stacked neatly before her, a whole page of newspaper torn into beautifully even strips, exactly as if a bird had done it—the work of hours, the labour of anxiety. Nona flew to her. Cam caught her up by the arms and looked *through* her, not *at* her; her beautiful pale grey eyes looked like holes burnt in a mask.

Then she held Nona so hard that it very literally hurt. Nona's face was squashed into the hard bits of her chest.

"Cam, I'm fine!" she said again, flattened and breathless. "I'm okay! Where's Pyrrha?"

Camilla's arms went slack so Nona could pull back a little way. She looked up at the door, as though she expected to see something there and had just realised she hadn't; she looked down at Nona. When she looked at Nona again her face was horrible.

“Nona,” she said, “Pyrrha went to pick you up from school before lunch. I thought she was with you.”

JOHN 19:18

IN THE DREAM the waters kept rising. They started making a hut at the top of the hill. Bodies were bobbing up and down in the water. He was scared of that—he was always scared of the water—and he made the waters go away for a while, and he raised up some parts of the earth that had been covered by sea. She watched them explode upward, shedding tonnes of water back into the soup. She asked him if it was hard; he said the hardest thing was remembering that he could do it, and not just doing things the old difficult way.

On the new plank of land, all cut up from the water and the damage, there was a broken concrete building guarded by enormous shards of cracked bone. Like an egg that had been smashed from above. They wandered through the fields, slipping in icy brown mud, but they didn't go anywhere near the building. They found the hood of a half-dead car to sit on, which was drying in the light, and he said: Politically, we were a landmine. Everybody was trying to get to grips with the timescale. We didn't have much time left, and new data fucked around with the numbers every day. Every time you breathed funny, we wet ourselves. But the old backers, they were the most scared of us, kept saying we were working with this country, or that country, pushed the hardest to prove what we were doing wasn't real and that anybody talking to us was helping us pull the world's leg. They were all going round and round and round. I kept saying, give me a seat at the table, let's work out if I can help, if I can do something.

He said, Turns out you can't even talk about whether or not you can work out how to do something without twelve weeks of diplomatic dialogue. It was sick.

He said, Anyway, we all had Interpol warrants. Some of the guys inside our walls who'd joined us were like, we want out. Sometimes they wanted out because they were CIA plants and they had bosses to go back to; sometimes they wanted out because they were scared. Anyone who wanted to go, I let them go. I didn't even care about those guys. Like, nice of them to show up, but they were small fry. I could only trust the inner circle. My scientists, my engineer, my detective, my lawyer, my artist, my nun, my hedge fund manager. My diehards. The ones keeping the lights on. And Ulysses and Titania, my two dead kids—but they were dead, they weren't

great conversation. I wanted to figure out if I could bring them back. If I could really do it, if I could make them come back to life.

He said, Problem was I couldn't bring anyone back once they'd gone, just stop them from going if they were close. I could fix all the damage and even get the heart beating again and fix the brain. But there was nothing going on inside Ulysses and Titania: they never talked, they never responded. I'd get really scared now and again and turn off the hearts and the brains. I didn't know what I was doing. And that ate at me.

He said, Our nun kept saying of course you can't bring them back, their souls are gone. It took me way too long to listen to her. But I was a perfectionist, right? I didn't want to believe that there was a thing like a soul, I wanted to believe I hadn't got it right.

He said, Both of us were correct. But that's for later. What happened then was we found out where the money had gone.

At this point in the dream, he stood up and walked three times around the field. He said, "Don't follow me, I'm mad." She sat on the car roof and watched as he kicked a piece of detritus over the edge of the big muddy field. He had sent it quite high, so it fell into the rising mist and then rattled a long way down the hill until she didn't hear it anymore. She wondered again why anything that hurt them only hurt briefly, but that anger took such a long time to go away.

When he had got over it, he rejoined her on the bonnet of the car, and he tucked his knees up and the metal beneath them groaned at their weight, and he began again.

He said, They took the ships, our ones, the new ones. They said they were going to use FTL instead, faster than light travel. Stupid name for it, it was never really about light speed, but anyway. They said carrying everyone over so slowly was a risk, that they'd shut the cryo plan down because it wasn't *good* enough. It wasn't safe, it wasn't okay or moral. They said we'd only managed to get it down to an eight percent chance of lasting damage once we thawed them, and we'd never fixed maternity—

Here he broke off and couldn't speak for a while. When he spoke again he said, *We* were the ones who argued them down to 8%. They were ready to go when we were just in the seventies, they were all, ooh, everyone knows it's a risk, and it's not like it's thirty percent fatality, it's thirty percent *chance of damage*, what's that even, ooh. He said, They hadn't given a *fuck* about maternity, said people should terminate before they got

packed as a rule. When M— had been all, I will not accept those numbers, I will not accept a plan that incorporates reproductive injustice, and we stood beside her, we said that's not acceptable, they whinged about the money for a while and eventually said fine. And now they were acting like eight percent *wasn't good enough*. Like we hadn't tried.

He said, Their plan was to evac the whole population. First, send out a dozen guide ships. They said they'd managed to find some poor dipshit geek who'd fixed the FTL problem of getting locked in the chrono well, you know, moving so fast you were stuck doing quantum wheelies. They'd come up with something where you could oscillate out so long as the ship was attuned to a prearranged spectrum outside. I still don't understand the maths. It's going to take me ten thousand years to understand it. I couldn't follow, but A— could. He said immediately, *What is the point if you still have no fucking clue where your ship is going to end up when you shake out of FTL*. They said, *Aha, but we can track it once it's out*. A— said, *It could be halfway across the universe or phasing through a planet*. They kept arguing that probably wouldn't happen, and that A— wasn't following, and he had to admit that it wasn't his area, but he said they were taking *one* discovery and acting like it changed the whole ballgame when really we now needed ten years of funding to discover whether it was any use, i.e., academia functioning as normal. But these trillionaires were acting like they'd got the Holy Grail. They said it was expensive, so twelve ships would go first, with one guiding them out with the beacon frequencies like a tugboat leading a cruise liner, triangulate for Tau Ceti, dump the population, and come back. They said that they were on track to finish a lot more FTL-capable ships by then.

He said, We knew how much those ships cost. We couldn't even imagine how much FTL engines cost, but we could guess. We knew how much each ship could carry. In the cryo cans, we could cram in billions, that was cryo's saving grace. Whereas they were staffing ships with a living crew, no sleepers, big-ass ships with thousands of live staff. When we pointed that out they kept saying *we* were crazy, *we* were kooks, *we* were monsters. They kept saying cows watched sunsets. At that point I wished I'd used the fucking conspiracy theorists instead of the cows. Nobody would've cared if I'd turned people inside-out who think vaccines have nanites in them that mine cryptocurrency. But *cows watch sunsets, man!*

He said, M— freaked out. Said this was the rats scattering. Said this was why they'd dumped the cryo plan in the first place. She said we were looking at a private flotilla carrying the rich bastards to safety. And A— agreed with her, which was how you knew it was really, really bad. He said this was a blind. He said he wasn't even sure the FTL thing was real. He said they were going to try to generation ship it to Tau Ceti using stuff *we'd* come up with, tech *we'd* created, and just be all bye-bye, fuck you, planet, thanks for the oil and for the chicken yakitori, we loved that stuff.

And I said again, Guys, nobody's going to fall for that. They're going to have to give numbers. They're going to have to prove they're making the other ships. Nobody's going to fall for that. Look at all the division we caused because we proved magic was real and turned Bidibidi inside out because we didn't trust the cops. It's not going to fly. I said, they can't do this *now*. They can't pull this off.

At that moment in the dream he got up off the car, and he said, "Fuck," in a normal voice, and then he said, "*FUCK*," so loudly that it echoed off the crumbling concrete shell and the bones and was carried off into the mist. She watched him walk the field, three times, five times, ten.

On the eleventh, he squelched through the mud to her and collapsed in front of the car and he said, They left you, they left you. They saw you suffering on dollar-shop life-support, and they didn't look back. They didn't give a fuck about trying to save you. They left.

She said, "I don't remember."

He said, "I can't forget."

DAY FOUR

WHERE IS PYRRHA?—THE GANG SWEARS AN OATH—THE ANGEL MAKES A CALL— HOT SAUCE DRAWS HER GUN—FORTY-EIGHT HOURS UNTIL THE TOMB OPENS.



17

NONA WOKE UP, COLD AND ALONE, with very little idea of how she had fallen asleep; she was still wearing all her clothes, and she hadn't had her bath. In the night someone had unbuttoned her dust coat, taken off her shoes, and loosened what she was wearing, which meant Camilla or Palamedes; only they would have thought of it.

Last night had been dreadful, too bewildering even to thank her lucky stars that Camilla hadn't once asked about the broadcast—once she'd heard that Nona had waited at school when Pyrrha hadn't turned up, then been driven home by a teacher, that was that. She didn't ask anything else, except: "You heard about the broadcast?" and Nona said, faintly, "Yes," ready to tell her about the girl from the dream; but Camilla had immediately changed tack, immediately gone to ask Palamedes what to do.

Nona, who by this point was perishing with hunger and exhaustion, had been placed on the floor by Palamedes and forced to suck on cubes of frozen fruit juice as he furiously scribbled on a sheet of paper. He only paused once to say, "You know what the Nine Houses have said, of course."

Buoyed by blood sugar, Nona was ready to confess.

"Yes. More than. Honesty came in and told us everything they said over the radio, and then Hot Sauce wanted to see it, and..."

She paused. But Palamedes didn't take the bait.

"Pyrrha was gone before we knew anything about it. She must have set off a full hour before any call came. Nona, did Crown say anything to you about the broadcast when she walked you to the classroom? Did she seem to know about it?"

Nona puzzled over the memory.

"No, she didn't say a word. We only found out after lunch and I stayed because Camilla didn't come to pick me up. Crown didn't say anything"—

this wasn't quite true, and Nona was feeling in the mood to explain, so she tucked the ice cube in her cheek and said—"only Crown *did* tell the Angel that she was dating Camilla and I didn't say, 'No she isn't,' so I'm sorry."

Palamedes was not so tired that he could not look amused, which was always funny on Camilla's dark, serious face.

"On Crown's head be it. Don't worry, Nona. Keep at that cube, and take another when you're done. You're almost unconscious." Then he said, more to himself than to her: "Pyrrha, why the hell did you go off half-cocked? What was so fucking urgent that you couldn't even pick up Nona?"

"That's two swears," said Nona, so nearly asleep she was in danger of choking on the ice cube.

"Not a Teacher's Aide right now, Nona," said Palamedes.

She said, "Maybe someone told her about the broadcast on her way to get me. Maybe she went to see the shuttle land."

Palamedes said, "Neither of those things would prevent her from getting y—" and then he stopped completely dead.

He said, "The shuttle. That fucking shuttle."

"Three," said Nona, forgetting.

"Oh, God," said Palamedes. "Pyrrha Dve, *please* ... Nona, your ice cube's falling out."

The last thing she remembered was the ice cube falling out for real and finally; nothing after. Now the alarm was ringing shrilly, far too close for her to stop it with one arm and fall back asleep. Camilla must have set it to make such a horrible sound at some point yesterday. Nona hunted around and pushed its buttons until the noise stopped.

She was completely alone in the bedroom. She panicked for a moment until she saw Camilla and Palamedes's clothes hung up like normal. But neither of them was there: no Cam with her clipboard, no nothing. It was the first morning that Nona could remember when she hadn't been woken up to tell her dreams. She heard the running of the tap in the room next door, and that comforted her, all the sounds of someone doing the washing-up. Except it wasn't Pyrrha, which made her feel bereft. She did not know what to do without someone to give her the cue that it was okay to dress, and in any case she was dressed already. For a moment she lay there, helpless, until the noise of the dishes being wiped stopped and Cam was there in the doorway with one of the blue-and-white-striped cloths that Pyrrha used to dry things with.

“Push the red button and tell the recorder anything you remember,” she said. “I’m making breakfast. Press the one second from left when you’re done.” Then she disappeared again.

Nona didn’t like this at all. Last night’s dream was already mixed up with Pyrrha being gone and the girl on the broadcast, so that she now doubted whether or not the girl on the broadcast *had* had the face of the girl in the dream or if it was all part of some long nightmare. For a moment she thought about hunting out the picture to confirm, but Cam had told her to record herself, and she’d already forgotten which button to push. Her face burned with embarrassment, so she pushed buttons at random, and the recording within made awful sounds. She turned the volume down low so that Camilla couldn’t hear her screwing up. There was static, and then she heard Camilla’s voice coming out of the speakers, sounding tired.

“—ant her to be Harrowhark, Warden.”

Another plastic echo of buttons. The same voice answered, but not the same person. The conversation that followed was filled with weird pauses, as though they were actors in a play who couldn’t quite get their cues right.

“Yes, but the question we need to ask is, *Why?* They hate zombie wizards so much more than zombie thralls. To wit, Judith Deuteros. Why do they want a Lyctor on tap?”

Another pause, another clack.

“To remove the R.B.?”

Pause. Clack. “Not sure. Get the feeling that the R.B. is more a crimp in their plans than the plan itself. At first I thought they were keeping Deuteros alive to see if they could make a Lyctor out of her instead, but I’m not so sure. I think I buy Corona’s story that she’s the getaway vehicle ... put crudely. But it’s Harrowhark they want—or at least, it’s Harrow that We Suffer wants. I don’t think Merv Wing and the Hopers want Harrow at all, or at least—they’re not holding out for her. Everything comes back to the Tomb, Cam. God, I wish I could see your face.”

Clack. Pause. “Look in the mirror.”

Pause. “It’s not you. It’s me wearing you. I keep turning around to find you, and there’s nobody there.”

Clack. “I know the feeling.”

Pause. “Of course you know. Of course I’m telling you what you already, intimately, know. I have spent three-quarters of my life telling you what you already knew and one-sixth telling you what you didn’t. And now

here I am, installed in your body, mere minutes from chewing up your soul ... Camilla, I can't bear this. I'm eating your life."

Clack. Pause. "I'd carry you with me either way."

Pause. "What do you mean?"

Pause. Clack. "I've carried you, Warden. And I've carried your memory ... I'd rather carry you."

Clack. "What about carrying nothing? What about Camilla Hect, the independent entity? Free to live her life outside the shadow of her necromancer? Free from his agenda dictating hers?"

Pause.

"You thought it was your agenda? Huh."

Clack. "I cannot bear the thought of using you."

Pause. "Love and freedom don't coexist, Warden."

Clack. "*This* is all there is to love? Simply by being in your life, I have added indelibly to its weight?"

Pause. "Yes."

Clack. "Camilla, I mean it."

Pause. "I meant it too. You used to say it to me."

"We are one flesh." Clack.

"I am your end."

Pause. "That didn't mean I got squatting rights in your soul. I never would have asked for that. I never had rights to that."

Clack. "Sure. That's why I gave them to you."

Clack. Pause. Pause. Pause.

"I hope you know that I adore you, Scholar."

Clack. "Indubitably, Warden."

Pause. "Cam, have you thought about what it means if Nona's actually —a completed merger? One we will never actually be able to unpick, a successful soul gestalt?"

Clack. "Yes."

"Yes? And? Thoughts?"

Clack. "Lucky them." Another pause, and in the same tones: "More seriously. Keep neutral."

Pause. "Yes, agreed. Roger that."

Clack. Pause. Pause. One of them said, Nona couldn't tell which, "About the Captain and Corona—" but then with a loud static squeal and a garble the recording swapped over into Nona's own voice saying—

“Water-mouth, water-salt-mouth,” and Camilla’s, saying, “In the dream, there’s salt water in their mouth?”

“Nn-hnn.”

“In *your* mouth?”

“Mm-hm.”

“‘Yes’ when I’ve got it right, ‘no’ when I don’t. The salt water’s in your mouth?”

“Mm. *Yiss.*”

“Do you remember anything else?” After another moment, “Face? Nona, are you pointing at your face?”

Nona looked up. Camilla was standing in the doorway. The front of her cheeks and forehead went hot, and she knew that she was blushing furiously, but Camilla’s expression was very even. The recorder made another loud static squeak and a garble and Nona pushed wildly at a button until it stopped. Silence filled the room like cold water.

“How old was I then?” she blurted, more out of something to say than anything else.

“Two months.” Then: “Go wash up. Breakfast’s nearly done.”

Two months, Nona thought distantly, back when she was a baby who couldn’t do anything and could barely talk. It seemed so long ago. She wanted to say, “Cam, I didn’t hear anything,” even though she patently had, but Camilla had already disappeared.

In another pother of despair she twiddled the player to try to get a local radio station, hoping vaguely that there’d be another broadcast or maybe music. Pyrrha could make it go to stations where they still played music. She was teaching Nona how to dance.

Who was Pyrrha going to tell ass jokes to? Nona didn’t know; all of a sudden she felt sad and responsible that nobody was there to listen to Pyrrha’s ass jokes.

In this saintly, uplifted, and really quite terrified state of mind, Nona looked at herself and found that she was very grimy. In a welter of fearful bravery she sponged herself at the cold-water tap until she was free of smuts and old blood and dust, and the water was so cold it made her skin purple and blotchy. She called out, “Camilla, can I borrow a shirt?” and was pleased to hear, “Sure,” so she picked out one that was only a little too big but smelled comfortingly of Camilla. She looked in the cracked mirror and

decided her hair was probably all right. The braids were a bit fuzzy but still doable. Thus armed, she went into the kitchen to see about breakfast.

“Sit,” said Camilla.

Nona sat down in front of a whole glass of water and a pottle of curds with the top taken off and a spoon stuck inside. The heat was already getting bad. The tiny, whirring fridge sounded like it was on its last legs. Nona, wanting very much to be good, drank all the water and ate half the pottle fuelled by martyred smugness that she was behaving so well. By the time she’d eaten half though, she felt ill and set down the spoon and said, “Done,” and was a little horrified that Camilla only gave the pottle a cursory glance before saying, “Okay.”

She wanted to say, *Camilla, I’m really sorry I listened to your secret private tape*, but Cam was sitting in front of her and mechanically scooping the contents of two pottles at once into her mouth. That did not seem like the action of someone who hated Nona forever, even if there was something strangely awkward in the set of her shoulders and her hands.

“Cam,” she said, plucking up what was left of her courage, “are we going to wait at home for Pyrrha?”

“No,” said Camilla. “She’s been gone for nearly twenty-four hours. I’ve been stuck here the whole time. I need to see the broadcast. I need to know where Pyrrha is. We’re going looking.”

“Oh! To her work, at the building site?” Nona cheered up a little. “Do you think she got caught up in everything and slept on someone’s couch?”

But Camilla squashed this. “No. The Warden says the timeline’s wrong. Pyrrha went walkabout before one o’clock, when she was due to pick you up. Either she met with an accident or she went somewhere deliberately. If she went somewhere deliberately, she had to make the choice then and there.”

“How do you know?”

“Her guns are still here.”

Even Nona could tell that meant Pyrrha had not intended to go anywhere very far. Pyrrha loved her guns. Then Cam dropped the bomb.

“We’re going to the spaceport.”

Nona was staggered.

“Cam, the spaceport is a *mess*, everyone says so, you say never go near there, we’re going to get shot maybe twenty times.”

Camilla emptied the last pottle into her mouth. “Yes,” she said. And: “You’re coming too.”

“Really? Really? But I never get to go! Thank you! I won’t get shot anywhere strange.” Then she said: “Oh, but Cam, can’t we please please go by my school first, I said I’d go. Hot Sauce and the others are really the only ones left.” When she saw Camilla’s expression, she pleaded, “I haven’t made sure the Angel—my teacher—is safe, you know, after driving me home last night. She saved my life. I *can’t* go anywhere without checking in. Really truly.”

She did not expect Camilla to hesitate. She expected, “No.” But Camilla said, “Fine. The Warden wanted to thank her. But, Nona...”

Nona waited.

“After this,” Camilla said, “probably no more school. Probably no seeing your friends. You know that, right?”

She was glum, but she had been expecting it. “I do, I do know that.” She couldn’t help but say: “I’ve loved them though.”

“We know,” said Camilla.

After that Camilla went to dress and clean up in the next room. Nona, having discharged quite a lot of goodness, was drawn to do something that she never would have been allowed to do normally; she went to the window, peeled up the sniper blazing as quietly as possible, and stared directly up at the big blue sphere hanging in the sky.

She so rarely got to look at it from here. It hung on the morning horizon, and as she watched the sphere made a low, voiceless moan—a wanting sound—but quiet, on the edge of hearing. A whispered vocalisation and nothing more.

“Can you help me?” Nona whispered. “Can you do anything? Do you know where Pyrrha is?”

But it only lowed sadly, like a cow.

“That’s all right,” whispered Nona. “Sorry for asking.” Then: “Don’t do anything weird, okay? I’m having enough trouble right now.”

The sniper blazing was pressed back down just in time for Camilla to come back, to help as Nona wriggled into her sand jacket and sleeves, and her hat and her mask, and did up her shoes; Camilla put on the dark glasses, and then they went out into the Building as though it was a normal morning.

The Building was a hive of activity, as though it hadn’t slept. There were voices behind doors—sounds of people moving heavy boxes—no

baby crying, only talking, low and urgent. For some reason Camilla even took the elevator this time. When Nona asked why, Camilla said, “Conserve your energy. You’re tired.” The elevator behaved all the way down to the ground floor, as if it was cowed too. On the ground floor there were lots of people there, forming a human chain at some storage cupboard or something, passing sealed security boxes from person to person to make a big stack of them outside the door. There was another person carefully securing them in the back of an idling truck. Nobody paid Camilla or Nona the slightest bit of attention.

It was a long and lonely walk to school without Pyrrha, despite the press of all the people. There was something electric in the air, as though the city were tensed and waiting for a loud noise, like watching a dog play with a rubber balloon and dreading the *pop*.

There was a big militia presence on the street. They were all wearing the same gear she’d seen yesterday, full armour, full face shields. They went in rigid twos and threes, never alone, and never walking when they could be on motorbikes. She heard one of them say in a raised voice to someone, “I’m just doing my job. I’m just doing my job.” Camilla gave them a wide berth.

Nona felt sorry for the city: it wasn’t its fault. It was as tall and tumbledown and snaggletoothed as always. They took the long way around, avoiding arguments, immediately beelining away from raised voices and certain sets of the shoulders until, by the time they reached the school, the sun was basically risen.

When Nona cupped her hands over the glass and looked into the foyer, she saw movement. Nona buzzed the door and it unlocked to Honesty, who was waiting there with Kevin *and* Beautiful Ruby; she was delighted, and clapped her hands.

“You’re here! You’re really here! I thought you wouldn’t come,” she said ecstatically. She threw her arms around Honesty’s shoulders. “You said you wouldn’t come anymore, Honesty. You said you were going to get a job.”

“I need to get fed, don’t I. I’m a growing man,” said Honesty, who had gone red staring at Camilla, who loitered in the foyer a little way away from them. “Get out of it, Nona, stop being in love with me.”

But she was already hugging Beautiful Ruby, who coped better with it, saying: “Nona, you crim! Did you really sneak off to the—” and for his

pains was jabbed in the ribs by Honesty *and* Nona, so he said at the top of his voice, “*Toilet,*” and they all dissolved together into a huddle of whispers, with Kevin right at the bottom.

“She doesn’t know! Don’t tell her,” hissed Nona.

“Whew, lad, good save there,” said Honesty.

“Don’t be sarcastic at me,” hissed Ruby. “It’s not *my* fault, I just wanted to know how Nona was, you know they could’ve still been getting her off the road with a spatula. I walk past that road and they’re cremating people, like, right *there*, I saw somebody’s *arm*.”

“Ew,” said Kevin.

“I didn’t get to see anything,” Nona whispered. Kevin was right there and she wanted to hug him but it was impossible in the huddle, so she reached down and he placidly took her hand while the other worked the zipper of his jacket up and down. His hand was exactly as sticky as she had suspected. Nona said, “Hot Sauce and I left, we didn’t get squashed.”

“Why didn’t Hot Sauce take *me*?” hissed Honesty, still injured. “I’m her lieutenant and you get out of puff if you walk down the stairs.”

But Beautiful Ruby was saying more urgently, “The Angel drove us home—the Angel was madder than hell when Noodle came upstairs with that note, that was badass. I thought you’d catch it. Where’s the boss?”

“Slept over with the Angel, I think.”

Both boys exclaimed, not caring of the noise now. Camilla, leaning against a leprous pillar, didn’t react. It was horribly easy to forget Camilla was there when she didn’t want you to remember. Nona said eagerly, “The Angel said she wasn’t to sleep by herself and she dropped us both off in the truck, she had a driver and *everything*.”

Hearing that, they groaned in envy.

“She’s probably got her own screens,” said Honesty.

“I bet she lives in one of those outer neighbourhoods with a gate,” said Beautiful Ruby. “Not fair. Your people should’ve given you a massive hiding.”

“She wouldn’t get a massive hiding, she’s nearly a grownup,” said Honesty, but Beautiful Ruby said, “She’s a titch though, so maybe they forgot. That pimp of hers scares me shitless.”

Nona gave an outraged look over Ruby’s head, but Camilla was staring out through cracks in a boarded-up window over on the other side of the reception area, which was a long way away. She dithered terribly and then

said, “You can’t tell anyone, but my—Pyrrha hasn’t come home since yesterday. You can’t tell *anyone*.”

Beautiful Ruby said instantly and kindly, “Won’t tell. Don’t worry, Nona, pimping is long hours and you have to go all over,” and she turned on him and something in her eyes and face made him stop immediately and say, “It was a joke! It was a joke. Oh my God, don’t be crazy at me, stop it.”

“We’re going to go look,” she whispered, once she had calmed down. “Me and Camilla.”

“Was it the broadcast?” asked Honesty shrewdly. “Any chance...” And he made a horrible motion, strangling himself with his tongue out and his eyes floating all the way back into his skull.

“I don’t think so,” said Nona, trying to regain her composure and stop her tantrum in its tracks. It had been a very near thing. She was feeling fragile, as Pyrrha said after long nights. “Pyrrha’s very smart and wouldn’t have got hurt.”

Beautiful Ruby said, injured, “How come it’s cool to ask if your people got hurt or killed but not okay to say one’s a pimp,” and Honesty said, “It’s tact, little man, it’s tact.”

“How’s that *tact*? Seriously, how is that tact? Someone explain.”

Nona’s eyes were smarting, and she changed the subject hastily. “Where’s Born in the Morning?”

They fell silent, which told Nona all she needed to know.

Honesty said breezily, “Those fuckin’ dads of his, probably already joined up,” and laughed like it was a joke. But his absence was depressing, and they all felt it. It seemed strange that they were all there, even Kevin—even Honesty—but Born in the Morning wasn’t. It felt as though they weren’t all together, they weren’t a gang. They subsided into silence until the door buzzed again. Nona saw Camilla flinch over on the other side of the room, and Honesty darted forward; but it was the Angel, and it was Noodle, and it was Hot Sauce.

“This must be the first time *you’re* on time, Honesty,” the Angel said. Then she saw Camilla, and after a moment’s hesitation she reached out one firm little hand for Cam to shake, saying in the way adults spoke to each other—“Manic, isn’t it?”

“War zone,” said Camilla. And: “I wanted to thank you.”

The Angel firmly headed that off at the pass. “Nonsense, I did absolutely nothing but give a colleague a lift. Unusual circumstances last

night. Come upstairs and we can talk after I've settled the kids ... Which is really the last and only thing I can do. I don't think we'll be able to keep this up much longer. The other teacher's already left me a message to say that she thinks school shouldn't resume until everyone's off the streets, so, you know, who knows when school will ever resume? Come upstairs—come on, everyone," she said, before Cam could disagree. And as they went up the stairs she said, "I met your partner yesterday," which had the power of stupefying Cam into silence.

All of them trooped upstairs to the cloakroom and put their things away as per normal and went into the dark, quiet classroom as one. The Angel turned on the lights and they sat at their proper clusters of desks, spread out across the classroom because the nice lady teacher always said no way was she letting them all sit together, with Nona at the Teacher's Aide desk at the back. Nona was surprised when Camilla, automatic and meek, took an unused desk at the back herself, one of the bigger desks that the older girls sat at. She still had her knees folded up a little too much. Noodle made a beeline for the bed he always sat in beneath the whiteboard, and once he had settled himself, the Angel said—"Is everyone all right? Are everyone's families all right?"

There was a faint chorus of assent, but then Beautiful Ruby burst out—"Sweetie said maybe now the zombies are back you won't get knifed in the street, so we should do whatever they say."

The Angel lifted both eyebrows. "Since when have you called your mum by her first name?"

Beautiful Ruby coloured a bit. "I'm not going to call her *Mum* anymore, she's going over to their side."

"She's weak," said Hot Sauce, speaking for the first time.

The Angel looked at Hot Sauce searchingly. Something new was happening between them, Nona decided, they were different from how they had been just before last night. It wasn't as easy now as Hot Sauce being their leader and the Angel's protector. Maybe Hot Sauce had gotten into trouble. But the Angel didn't seem mad, she was only looking at her more carefully, with more interest. She said, "Hmm. Well, it's a gift to be strong—and when you have to be strong for more people than yourself it gets very complicated. I don't know how to explain or make it sound good," she added apologetically. "I don't want to read you the riot act. Don't care about what people *say* ... care about what people *do*. People say all kinds of

things because it's so easy to open your mouth and make words come out. It's the doing that shows you what they are, and what they feel."

Hot Sauce challenged, "So if someone says, 'I'm a necromancer,' we should wait around to see what they do next?"

Nona dared a glance at Camilla. She was in a posture of perfect stillness, face a mask behind dark glasses, but listening as hard as she possibly could, which made Nona doubt it was Camilla. She sat as though she had been bolted to the floor. The others were absorbed by this verbal cut-and-thrust between their leader and the Angel, leaning forward to hear what the Angel would say.

The Angel said, "What, right now? 'Course not, start running in the opposite direction ... No, don't fight them, Hot Sauce," she said, as Hot Sauce opened her mouth. "If you valorise paranoia so much don't be a hypocrite about it, all right? If you're scared of necromancers, run from them. If they really *are* a necromancer, there's no point in fighting them, is there? It's like big animals, you can't actually exert your will on them. If you think you can, you're in danger. I learnt that back at my first job."

Honesty said, "Are you scared of necromancers?"

"Terribly. I was born on Lemuria, you see," said the Angel.

Honesty gave a long, slow whistle. Beautiful Ruby looked at his feet. Hot Sauce relaxed minutely. But Camilla said— "What happened on Lemuria?"

The Angel glanced across at Kevin, who had his knees tucked up to his chest and had wedged himself tightly into the desk. He had one of his erasers with the face on it out, and was stroking it against the desk so that it left waxy streaks. She said, "The usual. It had been under contract for a long time. I mean, we were the third settlement wave, they built the Crescent in the bones of two other cities, you couldn't dig up anything without finding remnants of a people we'd never known. The microbial population didn't show signs of serious decay until the moment before the sea went anaerobic. The things crawling out of there ... they seemed to mutate all at once ... The Houses pulled support, said they'd prep us for an early move, but they left minimal forces in the barracks. We dug up old caches of materiel and used them. On the mutants from the sea, on the animals as they changed, on one another, on the Houses when they saw what we'd got our hands on and came back to take control. Blood of Eden was there too, you know. And in the end the Houses won and most of us

surrendered and we were moved. Two moves later, and I'm here. There's still a facility on Lemuria, of course. A decade later the Houses made it safe for geopolymers refining. It must be desolate."

Camilla said, "What kind of mining?"

"Microsilicates, zeolites. Industrial sands."

Camila pushed her glasses up the bridge of her nose and said, softly, "That must have been hideous."

"I was a zoo director. I did the big nonclumpers. We were trying to work out if we could save them," said the Angel. "We had to cull all the animals when the Houses pulled out. That was horrible."

Honesty said gruffly, "That's not right."

"No, but what can you do? Sometimes you step in to make sure someone won't suffer," said the Angel.

"No, I mean, the animal stuff's evil, but I thought you were a real doctor," said Honesty.

"I'm an animal doctor, Honesty. I've been learning a lot about human medicine down at the clinic."

Honesty absorbed this. "Do you know where I can get animal tranqs? They go for a lot."

"Bugger off, Honesty," said the Angel tolerantly, not much like a teacher at all.

Beautiful Ruby, who had been far more deeply affected by that story, drummed his hands urgently on his desk. "I can't let Sweetie do this. I don't wanna get moved again. We used to live in a house and now we live in a tip, what's next? I've got to stop her."

Then the Angel said, "But your mum isn't a necromancer, Beautiful Ruby ... the people saying, 'Let's not fight, let's get a resettlement,' they're not your enemies ... If you think in black and white your brain can't be agile."

Beautiful Ruby still didn't look convinced. "But she's embarrassing me. She's letting us down. And she's probably going to get her lights punched out if she says that on the street."

"Nobody ever died of being embarrassed," said the Angel. "Try to understand her point of view ... and wait until she *does* something. And trust her to keep herself safe too."

Nona lifted her hand. The Angel said, "Nona, you work here, you can just talk," and Nona said— "Are we going to have normal school?"

“You mean this morning? Yes, as much as possible, as long as I can,” said the Angel. “Hindered by the fact that I can’t teach mathematics—I couldn’t begin to teach you reading and writing—I don’t want to teach history—but I do want to keep you louts out of trouble. So I thought I’d come and teach you that … how to stay out of trouble.”

The Angel took a big roll of wax paper out of her satchel. She sat them all down at a table, even Kevin, who had to sit on top of the table, and spread it out in front of them. Camilla did not amble over, which surprised Nona. She was sitting with her hands clasped together, staring at the Angel as hard as possible. Nona looked at the roll of wax paper instead and didn’t quite understand what she was seeing until the Angel said kindly: “So this is a top-down diagram of the city. See, here’s the civic centre, where some of you have recently been...” Here she looked at Nona and Hot Sauce particularly, and Nona coloured. “And here’s us.”

She ran her finger down a few streets, made a few zigzags, and tapped another piece of the drawing. Nona still couldn’t see how such a tiny move could represent her and Hot Sauce’s expedition, nor could she parse the shapes, the heights of things. The map was too flat—everything was a minute collection of squares and lines and squiggles; but Beautiful Ruby seemed to get it. He pointed at a bit of the paper. “*That’s* not there anymore.”

“The water plant. No,” said the Angel. “They blew that up early in a bid to smoke the Cohort—that’s the Nine Houses’ army—out of the barracks. Really stupid stuff. And this isn’t here, the big terraced graveyard. I mean, it’s still *there* ... shelled to hell and back. Which wasn’t as stupid ... although there’s been so many sand burials outside the walls it was all optimism in the end. Ruby—colour that in red.”

Beautiful Ruby took the red, chisel-ended marker pen—not like a wax crayon or a fat ballpoint, a grown-up thing they all looked at admiringly—and neatly coloured that part in. The Angel said, “Anywhere we colour red, that’s somewhere you don’t go unless the only other option is being swallowed up in a sinkhole. Got it?”

Honesty said, “I’ve been to that graveyard. It’s all tents and concrete.”

“Yes, but it’s the first place people will assume necromancers will go, and people like to shoot first and ask questions later,” said the Angel, “or worst case, maybe a necromancer *will* be there. I know we think they’d have the blue madness, but what we know is that we don’t know anything,

okay? I want you lot to make that your motto. What we know is that we don't know anything."

Nona quite liked this motto. It was an accurate summary of her entire life. The Angel gave another pen to Honesty and said, "Can you find Southgate? Colour it in."

"Yeah, sure," said Honesty, "for you," as though he might not have done it otherwise. When he found Southgate he blocked it in. This pen was coloured blue. The Angel said, "Southgate is a good place to go in an emergency. Why do you think that is?"

Nona said mechanically, "Because it's got access to the road out of town and there's a water pump and the ground is stable and it's not a priority target for any kind of orbital strike or bombardment."

Everyone looked at her. Then they looked at Camilla, sitting in the back. Camilla didn't move. She had found some bit of paper and was writing on it furiously, so Nona didn't even get a "Well done, Nona," which she deserved because Cam had taught her all that.

"What's *bombardment*?" asked Beautiful Ruby suspiciously.

"No idea," said Nona proudly.

"An interesting group, your family," said the Angel slowly, with an eye on Camilla. "I mean, you're totally right—if you have to run away, run there and keep close to the road. You're all city kids, I don't think any of you can survive in the open desert ... still lots of buildings out there, customs buildings, sturdy shells to hole up in from the elements. Go there, go together, but don't wait for one another. It's good to move in numbers, but don't stay anywhere dangerous to find the others. Don't worry about weapons or even food. Water bottles are your priority. Anything that happens will happen in the short-term. Okay?"

Nona looked at Hot Sauce as the rest of them chorused a slightly reluctant *Okay*, and noticed that there was no surprise in her face, no sense she was taking in new information, just the normal Hot Sauce dark-eyed intensity. She thought: *The Angel has already told her all this*, and had her suspicion confirmed when the Angel said— "Hot Sauce, tell them which building you picked out."

Hot Sauce automatically placed her thumb outside of the city gates, on a lone square.

"I've hid out here before. It's an old watchtower. Keep along the road. White building with the top railing. Nobody else likes it. One of its legs

looks sunk into the sand. But it's stable. There's stuff there."

"Good going, boss," said Honesty.

"If you try to sell anything I've left there," said Hot Sauce evenly, "I'll have you."

"I wouldn't sell your stuff," said Honesty, injured. When Hot Sauce waited, he said, "I promise, I promise. I'm your best boy, Hot Sauce."

"Well, selling supplies you don't need isn't a bad idea in a pinch—trading I mean," said the Angel briskly. "But like I said, this *ought* to be short-term, and you might not even use a hideout ... But if shooting breaks out in the city, serious shooting, you don't want to be anywhere near it."

Beautiful Ruby said, "But the necromancers can't do anything anymore."

"So we think," said the Angel, "but now there's a Lyctor."

Nona shuddered at the word, on hearing it outside, for real. The Angel noticed and said, more gently: "Don't be too alarmed. Really, even a Lyctor shouldn't be able to do much due to the blue madness ... I'd love to know how one made it all the way down here without frothing. I'm not even sure they can survive on the surface, the way things are. But that said, if the necromancers don't have necromantic abilities to fall back on they may simply shell the place if things get too bad. *That's* what I'm talking about. No one wants to be in a city that's getting shelled. Lots of people are about to start streaming out, and it's in the Houses' best interest that the population stays in one place, and stays put. So you need to find a middle ground. All right?"

There was a *ssstt* from overhead. The lights abruptly went out. Everyone looked up, waiting, and then they came on again but much more softly. Then there was a deep *chug-a-lug* noise that sounded as though it were coming from down the hall. "Wondered when that would happen," said the Angel. "I guess that's our wheels spoked."

Camilla said, "A generator?"

"Yes. It'll only last an hour or two though, it's crap. I don't like keeping the kids here if the electronic locks don't work. I think that's it for school for now," she said. "I'm going to tack up this map here ... and here ... and Honesty, Hot Sauce, I think you should both try to memorise it. Blue area, red area, safe square. Test each other. The rest of you, let's go clean out the fridge. Take whatever's in it home to your families. Shake a leg, people."

That was said in the exact same tones in which the Angel would have told them to go and get out the stuff for the Hour of Science, so everyone moved without thinking about it, and even though Beautiful Ruby and Honesty lifted up their voices to complain that they wanted more school (*Honesty* wanting more *school!*) they didn't need prompting to raid the fridge. Hot Sauce, unusually mild and active, helped tack the map up on the board and stack the chairs. Nona thought this would be the moment Camilla would take her home, but it wasn't: Camilla was at the back of the classroom lost in her own world, hunched in on herself and her paper, as though nobody else were there.

So Nona busied herself finding all of the drawings they'd made yesterday and marking on the back who'd done them—not a hard puzzle. Kevin still didn't know how to draw and didn't want to learn. Born in the Morning was quite good but only ever drew cats. He said this was because they were his favourite, but they all knew that he was only good at drawing cats. Hot Sauce was the one with the palest, most hesitant drawing of Noodle, as though she had really drawn Noodle's ghost. Honesty always drew himself in all his pictures, so Ruby's was whatever was left over, and obviously Nona knew her own drawing. She smoothed them out and shook them over the sink so that all the crayon crumbs disappeared, and then she used that as an excuse to approach the Angel, holding them before her. The Angel took the proffered sheaf.

"Might be nice to have these to take home, I suppose," said the Angel. "A reminder of normal times."

"Are we never coming back?" said Nona.

The Angel winced and touched an urgent finger to her own lips in a *shush!*, but the others were too busy quarrelling over the yellow yeast berries and whether or not they should set out some for Born in the Morning—"We shouldn't," Beautiful Ruby was saying, but then Hot Sauce said, "We are," and that ended it—to care about what Nona said to the Angel. The Angel leafed through the drawings and said softly, "With that one little broadcast everything's changed, Nona."

"Yes, I know," said Nona sadly.

"We've got responsibilities."

"I thought you were your own boss here," said Nona.

"I have a lot of bosses," said the Angel.

"How many?"

“Millions,” said the Angel, with perfect truth in the set of her shoulders. “Don’t worry about that for now—I’m being unhelpful and unkind—it’s just that, Nona, there comes a time in your life when you have to separate the things you do because they make you feel good from the things that make you—”

The Angel stopped so dead midsentence that Nona thought she had had a heart attack, that she had been hurt in a way Nona couldn’t understand. She was staring at the topmost drawing of the sheaf of papers. Nona peeked over, ready to apologise for another one of Honesty’s explicit anatomical sketches.

“Oh—that one’s mine,” she said, wanting to break the spell, wanting to help. “It’s mine, don’t worry.”

The Angel was speechless for a moment. Then she looked at the paper, then looked at Nona again, and looked at the paper. She said, “Sure,” as though everything were normal and she hadn’t acted like she had been knifed. She laid the drawing aside and said, “Give the rest out, why don’t you?” and smiled at Nona, but it was a weirdly awful smile, as though the Angel had forgotten how smiles worked.

Nona was a little stupefied, but after all it was strange times and everyone was stressed, so she went around handing back the drawings to their owners. Beautiful Ruby said, “I’ll take Born in the Morning’s, I don’t want mine, who cares,” and Nona did not argue.

When they were all packed up, Nona’s friends gathered together in the cloakroom, out of earshot of the others, Hot Sauce having shepherded them all there. The Angel followed them out and said, “Good luck, take care,” to each of them and shook everyone’s hand except Nona’s and Hot Sauce’s. She even specially shook Kevin’s. They all got tongue-tied and didn’t know what to say except Honesty, who said, “Thanks, sir.” Then they all took the time to pat Noodle, who was sitting on his haunches next to the Angel and even held out his paw when Beautiful Ruby said, “Shake,” which pleased everyone.

Then the Angel went back inside with Noodle and they all put on their sand sleeves and their UV jackets, only Nona and Hot Sauce didn’t button up theirs, and everyone’s hats and masks were hanging down over their necks or their chins. Their mood was sombre, and they clustered quite close to each other.

Honesty said, “You got a copy of that map, boss?”

“Yes. You remember it?”

“Yeah. You really got stuff out there? Like gun stuff?”

“Not saying. You don’t need the money. Who’s taking Kevin home?”

Beautiful Ruby said, “Aren’t you doing it?” and Hot Sauce said, “Can’t.”

“I’ll do it,” said Honesty handsomely. “All hands to the pump.”

Hot Sauce gave him the expression that everyone knew was Hot Sauce’s smile, and which each of them would have cheerfully punched any of the others to get, even Nona. She and Honesty reached out to clasp each other’s hands around the wrists. It was Nona who said, feebly—“What now? How do we stay together?”

“We’ll be together when we need each other,” said Hot Sauce. “We have a place to go. There’s stuff there. Bring your families. I’ll look after you. I know how.”

Beautiful Ruby said, “Even my mum, boss?”

“Even your mum,” said Hot Sauce, and Beautiful Ruby looked relieved.

Honesty said, “Let’s spit on it,” but they were wearing gloves and none of them wanted to take them off to spit on it. So Hot Sauce put her hand out in the centre and Nona put her hand on Hot Sauce’s, and Honesty put his hand on Nona’s and Beautiful Ruby put his hand on Honesty’s, and Kevin had to put his hand underneath, not being tall enough to reach the top.

“Doesn’t feel right without Born in the Morning,” muttered Honesty.

“It’s for him too,” said Hot Sauce. Then she said—“We swear to protect each other and die for each other. We are loyal to each other forever. Any zombies we kill, we kill for each other, and we’ll say, ‘This is for the others.’ That’s it.”

“I swear,” said Honesty.

“I swear,” said Nona.

“I swear,” said Beautiful Ruby.

“Kevin,” said Kevin, whose eyes had gone big and round under the stress of pledging, so they had to coach him until he said, “I swear.”

“I swear, as boss,” said Hot Sauce. They let one another go. Then she said, “Okay. Go home.”

They hauled their packs up on their shoulders and on their backs and Nona and Hot Sauce walked them downstairs. There they got a massive surprise; Honesty said, “Born!” and buzzed the door—the door opened—and there was Born in the Morning, sulky with embarrassment, having been

squatting down in front of the doorway and dusting himself off. They crowded around him, asking questions—

“Why weren’t you in school?”

“How’d you come now?”

“Why didn’t you hit the ringer?”

“Didn’t work,” said Born in the Morning, going quite red. “Anyway, I didn’t really come, I just came to see you. I slipped out.”

Hot Sauce said, “Your dads joined up?”

“Yeah.”

“That’s fine,” said Hot Sauce.

So they had to pledge all over again, with Beautiful Ruby loading Born in the Morning up with packages and Born in the Morning not even getting on his high horse and simply being pleased. When they pledged, Beautiful Ruby, being silly, said, “Kevin,” instead of “I swear,” so that they all fell around laughing. They all said, “Kevin,” until Kevin said, injured, “Don’t make fun of Kevin,” so they all fell around laughing again.

That meant they were all happy when they saw Honesty and the others off, not scared or worried. Beautiful Ruby went off with Born in the Morning specially, one of his arms slung familiarly around Born’s neck, both of them talking quietly. The door wouldn’t lock properly, so Nona and Hot Sauce put a chair in front of it, and Nona slipped her hand into Hot Sauce’s as they went back up the stairs, in an uplifted frame of mind.

“I’m glad Born in the Morning showed up.”

“We might not see him for a while,” said Hot Sauce. “Edenites go through people like water.”

This spoiled all of Nona’s joy.

“You don’t think he’ll *die*, Hot Sauce.”

“No. I mean we have to wait for his dads to die,” said Hot Sauce philosophically. “He’ll only come to us when most of his fathers are dead. Then we can have him … His dads are baggage.”



18

WHEN THEY GOT BACK up to the classroom, Camilla had emerged from her corner and made herself useful unplugging all the electrical equipment and stacking chairs. The Angel was writing something on the board. “I’m doing inventory,” she said, to Nona’s question. “If we get looted I don’t want them ruining all the kids’ things trying to find stuff. Hot Sauce, can you go down the hallway and turn off the generator? I know you know how, but don’t forget to bleed it afterward.”

Nona went to go with Hot Sauce, as she had a lively interest in what bleeding the generator would involve, but the Angel said, “Nona, stay a moment.”

She had a piece of paper in her hand. When Hot Sauce had closed the door through to the classroom, Nona and Camilla both approached her. Camilla did something a little strange then: she tripped. She pitched forward on a raised bit of the carpet and stumbled into the Angel, tried to right herself with her hands on the Angel’s hips and front, and stumbled upward, saying “Sorry—sorry,” glancing out the window like she was embarrassed. Then she turned her head back and looked more normally at Camilla, standing as gracefully as though she could never even think about tripping.

The Angel said, “It’s really been that kind of day, hasn’t it?”

“Yes,” said Camilla.

The Angel was fidgeting with the piece of paper. She said, “May I ask Nona a question?”

“She doesn’t have to answer,” said Camilla.

“Of course not,” said the Angel.

Nona, who thought she could speak for herself, said—"I'll try, but if you want to test me about the map I don't think I'll be much good. I want to take it home and look at it there."

The Angel showed her the piece of paper. It was her drawing again. Maybe the Angel really liked it. Nona was ready to be magnanimous if the Angel wanted to keep it. She guessed she could draw it again at home if she wanted, and she hadn't even really tried very hard.

The Angel said, "How did you draw this?"

This question bewildered Nona so much that at first she didn't know what to say. The Angel slid a sheet of paper in front of her—she recognised the scribbles she was doing, with most of her mind elsewhere, right before she and Hot Sauce had escaped to go to the broadcast—and she said, puzzled to death: "With my hand?"

The Angel urged tersely, "Did you get this from a picture?"

Nona looked down at the animal she had drawn, and thought perhaps she understood. She said, "No, I made it up. It *does* work, I promise. See these things? They're its ears," she said, in much the same tones as she would have explained to Kevin. "*This* thing is its nose, and you can't see it because I didn't draw it, but the mouth is under here. When first it was born it used to live in a river, but then it got cold so it had to get large. I know the legs can't rotate, but you don't think that's stupid, do you?" She looked up at Camilla and the Angel, then said, "Am I in trouble?"

The Angel looked at Camilla, not Nona.

"I've seen pictures of this animal before," said the Angel, slowly and carefully. "I only saw it because I did a special unit when I went to university. I went to the special zoology school on Miró and attended a heap of underground archaeology talks. I was a youthful firebrand. Political, you know. And that's where I saw the picture."

"Okay," said Nona.

Camilla said, looking at the picture, "I don't think I've seen this before."

"You wouldn't have," said the Angel. "It's a cradle creature."

"I've heard that phrase," said Camilla. "Somewhere."

"Have you?" said the Angel.

Nona didn't know what to say. The Angel and Camilla didn't seem to know what to say either, and they all stood around for a moment, with Nona racking her brains. Camilla took her dark glasses off and folded them up

neatly, to put in her breast pocket. Then she said quietly— “May I ask a question?”

Nona glanced up at Camilla’s face, just to confirm it.

“Go ahead,” said the Angel, smiling without her eyes having anything to say about it.

“Back on Lemuria, or anywhere else,” said Palamedes, “did you ever have an operation, or receive medical care, from the Nine Houses? Even if you don’t remember it. Did you ever get some kind of implant? You said you met archaeologists. Were they House? Did you specifically meet any necromancers who gave you any kind of treatment?”

Nona was so shocked that she forgot to breathe. Palamedes had not simply broken one rule, he had broken about fifty. The expression on the Angel’s face brought her back to real life: it was so terrible that it hurt Nona to look. The crinkles on the sides of her eyes and mouth froze. She suddenly seemed older and more shrunken—rather than tiny and buoyant, tiny and withered.

Palamedes was moved to say gently, “I don’t mean you any harm,” but a weird, high-pitched whirring had started at the vicinity of his ankles. Noodle had gotten up from the basket and the hair right at his flanks was standing up as though it had been electrocuted, and he was *growling*. Nona had never heard Noodle growl before. He broke into a volley of barks, with his lips pulling back from his sharp yellow teeth.

This roused the Angel. She said, “Bloody dog. Let me put him in the kitchen with a toy,” and she dragged Noodle to the kitchen by his collar. She picked up her big black bag and she closed the door behind her, and then a few seconds later she emerged, still looking grey and haggard but more resolute and settled somehow. She was ashy underneath the freckles and her mouth was set in a tight, cool line, but she had drawn herself up to her not-very-impressive height and stood in front of Palamedes as though she weren’t scared. Nona could still see terror on her lips and in her hands and in her feet.

At this point the lights finally sizzled to a close: Hot Sauce was done with the generator, Nona thought. The room plunged into hot black darkness. The Angel went round to the windows and pulled open the blackout curtains and the blinds, recklessly, so that electric blue light puddled on the floor, and then she circled back to the teacher’s desk and threw herself into the seat.

She said, “Nona, do you want to go and sit with Noodle?” He was making little whimpering noises, even through the door. “He calms down with you.”

Nona hesitated, but she had been kept out of one too many conversations by being sent away to do something ostensibly good. Nona could tell the Angel’s plan from the quick movements of the Angel’s eyeballs, the swallowing. She said apologetically, “Normally I would say yes, but I think I’d like to stay, please.”

“Are you sure? You can listen from the door, you know,” said the Angel baldly.

“Yes, I’m sure.”

The Angel passed her fingers over her face, briefly touching her eyelids with thumb and forefinger, one on each. She relaxed backward into the chair. Palamedes didn’t sit, but Nona sat herself down in one of the big puddles of blue light, enjoying the sensation of it and absolutely nothing else that was going on.

“Did you know, my colleague thought you were a prossie,” said the Angel, wiping her hands together. “I never thought it fit.”

“What I know about sex work could fit in a teaspoon and leave a lot left over,” said Palamedes. “Did *you* know the children call you ‘the Angel’?”

Now the Angel’s mouth quirked on the other side. Her composure had come back, in part, and her teacher voice came to the fore, so that she might have been describing why socks would, in fact, insulate the ice cube.

“Yes, they’ve come up with a very strange take on my—my nickname. It’s that Hot Sauce’s fault, I’m afraid. She’s overheard a couple of things she doesn’t understand. I didn’t know anything about it until last night, when she explained. The kids usually call me ‘Miss’ or ‘Mister’ or ‘Sir.’ Usually ‘Sir’ so that Joli can be ‘Miss,’ and of course the kids just call Nona, ‘Nona.’”

Palamedes said, “What is the implant? Please. We only have so much time.”

The Angel hesitated.

“Look,” she said, and moistened her lips with her tongue. “Will Nona listen to *you*, if you send her to the kitchen?”

“I could ask her to, if it’s important to you,” he said, “but she’s an adult who can make her own decisions.”

“It doesn’t matter. I’ve made my mind up. I want to stay,” said Nona.

Hearing that, the Angel stopped looking at Nona altogether and held Palamedes's gaze instead, her own rigid, like she had put on blinders and narrowed existence to him.

"Why aren't you affected by the blue madness? Which one are you—and how many of you are still alive? I thought it was sheer optimism, the report that most of you were down."

Palamedes stepped Camilla's body forward and the Angel said swiftly, "Don't move, please. If you take one step closer, I'm leaving ... out the window, if I have to. You can get what you can from my dead body, but if you're this good you might have an inkling that my dead body is designed to deny you answers."

Palamedes put his hands up. "I'm staying right here. I want no harm to come to you, I won't compel you, I have no thought of hurting you—I am not your enemy."

"You were born my enemy," said the Angel, very sadly and very tiredly now, "or, worse, you became my enemy ... in the last five minutes. By doing the thing you can't walk back from."

Palamedes said slowly, "What do you think I am?"

"You can be nobody but a Lyctor," said the Angel. "You used necromancy on me when you touched me, for that split second when I thought you'd fallen. It couldn't be anything else. I don't know what you sensed today ... I've met you dozens of times and you've never cared before, so I don't know what's changed, or how I messed up. But, God, what a mess!"

Nona would have laughed aloud at the idea that *Palamedes* was a Lyctor, only she was too scared to laugh: she did not know what to say or what to do. She sat in her pocket of blue light and wished hard that Camilla had just taken her home, that they were a million miles away, that today had never happened. She had the terrible sinking feeling that whatever was going wrong right now, it was her fault somehow: that she hadn't been smart enough or good enough.

Palamedes was saying, "I am not a Lyctor, if it helps."

"Swear to me," said the Angel, suddenly intent. "Swear on your bloody life."

"I swear on the life of Camilla Hect that I am not a Lyctor," said Palamedes.

The Angel searched his face. Whatever the Angel wanted to find there—Nona was watching her face as hard as she could, so hard her eyes were watering—she eventually found it. She slumped back in the chair with her chin sagging to her chest, and she glanced at Palamedes, drawn and gaunt and complete. “Then that’ll make this easier,” she said.

The door next to the corridor opened. The Angel flinched so hard that it looked as though she might be having a fit. Nona turned her head and saw Hot Sauce. Hot Sauce looked at the open curtains: she looked at Nona.

Then a huge, rippling sound entered Nona’s head. She was aware of a tight, hard noise, *pop—pop*, distant and then much *much* closer—as though her whole head was exploding. Everything went black, but she wasn’t asleep. She had the biggest and most frantic headache and she was terrified, her body wasn’t working, she could feel nothing and perceive nothing. The headache got worse and worse and worse, then suddenly it stopped, and she didn’t know anything at all.

Time exited her body. After a period apart from it, the headache came back. It wasn’t as bad, and then it got a *lot* better. The blackness didn’t go away, but her other senses started to come online. There was something rough under her face that smelled like wax crayon and lemon cleaner, and she was drooling—her mouth was full—full of something disgusting and sticky. Her mouth opened and it all fell out. She was lying down. Nona, so well-versed in thinking about what her body was doing in various states of consciousness, could tell *that*.

An unfamiliar voice was saying—“Cancel that! I said, *cancel* that order! Merv, do you hear me? Merv, if I see even *one* of your bastards step into this building I will call such hell down on you that they’ll put your names up on the Extinction Roll—*Don’t you hang up on me, you motherfucking kingmaking piece of shit, I will rip off Hope’s head and shit down his neck!* Goddamn it! Fuck! Fuck.”

Then the Angel—“What did they say?”

“They said sure, no prob,” said the unfamiliar voice. “What do you think they fucking said, Aim? Oh, boy, we’re fucked. Oh, God, we’re fucking fucked.”

The Angel said, “Go unlock the door. We’ll take the girl and get out of here.”

“No. We leave her here.”

“She’ll get liquidated.”

“You should’ve thought of that before you started playing teacher with the frigging Troia experiment.”

The Angel burst out frantically: “I didn’t *know!* How the living hell was I meant to *know?* You’ve kept me away from all that, I’ve been completely separated from any intel!”

“You knew Merv went mental on us yesterday, said it was a power play,” snapped the unfamiliar voice.

“I don’t mean *that!* How the hell could I have known about these two? I only realised they lived in the safe house last *night!*”

“Yeah, well, Ctesiphon is short on cash, we don’t have anywhere to stash anyone,” said the voice. “If you’d just let me within two metres of this place I could’ve told you months ago—”

“I was protecting my Edenite kids on the roll. They would’ve gotten transferred to the other side of the city and they needed this—”

“Pull yourself together, Aim! You don’t get to think about what some snot-nosed kids need!” bawled the voice. “What’re we going to do, what the hell are we going to do?”

“Yelling at each other won’t help,” said the Angel tightly. “You are the least respectful bodyguard I have ever had.”

“Okay. Cool. Nice. Great. Cool,” said the unfamiliar voice. “I’m thinking. I’m thinking. Oh my God, this is such a fuckup. Not on a personal level, because as far as I’m concerned good job, but this is *such* a fuckup.”

“We go to the roof, like you said,” the Angel suggested, but the unfamiliar voice said, “Changed my mind. That’s not an exit. They won’t shoot at us if you’re with me, but we can’t account for anyone else.”

“Then *what?* God, I’m too old for this.”

There was a big clanging sound. It hurt Nona’s ears. An awful pressure travelled through her head that felt like she wanted to hold her nose and blow something out her ears, like when she was swimming. It sounded as though someone was dragging furniture.

“Anyone comes at me, I take them down,” said the voice.

The Angel sounded torn between amusement and annoyance. “You discharge a firearm with me in the room, you’ll get court-martialled and hanged.”

“Everyone’s too busy for bureaucracy,” said the voice. “We play our cards right here, I can get Suffer out clean. Hell—I play this *really* right, nobody’s going to know a thing until it’s too late.”

“Oh, God, you can’t believe that. You’re going to get yourself shot.”

“Not with my pedigree.”

“How many of them are there?”

“Nine. Maybe ten. Plus driver, probably eleven.”

“That’s a massacre.”

“It’s a compliment,” said the voice modestly. “Anyway, they’re still defusing the door.”

The pressure got lots and lots worse—it got better—something went *klink!* in her very close vicinity. Her sight softly shaded back in—it was dark—the room was hot and close and stuffy again. Nona stared at a huge sopping red patch of blood on the floor. Her head felt wet and itchy. The unfamiliar voice was saying, “Hang on a mo. I’m just going to deadhead these two.”

The Angel said tightly, “Don’t you *dare* touch them.”

“It’s for your safety, ma’am. Don’t watch.”

“It’s goddamn superstition.”

“Yeah, well, Aunty always told me it was ninety percent superstition and ten percent for the fun of it.”

Big booted footsteps clomped over to Nona. This was too much, even if Cam had always told her to play dead until she couldn’t. Nona sat bolt upright in terror. Someone swore and there was another big *pop* and she was thrown forward by a huge brief light in her chest like pain, much quicker than the headache, spreading through her ribcage briefly and wetly before it went away.

She shrieked from the floor, “You *shot* me *again!* That’s *twice!*”

Then there was the Angel saying, “No. No. Stop. She’s alive, stop, that’s an order—that’s a *direct order!* Nona—Nona,” and there was the Angel, rolling her over, her face wet with tears, saying: “I’m sorry—God, Nona, I’m so sorry.”

But Nona was not in the mood. She struggled free from the Angel’s grasp and looked for Camilla. Camilla was lying very still on the floor, faceup, eyes half-closed and staring sightlessly at the ceiling: her front was all over blood and her hands were clutched into stiff claws over her chest, as though she had clapped them there in a panic. The amount of blood was astonishing. Nona didn’t think people could even bleed that much. It was more gross than frightening. Nona crawled over to her as the Angel was

saying, “Hold fire, hold your damned fire,” and Nona peeled up Camilla’s eyelids.

Even in the dark Nona could see that they were bright, clear grey. Camilla said calmly, “It’s fine, Nona. You’re fine. Back up,” and then Camilla opened her hands and two bullets were there, shining in her fingers. Then she said, “Update?”

Nona looked up. There was the Angel, sitting on the floor, looking as though she had seen two ghosts. Near her was the new person—a compact, medium-sized person with a machete strapped to each thigh and a small, heavy gun in their hands, not wearing an air mask, not wearing a hat. A mask hung around their neck as though they’d been in a hurry and hadn’t pulled it up yet. Their face would have been fierce and handsome if it hadn’t been puckered with shrapnel scars on both cheeks, across the nose that should’ve been flattish but had been broken once, in a peppery storm of burns at one temple. These scars meant they weren’t fierce and handsome; they were *super-cool* and fierce and handsome. Their hair had been buzzed short on one side and kept longer on the other, the long part dyed a shriekingly electric blue, and their brows were dark and their eyes were darker, smudged with camouflage makeup above and beneath. And Nona had known who they were the moment their body moved, but the machetes helped. It was Our Lady of the Passion, for the first time unmasked.

“*Pash* shot us!” she wailed. “And my *teacher!* Palamedes was talking to the Angel and someone *shot* us through the window and now the carpet’s *gross!* *This is the worst day of school ever!*”

Camilla sat up, and she and Pash stared at each other. Pash’s handsome features screwed into an expression of stupefied loathing. Camilla’s betrayed nothing at all.

“Did you shoot us?” asked Camilla, whose left hand had tightened minutely.

“No—that was fuckin’ Merv Wing,” said Pash, looking as though she was sorry about it. “How the hell do you know who I am? Crown’s been squealing, right?”

“No,” said Camilla, who had relaxed her left hand minutely. “Why weren’t we told she was one of us?”

“That’s *they* to you,” Pash said, “and you’re not one of us either, zombie.”

The Angel said urgently—“Pash, I retract the liquidation order, we can deal with this later. The circumstances have changed. Is there any way you can call Merv off?”

“No—they were ready to go for you the other day when they thought Suffer was putting more of her own people in. Which was—you, wasn’t it?” Pash turned to Nona, who was wringing clots of blood out of a completely messed-up braid. “*You* made the radio call to Crown two days ago, *you* were the one Crown was with. What the fuck’s going on, you little creep?”

Nona was deeply injured. “I *didn’t* make a radio call, it was a *pretend* radio call, and don’t call me a creep, because I’m not.”

The Angel said helplessly, “*That* was the Crown you’re always going on about? Nona, what are you? What is she?” and Pash barked, “I told you! You’re looking at the fucking *Lyctor project*, Aim! Your dog was getting walked by the fucking *Lyctor project*, and you just called wipe protocol on *the fucking Lyctor project*.”

The Angel said, “Give me the radio.”

Pash unbuckled a real wireless radio from her belt and tossed it to the Angel, who caught it neatly, even though her hands were still shaking. She tapped something into it and held it up to her ear and said, “This is the Messenger. Holding pattern downstairs, please.” Then: “Yes, we know,” and “Yes, we know. These are unusual circumstances.” Then: “Yes, but if you’re so hot on protocol, why aren’t you letting our designated lifeguard extract us from the building?” Then: “That’s ridiculous.”

At the second *Yes, we know* Camilla scrambled to her feet. She seized a stack of chairs and shook them out in front of the doorway that led through to the cloakroom. Pash immediately raised and trained a gun on her, which made Nona gasp in indignation, but Camilla didn’t stop. The Angel was saying, “Get me the commander on the line,” and then: “You do realise *one* gunshot in here and you’re in front of a tribunal—that Hope’s in front of a tribunal? We don’t—yes, we *know* we can’t countermand—look, don’t you dare—We’ve got my *dog* in here! No, we will not put on a gas mask, this is a coup—Fine. If you come up those stairs the lifeguard will shoot you. Messenger out.”

The Angel lowered the radio. She said dolefully, “Fuck.”

Pash went to the teacher’s desk and threw it over. Everything on top—the paper clips and the pencil sharpener and the whiteboard erasers and the collection of paper animals—scattered to the floor in an almighty *whump*.

Then she vaulted behind it—the Angel moved to her—and Pash drew her gun from the strap off her back. Camilla looked at her and said, “How many?”

“Nine, ten. No gunfire, but maybe electrics,” said Pash, purely on automatic, and then she blustered: “Don’t fucking talk to me, Hect. The moment the commander hears about this, your ass is grass, and there’ll be no Crown to save you.”

“Do you want my help to get out of here,” said Camilla, “or not?”

“I don’t bloody need your help,” said Pash, at the same moment that the Angel said, “Yes. We can’t let Merv Wing take us, not now. I did—I *did* call for you to be shot though.”

“No problem,” said Camilla levelly. “So long as I can let out some deferred aggression.”

“You’re a minion and you’ve been bloody lying to We Suffer this whole time about what you can do,” said Pash hotly. “The commander never said shit about you coming back from a bullet, you *or* the lich. I would put another one in your brain right now, for science, only I don’t want to waste my ammo.”

“Guess we’ve all lied to each other,” said Camilla.

Pash looked to the Angel and said pleadingly, “Aim, for fuck’s sake, what if she turns around and snaps your neck—”

“Nona, please go into the kitchen now,” said the Angel. “For your safety, not to get you out of the way.”

“I don’t want to leave Camilla,” said Nona

A window broke somewhere on the floor below. Camilla was already drawing Nona behind the desk. They all crouched down in the dark behind the desk with its nice particle-board smell. It was so quiet that for a moment Nona thought Cam had been wrong, that there couldn’t be ten or eleven people coming for them, that the whole building was far too quiet. Noodle started to softly scratch behind the staffroom kitchen door and then Aim said, “Noodle. Danger,” and he stopped, and he clacked away from the door.

Camilla was saying, “Quickly. Isn’t there somewhere else she could go? She could take the dog.”

Looking at the staffroom kitchen door made Nona look at the other door, the one to the other corridor down the hall, and she remembered all at once and said, “Hot Sauce! Where’s Hot Sauce?”

The Angel said, “Pash locked her in the generator room. They’d have to get through here to get to her.”

“I want Hot Sauce,” said Nona.

Pash had her head crooked out from the side of the desk, watching the shut door. She said tersely, “I don’t want the lich running around.”

Camilla said calmly, “Make up your mind,” and the Angel said feebly, “Nona, Hot Sauce wasn’t … she saw, you see … she was in the room, when…”

There was a distant crash—a glittery, soft sound like glass caving in.

“That’s the door,” said Camilla.

Pash suddenly said, “Oh my God, I’ve changed my mind, okay? The lich goes through the door. No distractions. Get out of here.”

Camilla asked, “Why not get everyone out?”

Pash said to the Angel, “Come on, Aim. Even the zombie sees reason. Get in the kitchen,” but the Angel—Aim—said, “If they don’t see me, they won’t hesitate to use projectiles.”

Camilla said, “The longer we exchange fire, the worse. Once we break the first wave, push.”

“Hect, let’s get one thing straight: I’m giving the orders and if you don’t say *Yes, sir, no, sir, three bags full, sir*, I shoot out your kneecaps and use you as a meat shield,” said Pash.

“Three bags full of what?” said Camilla.

“Fucking whoop-ass if you don’t do what I say, comedian.”

“I’ll keep to melee. No friendly fire.”

Pash aggressively pulled her mask up over her mouth, a hard-shell plastic snap one with a bit for breathing through. Nona couldn’t help admiring her: her dark-rimmed greasepaint made her eyes a lovely hazelly, yellowy green colour. Pash saw Nona looking at her soppily, scowled at her with her whole face, then drew a pair of goggles over those beautiful dark-rimmed eyes. Nona vaguely made a note to practise scowling, and also to dye her hair.

There was another, less distant *smash*. Pash tensed up and said, “They’re taking the stairs.” Beside Nona, absurdly, Camilla relaxed. She was crouched behind the desk doing something with the snaps of her baggy canvas trousers, digging her hands into her capacious pockets. She said, “Nona, do you want to go, or stay?”

Nona dithered.

"Go. No, stay—no, I'll go," she said. "Hot Sauce needs me. Unless—Camilla, *please* be safe, I love you so much."

"This won't take long. Go when I say *go*," said Cam, and she smiled at Nona—smiled her lovely, exquisite little smile, the one that made Nona feel like she really could fall in love with Camilla forever and forever and get married to her and maybe adopt a dog.

Then she said to Pash—"Do you want them alive?"

Pash's expression hardened further.

"No."

"Nona," said Cam, "don't come back until we come to get you. *Go*."

Nona fled. She scrabbled for the door next to the staffroom door and flung herself through, then shut it behind her. Her footsteps squeaked on the linoleum and the door creaked horribly, because Kevin loved to hang on doors and try to make them make the longest and worst sounds he possibly could—it sounded like a siren in that silence, worse than, and she was grateful when the door closed behind her. Then she flew down the dark, dim corridor—a place of unspeakable and enjoyable terror for her and the gang normally, it was so narrow and the walls were so dark and sweaty—and when she got to the generator room, hammered on the door before she remembered that *she* was the one who had to unlock it. The key was still in the lock. She turned it with sweaty fingers and drew back the bolt, she nearly tripped down the short flight of stairs, and she said, "It's me, Hot Sauce, it's me," before clanging the door shut again behind her.

The generator room was quiet and dark, except for a little lightbox window over the internal door and another one through to the outside, only there was a taller building in the way, so it let in sickly, greenish light. When the generator was on it usually made a lot of violent whuffling noises, the kind that threw the tinies into disorder because Honesty had told them it was powered by kids their age burning to death inside. It wasn't like they believed him, but they hated the story. Hot Sauce was lying curled up in front of the generator. She'd been sick, and there was a bright, acid smell of vomit, but Nona didn't care. She went to Hot Sauce's side, and she rolled her over.

Hot Sauce looked at her, but also didn't look at her. Her eyes were strange. She looked at Nona as Nona got out an old wad of tissue paper from her pocket and wiped Hot Sauce's mouth and nose. "It's me, Hot Sauce. It's Nona."

Hot Sauce said clearly—“I made it up?”

Nona didn’t know what this meant so she said, “Yes, it’s fine. I’m fine,” so that Hot Sauce said, more strongly and more wonderingly, “I made it up.”

“Yes, only there are people in the building, and we have to stay here because they’ve come to kidnap the Angel,” said Nona.

Hot Sauce said, “She had a bodyguard.”

“Yes,” said Nona.

“Stupid,” said Hot Sauce. “Stupid … didn’t watch her enough. Didn’t read the signs. Didn’t watch … Nona, I made it up?”

Nona decided to go along with this. It seemed important to Hot Sauce.

“Yes, you made it up.”

Hot Sauce’s hand was still trembling a little. She didn’t seem like she’d been hurt, but she was shivering. She tugged up her shirt so that Nona could see, along with the soft watery ripples of the burns down her belly, what she had tucked into the waistband of her trousers. It was a handgun. Nona said, alarmed, “Hot Sauce, don’t carry it like that, Pyrrha says everyone who carries guns in their pants ends up shooting off their balls, and it sounds incredibly rude but I believe her.”

Hot Sauce’s face wavered and softened.

“You’re sweet,” she said.

From down the corridor and a little beyond, there was a big crash, and then a really astonishing huge noise like *ZZZAT*—the kind of whipcrack sound Pyrrha could make with the dish towel—and a very short scream. Hot Sauce sat up so quickly that it was all Nona could do to wrestle her down again. She struggled against Nona toward the door and Nona had to go full deadweight on her, pin her to the floor, wrap her arms and her legs around her as though she were Hot Sauce’s baby who lived in a pouch. They both fell to the floor and were a little stunned, but when a huge, resonant *BLAM-BLAM-BLAM*—percussive gunshot rattled down the hall, much bigger and deeper than the normal peppery gunfire noises, Hot Sauce went quiet and limp. She shuddered in Nona’s arms.

She said, “I made it up? *All* of it?”

“Yes, all of it,” said Nona, and then in a fit of honesty, she said—“Only, what *did* you make up, Hot Sauce?”

“The bullet went into your head,” said Hot Sauce.

Nona tried to remember everything Honesty had ever told her about lying, lies, porkies, and untruths.

“You *think* it did,” she said cunningly, “but it didn’t.”

“It made a hole,” said Hot Sauce.

Nona, exhausted from lies, was saved from having to think up more by another *BLAM-BLAM* and a long, cut-off scream, and then a terrific tinkling glassy smash. A yell seemed to briefly come from outside, somewhere, and then there was no yell at all. Nona held Hot Sauce very tightly, and after a while she felt Hot Sauce’s arms go around her, and she knew that Hot Sauce was going to be all right. They lay there together in the sweltering, gross-smelling dark, listening to the sounds coming from down the hallway.

Ever since she had known what fighting was, Nona had yearned to see Camilla fight; Camilla mostly wouldn’t. She had sparred with Pyrrha a couple of times, briefly and violently, always on Pyrrha’s critique, with Nona barely able to follow what was going on: sometimes on the beach, in the dark, away from the hot stripe of the lone yellow light still functioning in front of the harbour pier. Now as she listened as hard as she possibly could to noises she could not understand, Nona shivered all over and could not work out what she felt or what she wanted. She kept savagely biting at the inside of one lip so that the blood would come out, and then it would seal over. She heard noises that sounded as though people were throwing furniture around the classroom—rude when they were *already* low on chairs for anyone who wasn’t a tiny, older kids were sitting on all sorts of things—and then one last, long sound that wasn’t a scream, but a huge whimper. Then nothing. Hot Sauce’s gun poked into Nona’s thigh.

After a long time in the silence she whispered, “Is it over?”

Hot Sauce didn’t answer.

“We should stay here, I guess,” said Nona, answering herself: it was always nice to be answered, even if it was just you.

Hot Sauce was so still and quiet that Nona thought she must have fallen asleep. When someone rapped lightly at the generator-room door though, she rolled away from Nona with her hand at her waistband, and it wasn’t until the Angel’s voice said, “Nona? Hot Sauce?” that she took her hand away.

Nona stood as the door opened, and there was the Angel. It was too hard to see clearly in the dimness of the room, but she didn’t seem any worse for

wear, not limping or anything. Noodle followed on her heels, still cringing a little bit, but he headed straight to Nona and Hot Sauce when he saw they were lying down: Noodle loved it when people were lying down. He sniffed Nona around the mouth and licked her until she said, “Eugh,” and she had to sit up in a hurry.

The Angel said, very gently, “We need to leave now.”

Nona said, “How is Cam?” Feeling this was unfair, she added hastily, “And—Pash?”

“They’re fine. Cuts and scrapes.”

“Whew!” said Nona. “Is the classroom munted?”

“Well, the windows are going to have to be replaced and the blinds are busted,” said the Angel evasively, “and I think someone fell on the bean experiment, and Noodle did a wee in the staffroom, but really—it could be worse. The juniors will have to add *got smushed* to their bean experiment variables, there’s no coming back from that one.”

Nona was sorry for the bean experiment. The Angel said, “Did Pash hurt you when she bundled you in here, Hot Sauce? She can be—a bit aggie,” but Hot Sauce said tonelessly, “I’m fine,” and “Let’s go.”

Nona was more than happy to follow this edict. She and Hot Sauce held hands all the way down the corridor. She thought Hot Sauce looked at her a little strangely, but after everything they had been through that didn’t really strike Nona as odd. As they came to the lighter part of the corridor—as they entered the square of light the doorway opened on to, on to the classroom, Hot Sauce detached her hand from Nona’s altogether.

The classroom was much more of a mess than the Angel had let on. Nona barely noticed the wreck of the bean experiment. Pash was nowhere to be found and Cam was dragging bodies out to the cloakroom—human bodies, real bodies—and Nona’s eyes followed a pair of boots disappearing at Cam’s feet, in awful fascination. She stared unseeing until suddenly Cam was back in the classroom and said sharply, “Nona, come here.”

Nona couldn’t, for a moment. There were more boots behind Cam in the cloakroom. Wind scoured through a big hole in the window where the edges of the glass were strung with red globs and goblets, a hot and drying wind that made Nona’s eyes wrinkle up. She stared in wonderment at what remained of a display on the wall she had helped staple together: a big impressive art and writing collection about People in Our Community, with most of the People in Our Community riddled with holes. Otherwise

everything was quite clean, though the Angel was right about the beans. There wasn't really much blood, certainly compared to the stuff Nona and Cam had left on the floor themselves. The spell was broken when Cam lifted her chin with one hand, so that she was forced to stare at Cam's grave grey eyes, at the drying blood and the holes in her top. Camilla was wet with sweat. Nona buried her face in Cam's chest. She listened to Cam's heart thudding in her ribcage, the big soft *da-DUMP ... da-DUMP*, and she was amazed at how fragile and silly a heart was, how poorly protected. Camilla let her stay there for quite a long time, until she extracted herself.

Nona said, "Are they all...?"

"Nearly," said Cam.

Hot Sauce stood in the middle of the classroom. She was standing where Nona had been shot. The sun had moved and the blood was now in shadow. Hot Sauce squatted on her haunches to touch it, then she stood up, and she looked at Nona—more particularly, the side of Nona's head. Nona reached up past a braid and found it was stiff with blood.

"I didn't make it up," Hot Sauce said, and her voice sounded wrong.

Nona felt uncomfortable. "I didn't—I didn't *quite* lie to you, Hot Sauce," she said.

"There was a hole in your head," said Hot Sauce.

Pash came back from the cloakroom. She was sweaty too, and there was a red line of grime where her hard-shell mask had rubbed her face. She said, "Driver's down. The unit's wiped."

The Angel said, "Oh, God, Pash, was that really necessary?"

Both Cam and Pash said, "Yes," at the same time, and then looked at each other. Nona would have found that funny except that Hot Sauce was still looking. She broke away from Cam to take a step toward her, and then—*Hot Sauce took a step back*.

Nona felt wild and sparkling, electrocuted with despair. She said, and found her voice quite tight and funny, "Hot Sauce?"

"I saw you die," said Hot Sauce.

"But I'm not—you *see* I'm not."

The Angel said, "Hot Sauce, I think you need to come with me," but Nona had crossed over to Hot Sauce, caught her hand before she could run away again—pressed it to her chest, so that Hot Sauce might feel Nona's own *ba-DUMP, ba-DUMP* just like she had felt Camilla's. She cried out, "You feel? Feel it, feel my heart going."

Hot Sauce seemed to feel it. She stared at Nona's chest. She moved her hand up next to Nona's neck, quite professionally, like a doctor might, to feel the pulse there. Nona willed everything into that pulse—willed away the cold, dead expression in Hot Sauce's eyes; willed away the shiver at Hot Sauce's mouth.

"You *are* alive," Hot Sauce agreed slowly. "But you were dead. I saw it. Some of your brains came out."

"Yuck. I didn't know," said Nona, deeply embarrassed.

The Angel said, "Hot Sauce, I think you should come here and talk to me for a while."

"Shut up," said Hot Sauce, and Nona was outraged, Nona was amazed: that Hot Sauce should talk to her deity—the reason for her existence—talk to the *Angel* that way. Before she could get any more shocked though, Hot Sauce raised her other hand, and the gun with it.

She pressed the muzzle up against one of Nona's temples. Nona dragged her eyes up to Hot Sauce's face, stunned.

"You're out of the gang," said Hot Sauce, and squeezed the trigger.

JOHN 5:1

IN THE DREAM he took his time approaching the concrete building. He seemed afraid to. When night fell he scrawled around and found a canister full of petrol, smelling hard and strong, and he sloshed it all around the car, and he lit it on fire. She didn't like the smell. They sat away from it. At this altitude the wind kept whipping hard into the flames, licking them redly higher, sending sparks with every blast of air.

And she did not ask him, but he said: In the end we got patted on the shoulder and they expected us to be happy. They said, you won't have to go to jail—just keep behaving and no more cow stunts, please. Also, I have chronic sinusitis, can you do something about that?

He said, All the powerful friends we'd made, all those people said I would've been a good thing if they'd had time to present us the right way, that we were something mystical and wonderful but they were too busy for miracles, that if we'd behaved better or been more attractive—I don't even fucking know anymore—then they'd have listened. And, like, at some point, you stop wanting people to *listen*, you want people to *do*.

He said, We got together one night in the kitchen. And, like, it was beef again, so we felt bad, man, but at least none of us was vegan. The meat couldn't go off, because I was there. There was a lot of it, but we had a lot of people who needed a feed. We sat there with the window cracked so G—could hear us while he manned the barbie, which in the dark gets unwholesome as hell, and we ate off paper plates, and I told them ...

I told them, This is it. We were put here to save the planet. We're going to save the planet. We're not going to let them run away. We're going to fix this.

And they were all, Yeah, John, because they were my friends and they loved me. But because they were also dicks and most of them had multiple tertiary degrees, they were also like, How though. We know you can do X and Y and Z. That's still not A or B or C. We love the bone magic, but how are you going to pull this off?

And it was P—of all people who said, *First things first. If they're going to let us fix the world, you've got to make them take us seriously. Get some leverage. If they want to make you into a bad wizard, be a bad wizard. We can write the history books to say you were a good wizard. Or at least an*

okay wizard. They're not going to listen because we talk nicely, they're going to listen because we scare the shit out of them.

He said, Which just goes to show that only getting to NCEA Level 2 isn't going to stop you making waves in life, right. You can still eat steak, talk to wizards, and take down the government.

She did not say anything. In the end he wasn't really talking *to* her. He was talking *at* her. All she had to do was wait for him to say: Then we got an opportunity.

He said, Soon after that we got visited by a big black car with a bunch of suits in it. We didn't want to, but they had a chat with us over the phone to promise they only wanted to talk, they were representing someone else. I was more confident by then that I could handle anyone coming to ambush us—I had Titania and Ulysses with me all the time too—but they really did want to talk. They were very vague about who they were with, but the upshot was that their organisation was having a bad time because their leader had recently been indisposed and that was going to make them have a *worse* time pretty soon. When we pushed on how indisposed, they admitted he was dead. And I was all, I cannot help you there, that's beyond me right now. And they were all, No, no, what we want is for him to *not look dead*. We can do the rest. In fact, we prefer it this way. Could you give him a permanent pulse? Could you make it so he bleeds if he gets hurt? Could you fix any current degradation to his corpse? Could he talk, if we wanted him to?

I thought it was an interesting project. I was all, Probably, let me work on it. I'm going to have to do some long-range tweaking. If you want him to speak you'd need me on call, this couldn't be a one-off. I kept trying to push to find out who the hell they were and who this guy was, but they were immovable. They were all, Here's what we'd pay up-front. Here is what we would pay every month you kept him looking alive.

He said, And that figure had *a lot of zeroes*.

I was all, Let me think about it. After a few weeks I proved I could do it. It wasn't hard. Biggest problem was getting the blood to heat up inside the body so the corpse wouldn't spurt stuff well below human temp. I said they could fix him up with a heated jacket, but they were anal about it. To make him talk, they had to deepfake a voice box and have someone speak through it or give it a simple AI, and call me for complicated speeches. Then we set a time and a date for them to fly me offshore—me and A—and

M— and G—, everyone else staying at home—to do the job, and to get the payment. They got me a Sino-Swiss bank account under an alias so I could move the cash. I had phone calls from the bankers setting it up. And we were all pretty excited about this because, hell, couldn't we start bankrolling the cryo project again? Wasn't this funding money?

He said, I was all set to fly out when we got another update about the FTL project. They'd got every commitment we'd struggled to get or were in the process of begging for, all of a sudden. IAF had said yes. Pan-Euro had said yes. They'd tendered the plan for the first and second and third waves to fly everyone off the planet, and it was going to take five and a half years max, and that was with leaving people behind to shut everything down before the final wave. No mess, no fuss. They'd stolen a lot of our wording but, like, that was just one last kick in the ass, we barely felt it. And the reason it was going through was that it was *charitable*. They said they were funding the bulk of it. It was their money taking these soon-to-be-impoorerished trillionaires into space. The guys who'd been so tight with us that their arseholes squeaked when they walked.

M— and A— kicked off again, all, *This is horseshit, this is lies. What ships are they using? Who's engineering this and where?* Our contacts were all, *Ooh, we've seen photos, our people toured the yards, it's fine, it's all according to plan.* I couldn't believe how naive they were being. I couldn't believe they were falling so hard for this corporate smoke show when there'd been so many checks and balances and hemming and hawing over us. C— tried to say, *Yes, but that was a different time, things are very scary now, if you were launching the cryo project right at this minute you'd probably find it a lot easier,* but that didn't make any of us feel better. It was A—'s little brother who said, *Well, you have to understand money is one big shared hallucination, but I'm not sure they could have hallucinated this much, none of this is even in crypto.* We were sure it was a con. Not even a pipe dream, but a con.

He said, But nobody listened to us. Nobody investigated the things we told them to investigate. Everyone showed us what looked like evidence to them, and when we argued back they reminded us that cows had best friends and complex social relationships. M— and A— were a united front, and that was scary as fuck. It was always frightening when they stood together. Both of them were pretty quiet when we ended up taking the helicopter out together, us three, landing on a random oil rig to do what we

were going to get paid to do. I asked to see the body before anyone passed any money off to anyone. Sixth sense, I guess.

He said, They let me in to see the body, and I realised who I was dealing with and how big this was. Because I wasn't dealing with a group. I was dealing with a fucking nation. I was dealing with a huge political conspiracy. A— and M— looked at it, and looked at me, and they said, *Do it.*

So I did it. I fixed up the corpse, all the ice damage from storage, all the trauma of the body trying to eat itself after death. Did the blood transfusion manually, to rehydrate what was there and get it going. Made sure the body was working mechanically, unstiffened all the muscles. Rejigged the heart. Did the little tricks I'd thought of, got the eyes to blink by themselves, helped them install the throat speaker and helped with the mouth. I was feeling pretty sick about it by that point. I'd had no idea the guy was even dead. I mean, that was the point, nobody did. But I didn't feel like a hero. Then again, what could I do? They kept saying that this was for a year max, nobody could afford this much political instability right now, we were in the middle of an extinction event.

He said, So I had him sitting up and walking around and moving and we even tested him making a video call home. All fine. It worked great.

But I was like, You'll still need me for big public appearances, I can do it long-range. And they were all, We've budgeted for that. And that was when A— and M— stepped in to negotiate. They said they didn't want the payment in pure cash. They said I wanted something more material. And we went around and around and fucking around. At one point I thought they'd open fire on all of us because they were being so fucking stroppy. They were hitting the table like in a police drama, like, *We can end this whenever we want! The ball's in our court! We know how much this means to you now!* I was all, *Wow, sorry guys, I don't really know either of these two, they're very unexpected and mean. I came here to have a good time and I think they're being very harsh.* I think between Bad Cop, Worse Cop, and Sorry Cop, they got so sick of us that they told us, *Fine, we'll arrange it here and now.*

He said, That's how I ended up going home with a couple billion dollars and a suitcase nuke.



19

WHEN NONA GOT HER sight back she was lying on a bed made of three chairs pushed together. Her sight and her sound and her smell came back all at once, but her memories stayed weirdly distant, like they were shuffling their feet behind a doorway, waiting to announce a surprise party. She did not know the room. She was staring up at a particle-board roof with holes in it and a long flickering bar light, and she was lying in the awkward, rucked-up way one always has to lie on a makeshift bed.

That didn't matter. She had been put to sleep on makeshift beds plenty of times by plenty of people. What *mattered* was that her ankles had been haphazardly bound to one of the struts on the chair's frame, and one of her hands had been tied to the bit of the chair that was closest to her head. The other hand had been chained to the radiator with the type of plastic-sheathed chain that people put around their bicycles when they wanted the bicycle thief to really have to work for it. She had seen that type of chain in the city, usually in two pieces from where it had been cut with pliers.

Abruptly, Nona threw her third tantrum.

Nona had thrown exactly two tantrums in her entire life. She couldn't remember anything about the first one, but Pyrrha had told her about it. Pyrrha had been laughing with her mouth, but not with her eyes: her eyes had been very brown and distant and uneasy, as though this tantrum had reminded Pyrrha of something her brain didn't want to bring back. Everyone could remember her second tantrum. That was when it had been impressed upon her to keep her temper, and it was the reason Palamedes and Camilla always let her go to the ocean even though it was the most dangerous thing she could ever possibly want, both for their anonymity and just in general. The ocean made her stop being angry, and had a prolonged effect, so that a weekly dip meant that she was never worse than a little whiny. But at that moment everything that had happened—Pyrrha—the

Angel—Hot Sauce—calmly wiped out long and careful weeks of Palamedes and Camilla dipping her in the ocean.

Nona arched her back right up off the chair and let out a long, bellowing scream, one that went on for ever and ever and ever until her throat broke and healed and broke again and she was screaming blood as well as sound. This was her warning to everyone else. After she had done that, she gave in to the simplicity of anger. She tugged and tugged and tugged on the arm chained through the radiator until it should have hurt, but as always happened, she was beyond pain or thought. In fact everything hurt a lot. It hurt in that slippery, frightening way her body used to let her know that she had made a huge mistake, but Nona's anger gave her the power not to listen. Her hand came free of the chain and the radiator. It made a mess. Next she had to get her ankles free of the chair, and that was harder, because everything was wet now. She had to use both hands and both her feet. For long, helpless, frantic moments she thought she was stuck, the way she used to get frightened when Camilla had put a shirt over her head and things went wrong on the way and her head tried to get through the armhole. It was with the same kind of sweating, anxious rearrangement that she got her feet free now. The plastic ties were good, like Corona had said, and they didn't break. But Nona came through them, screaming.

There was nothing in the room but the three chairs, which would probably never be used as chairs again after what she had done, and a dusty laminate table, and the light, and the locked door. Nona would have posted herself under the door if she had to. But the door wasn't actually that strong. She brushed some of the mess and a discarded finger off the seat of one of the chairs and she hit the door with it. The beauty of her anger was not in her strength; Nona's body could never be strong. The beauty was in the fact that she could hit the door over and over, as hard as she possibly could, as many times as she liked. That was a mess too. But she was angry. The door caved in.

The chair's cushion cover had come off, and so had one of the welded arms. The other arm had snapped off earlier. It had been useful when she needed a jaggedy edge to make herself smaller. This second arm had come off longer, and she gripped that one firmly, one hand at the bottom and the other hand atop that one. Even with everything so soggy and slippery, that felt safe. When she finally battered down the last fragments of door she stood with the weapon held before her and faced a tight knot of people in

their masks and their combat trousers and their big boots, just like Pash's boots.

The thought of Pash's boots made her mad again. She suddenly hated Pash. If it had not been for Pash, maybe nobody would have got shot. Maybe nobody would have locked Hot Sauce in the generator room. In front of her was a row of shining holes at the ends of raised guns, and for the *fourth* time in a very short period, they shot her. She slipped in a puddle and fell backward into the splintery door wreckage, two bullets in her chest, one in her knee.

Nona got up again and she was madder than ever. She stamped one foot in the splatter, and then another; she brandished the piece of broken cheap metal like a sword, and she screamed so loudly that it was coming out of her nose and her eyes and her brain, and every one of those soldiers took a step backward.

Nona turned and ran. Her feet made *slop, slop, slop* sounds as she fled down the corridor. There were people gathering in front of her, with more guns, people who for all their different masks and goggles and hoods always seemed like the same fake person. Somebody down the corridor shouted, "Disengage! Disengage!" but Nona's scream was louder. One of the soldiers didn't disengage, they shot her again instead. She raised the metal over her head, and she ran at him. They were screaming through their mask. Nona screamed through hers, the mask that was the front of her face.

There was a lot of noise now. Sounds crowded in all at once. It was like being the person in the middle of a traffic island whose job it was to direct all the heavy vehicles. Nona had once thought that seemed like a wonderful job to get to do, but no longer. Even the Edenite had cringed away from her screaming; they had dropped their gun and their gloved hands were clapped over their helmet, over their ears, and she opened her mouth to remember her teeth.

Someone dropped something over her head. It was a hood, and it was tightening at the neck. She reached up to tear it off, but something big and heavy pinned her arms against her body. It was like being swaddled. Nona struggled, but this was a good defence against her, maybe the only defence; Camilla had wrapped her up in a blanket too, the second time. When it all went dark, her body seemed to remember that she had used something up inside her, something enormous, and she started to tremble.

She trembled so hard that she thought she would die then and there, that this was what dying was finally like. Inside the hood she heard her mouth say, savage and distinct and cool despite the trembles: "Fool. You're killing her."

But she was only talking to herself, after all.

JOHN 3:20

IN THE DREAM, nights did not give way to mornings. The light coming through the clouds changed colour, but nothing rose and nothing sank except their chests when they breathed. In the dream she quite often forgot how to breathe, or swallow, and she would choke on her own saliva until the fright passed and the body remembered for her.

In a darkness that could have been sunrise he said, None of us ever wanted to use that nuke. We never thought we would. It felt like a toy. We kept laughing that it came with a manual. I think we were scared of what would happen if we stopped laughing. We pulled up the floor and put a safe beneath the lino and swore we were never going to use it. G— made sure it couldn't be armed, it was never something we were going to blow for real. But it was our leverage—it was a way to force people to listen to us just as much as the money was. Our first method was to keep telling the truth, keep pushing on the FTL story, keep asking hard questions. Our second method was to throw money at it. Our third method was to tell people that we'd got a nuke.

He said, It wasn't as naive as it sounded. Like, yeah, we were very aware that simply having this thing, that's a serious international incident. But we'd been party to this massive secret, right, we had access to one of the biggest political scandals of all time, and we were key helpers on the cover-up. A bomb would at least give *them* pause. It had to. And we were sick of how much time everything was taking. We'd been subjected to so much bureaucracy and so much red tape and so many people refusing to do so many things that we were willing to gamble on being tried at the Hague just to stop the process. Ready to make a hell of a mess to buy time. Prepared to do anything to keep you going.

C— kept saying, *Pick one. Are we more invested in proving this new plan is bullshit, or in saving you?* I was like, *It's both, how can it not be both.* C— was like, *It can't be both. Pick one and stick to it. Decide what you give a fuck about.*

He said, I found that the problem with being the death man is you stop giving much of a fuck.

Then he said, rubbing circles into one temple with his thumb, I still can't believe they wouldn't give me the time of day *and* they were scared of me. It's not fair. Either you're the evil wizard and everyone wants to know

what you think, or you're the good wizard and nobody cares. It wasn't fair. That wasn't how it was meant to work.

In the dream she did not ask him questions. The burnt-out shell of the car was still smouldering. It seemed like the smell was in her clothes, in her hair, in the mud. It was still cold this high up, in the mist, and the cold made the fronts of her arms bumpy, which panicked her until he told her it was natural.

He said, The FTL plan was going steadily by then. More and more nations had given their okay. They were on to arguing over who went in the ships, size and shape, how they could make sure it didn't turn into a colonial exercise on the other side. That's where they met resistance, because the trillionaires were all, *But we've got our hand-picked guys. There's only so much room, they've already undergone training, this isn't a tourist trip.* Nobody liked that. We'd been calling bullshit the whole time, and now we were getting some traction. I said, *Give me a year and I'll see if I can't solve the Tau Ceti question by myself, we've already got plans, I could do a hell of a lot with the cryo cans now if you let me.* Earned some Trans-Tasman support, but then the trillionaires banged the *wanted criminal* drum and put me on the back burner. The bastards said, *Fine, we'll make room for two hundred nominated people*—two hundred! Two measly hundred!—and I was all, *They won't fall for that.*

He said, They fell for it.

He said, Turns out everyone wanted to nominate someone to go on board, especially if they could nominate themselves. The absolute fuckers. Once they got that green light they said the first wave would leave in three months, we have to do this quickly, get the second wave ready before our next round of climate starvation.

He said, We paid people to find their engineering facilities. That was a huge pain in the ass. Like, talk about a group of people who couldn't find somebody to buy weed off of, now out looking for mercenaries. Thankfully P— knew a bunch of army guys who knew ex-army guys, it was all very *Soldier of Fortune*. They got caught pretty much immediately, but I was good at long distance by then, I'd had to practise. I got eyes and ears on the plant that was meant to be the main building site and I immediately saw that it wasn't to spec. The deliveries they were getting weren't even the right stuff to build the ships. They were bringing in random crap to make it look like they were busy. It didn't seem like they had enough people. The

superstructures of the new fleet weren't progressing. Best of all would have been to walk into an empty building, but what I saw was immediately suspicious enough for us to be sure it wasn't enough.

He said, So I went to the governments that were still sympathetic, sort of, like ours, and all the Trans-Pacifics, and we threw down our evidence. All, *Take a look at this, this isn't working*. They should've stopped the launch and seized the factories until they could investigate properly. But instead they asked the trillionaires for their point of view. And the trillionaires *lied!* They lied like their lives fucking depended on it! They had a glib answer for every question; I swear someone told them we were on to them beforehand! I mean, our cheapo mercs did get caught. They lied and everyone swallowed their shit. Not only that, they looked at us and were like, *We were going to put you fellas in jail, weren't we? Isn't it time you guys stop being independent actors, aren't you recognised by most nations as a cult? We're all legally appointed officials here, except for the trillionaires. Did you know cows recognise one another?*

He said, I got mad.

He said, Back at home I told them, they want to call us a cult, let's be a cult. It only takes a little bit of eyeliner and a couple capes. N— already had eyeliner and capes. We'd tried to keep everything so clean-cut and scientific, but now we were streaming quicker than they could serve us subpoenas. End of the world is nigh, that kind of thing. Join us. Live forever. Your governments are lying to you. Before, when it started, I'd tried to use all these scientific terms—tried to coin *phthinergy*, talk about a word that needed an antihistamine. I'd tried to make out like everything I was doing had principles I was probably going to write papers on later. I dropped all that, because turns out nobody wants papers, nobody wants principles. They want the magic bullet. They just want to be saved.

He said, I told them I'd save them. And I said, *I'm a necromancer.*

DAY FIVE

CROWN PLAYS HER PART—THE SAINT OF DUTY—PALAMEDES
COMES CLEAN—THE SADDEST GIRL IN THE WHOLE ENTIRE WORLD
—NONA WATCHES A DUEL—THE CONVOY—PAUL GETS BORN—ONE
LAST TRIP—TWENTY-FOUR HOURS UNTIL THE TOMB OPENS.



20

WAKING UP, NONA DIDN'T know how much of the day and night had been part of her dream. Nona got the disorienting sense that nearly all of it had been imagined, and she was only now starting her day, and she would soon be telling Cam everything in front of the recorder and persuading her out of breakfast.

She woke up lying flat on her back with something warm draped over her, and the familiar cheap-soap-and-leather smell of Camilla tickling her nose. One of Cam's jackets had been rolled up and put under her head on top of her pillow. For a happy moment, Nona thought she was home. But the floor underneath Nona was scrubby carpet, not tile, and the walls were unfamiliar. She rolled onto her side. Her vision swam horribly, and she found with a start that she was going to be sick.

Nona started dry-heaving pitifully, and there was Cam with the wastebasket, pulling her hair back, saying gently, "There you go, don't force it"—so it wasn't Cam. Nona tried to be as sick as she could be, which took a while and a lot of effort. Afterward she felt better, but as though she had run up and down the street outside the Building five times in quick succession. And her whole body hurt.

"Oh," gasped Nona, and she flopped back on the makeshift bed and shakily wiped her mouth with her arm. She was in a darkened room, right next to a long table with chairs. As she hadn't seen it from this angle before, it took her a little while to recognise the meeting room in the Blood of Eden facility, same one as last time. The portrait of the redhead with the cruel eyes stared down at her from her thicket of dried-up flowers, as though contemptuous that Nona had had the bad manners to throw up in front of

her. Her vision shimmered. She had to lay her head back again. Palamedes was looking at the contents of the wastebasket with a troubled expression, which was gross as well as worrying, and she knew the jig was up.

She whispered, "Are we alone?"

"Yes—but we won't be for long. Nona, I need to make sure you're all right."

"Did the bullet come out my head?"

"No—I had to take it out, it got stuck."

She was nearly too afraid to ask. "Hot Sauce—"

"Hot Sauce wanted to leave," said Palamedes, "and—well, we let her leave, Nona."

Nona's heart felt that the bullet had got stuck *there* instead. Palamedes continued, "Blood of Eden brought us here to see We Suffer, which is fine, and I worked on you—under supervision. Most of Ctesiphon Wing saw the bullet in your head ... and of course, nobody knew before how quickly you regenerate, because we hadn't told them. So they shackled Cam and me, then locked you up."

"Which made me mad."

"Which made you mad."

Nona said tentatively, "I made a big mess, didn't I," and Palamedes said briskly—"They should have bloody guessed. Every mistake they've made with us stemmed from a complete lack of trust—a cowardice and an unwillingness to let us in on the game. And now that I know what I know ... or *think* I know ... But, Nona, what's more important is that I make sure everything in your body works, because if you'd been a normal human being we would be planning your funeral."

"Don't bother," said Nona, affrighted. "It only made me angry—which I think was a pity," she added, belatedly.

"Yes," said Palamedes, distantly. "It was a pity. But, Nona ... Nona, about that broadcast. You saw it, didn't you? All of it? And you didn't—recognise anyone you saw?"

The jig was finally up.

"Only the girl from my dream," said Nona.

Palamedes breathed in through Camilla's nose, then out through Camilla's mouth.

"You didn't tell me that."

"You didn't ask," said Nona.

“Nona,” said Palamedes very, *very* slowly, “that was very important information—information that changes everything—the type of information we have schooled you for the last six months to tell us, instantly, and the type of information Camilla and I personally trusted you to prioritise.”

This was too much to bear.

“I’ve had things to think about,” Nona wailed. “I didn’t want to get in trouble.”

“Have Cam and I *ever* gotten you in trouble?”

“No, and I didn’t want to ruin that, Honesty always gets in trouble and it’s terrible,” said Nona. “And it’s not *fair* trying to talk calmly and sadly about my responsibilities when I *know* you’re thinking, ‘Nona, I want to beat you up with the broom handle.’ Just say, ‘Nona, I want to beat you up with the broom handle.’”

“I’d never use the broom handle on you,” said Palamedes.

Nona was mollified.

“You wouldn’t feel it. If Cam and I didn’t love you as much as we do,” said Palamedes, “we would take turns throttling you, then give all your magazines to charity.”

Palamedes had never said the word *love* before. More than anything—even the idea of her beloved magazines going to charity, as though others were more deserving than Nona, the most deserving person on the planet—this broke her.

“Don’t interrupt me. I’ve got to tell you something and I have to tell you *really quickly*,” said Nona, only she choked on the rough stuff in the back of her throat, and she said—“You know how I’ve been sick lately?”

“Yes,” said Palamedes.

“Well, I *thought* I was only going to be sick for not much longer, maybe a few weeks or a month,” said Nona, trying to organise her thoughts. She licked her lips and whispered up to the ceiling: “But now I think I only have a few days. Oh, thank goodness, I said it. Wow, that’s a relief.”

Palamedes went silent. Then he said: “A few days of *what*? ”

“Oh—living,” said Nona, too relieved at having said it to feel stupid. “It’s nearly over, Palamedes. I’m dying. I’ve been dying for months.”

Then Palamedes touched her, and he did not throttle her. He ran Cam’s soft, chapped hand all over her head. He touched her ribs and her belly and he pulled off her shoes and touched the soles of her feet. Then he got up and he pulled open a drawer on the desk and he came back with, of all things, a

fat black marker. He said, “Nona, put your hands on your hips and put your ankles together, I need a closed circuit.”

She put her hands on her hips and joined her ankles. Palamedes lightly sketched something just beneath the hollow of her throat, saying, “Keep still now,” when she laughed, being ticklish. The pen made a lot of little light, feathery *fwip—fwip—fwips* on her, and then Palamedes laid it down and said: “Here goes nothing.”

And nothing was what happened as Palamedes hovered Camilla’s hand over Nona’s face—her throat, down the line of her abdomen—except that his fingers were wreathed in fine blue flames, completely smokeless and heatless. They cast terrifying lights in the room even though they didn’t flicker, staying nearly perfectly still. There was nothing more than a slight tingling feeling as he made it all the way down to her feet and back, and then he clutched Camilla’s fist closed, and she looked at him and saw that he was bewildered.

“God save me from Lyctoral masking,” he said, exasperated. “Cytherea the First must have enjoyed those games she played with me … Hang on.”

Now he poked and prodded her: her heart, her belly, the tops of her thighs, the place at her temple where the bullet had gone in. When she flinched, Palamedes said gently, “Sorry. Give me a moment,” and she gave him a moment, and then after a long time he said—“You’re shedding thalergy like chaff in the wind. What’s going on? It’s almost like a starvation reaction, but Cam and I *know* you’re eating.”

“Not very much,” admitted Nona, but Palamedes said, “Not so little that your framework should have gone into thalergy metabolism. You’re eating your own reserves. You’ve got the level of retention I’d usually only see in palliative care. Nona—your soul’s trying to leave your body.”

Nona puzzled over this a little.

“But I *like* my body.”

“It doesn’t matter about *liking*,” said Palamedes. “What’s happening to you is why I can’t be in Camilla’s body for more than a handful of minutes, Nona. If I stay too long I start trying to make inroads on her soul—I start trying to bed down and put up new wallpaper and displace Camilla, for all that we’ve tried to make sure that doesn’t happen. At the same time, Cam’s body tries to reject *my* soul, like when you try to blink dust out of your eye. But your body would never try to reject its own soul … unless it didn’t recognise it. Unless your soul was a stranger’s … or a melange. Is that the

gestalt theory busted—or confirmed? Is that how we explain the rapid healing?"

He was talking much more to himself now. How could she explain?

"But you see, Palamedes, I don't mind dying," said Nona, trying to make him understand. "I've been doing it for ages. I'm not scared."

This explanation died on impact. Palamedes said with a voice like concrete: "I will not be party to this again."

Nona was a little bit afraid of that voice.

"I'm sorry, Palamedes."

"No. Don't be. It's simply—Nona, we can't let your body die," he said. "For one thing, it's the body of someone I owe a favour to, and I'd rather like to see the look on her face when I present it back to her ... And if we lose the body, whither goes the soul? Let's say you *are* the other soul ... And let's say I lose you. *You* die; *she* wakes up. The final kick in the pants in what I gather was a life long on kicks and short on very much else. And yet if I don't preserve *her* ... Ninth, really, I *sincerely* did not want to have to look after your bedamned water bottle."

Nona struggled to sit up. She was wet and itchy with sweat and the ink where the marker had touched her neck—she rubbed it before she could remember not to, and her hand came back smudged with black.

"Palamedes," she said, "do you think you know who I am?"

"I've got a theory," began Palamedes.

"Crown said *she* knew who I was," said Nona.

"Crown says a lot of things. Theories are all we have."

"Well, tell me your theories," Nona demanded, feeling much better from sheer excitement. "Say them out loud. Am I nice? Am I good-looking? Do I have lots of friends? Does everyone listen to me? How many legs do I have?"

Palamedes untucked Camilla's legs from underneath him and sat knees-up, feet flat on the floor, and he held Nona's hand. He looked at her with those keen, earnest brown-grey eyes, the softest and nicest of greys and browns, like sheeny earthenware cups.

"Nona, we never wanted to lead you."

Nona said, "Does it matter anymore?"

"I don't know, which frightens me," said Palamedes.

This was hardly to be borne, not after she had waited such a long time and in such circumstances. She said, "Palamedes, *please*. Tell me

something, one titchy little thing, the smallest and tiniest thing. I've wanted to know so badly. Maybe I'm dying of ... curiosity."

"Not funny," said Palamedes.

"Please," said Nona.

In the end he said, "All I know is this, Nona: if you're one of two people, current evidence suggests you're *not* just the first person, the one who owns your body."

Nona thought back to mathematics.

"But that means I'm the second person."

"Or—not *solely* the first person."

This was hard to get her head around.

"Can one person even *be* two people? I feel like I've only got enough room inside for me, and sometimes like that room's not even enough."

"Lyctors can," said Palamedes, "or at least—they *thought* they could; in fact all they became were half-dead cannibals. I think a true Lyctorhood is a mutual death ... a gravitational singularity creating something new. A true Grand Lysis, rather than the Petty Lysis of the megatheorem ... Oh, God, Nona, I'm rambling, I'm very sorry. I hate it when I'm like this."

Nona moved over to give him a hug. She hugged him like Camilla would have, the one thing she was truly good at, and he fell into it immediately. He put his head on her shoulder and breathed in deep through his nose.

"Do you remember the girl on the broadcast?" he asked. "The one who *wasn't* a startlingly handsome and very obviously dead person with fashion hair?"

"The redhead." That one was easy.

"That's the other body you might come from," said Palamedes. "Her real name is Gideon Nav, and we need to get you to that body, if we can. Spiritual gravity will do the rest."

This was horrifying.

"But I don't want to be *redheaded*," said Nona. "I do *not* think of myself as redheaded. And I don't want to be a necromancer. Or a prince. Palamedes," she said, "am I—am I a zombie?"

Palamedes took her by the shoulders and looked at her.

"You were born in the Nine Houses, Nona," he said. "So was I, and Camilla, and Pyrrha. We're all zombies, as people here would understand

them. I was born with aptitude, so I'm a true zombie, a wizard. Camilla and Pyrrha—who weren't—would be what they call *minions*."

This hurt her feelings.

"No wonder Hot Sauce kicked me out of the gang," she said, and her eyes numbed with tears again.

"Hot Sauce is a very young woman who has been living on her nerves for so long that I imagine she doesn't have anything else," said Palamedes briskly. "She'll regret what she did at some point."

Nona's lip wobbled and she had to keep swallowing hard. Palamedes carefully sat himself back down and grimaced, and she looked at his shackle for the first time: it was a big black cuff with an electronic red light that blinked off and on as she watched. He said, "It's an explosive shackle. After We Suffer saw Camilla and me pull the bullet from your head ... I couldn't *not* work on you ... she has come to her own conclusions, and whatever conclusions Crown wanted to give her. They've been very busy since we came back, so they wanted us to stay where they put us."

Nona was incensed. "I *hate* it. I *hate* being locked up."

"So did Gideon, I gather."

Then Palamedes looked very serious, and his face moved as though he were about to say something when there was a knock at the meeting-room door. He said quickly, "Tell Cam she and I need to talk as soon as humanly possible. I will get back to you—you're not going to die on our watch. I haven't been able to save many people in my life, I'm afraid, but I am intent on saving you."

Nona did not want to lie to Palamedes, which was why she was grateful that the eyes whitened to that clear glassy grey that meant Camilla, blinking hard a few times to get her bearings. The door knocked again and Nona said automatically, "Come in."

The door opened, and someone walked in; an elegant middle-aged person with shadowy eyes. They were wearing no mask and no goggles and no hood, and their hair was pinned up in a neat roll atop their head and wrapped in a brief scarf with a blue stripe pattern. They carried a little suitcase in one hand and two bottles of water cunningly gripped in the other, and they crossed to sit in the seat We Suffer usually sat in, and got comfortable taking things out of the little suitcase—paper, clipboards, electronic equipment, pens. When they tilted their head quizzically at Nona,

she realised with a start that it *was* We Suffer—We Suffer with no mask and a naked face, for the first time that Nona had ever seen her.

“Do I surprise you, Nona?” she asked, quite nicely. “We are beyond the cell disguises now, are we not? They are useful, but only to a point. I do not think you are capable of being tortured for my face.”

“Why was I tied up?” demanded Nona. “Why did you cuff Camilla? Why did you shoot us? Where’s the Angel? Have you found Pyrrha?”

“A comedy of errors. I apologise,” said We Suffer. Nona noticed that the light on Suffer’s hair made it quite a nice chestnut colour, like rich mouse. She was probably quite a bit older than Pyrrha, with strongly marked features and an aristocratic, slightly hooked nose, and her face was marked with lines that showed even beneath a light layer of powder and makeup. If Nona had been in less of a woozy mood she might have thought her pretty, but nothing was pretty at that moment.

We Suffer added, “I understand the bonds may seem unfair. But please keep in mind that you gave to my people a very great shock, and since you were the scariest thing I have nearly ever seen in all my days, that should not come as a big surprise.”

Nona was doubtful. “I suppose I’m sorry,” she said, “only I don’t think you’re sorry for locking up me and Camilla.”

“Do not bother with *sorry*. We are also impressed, in our own way. I mean, now most people will not agree to be in the same room as you. That is fine. We do not need them. Hect, as I told you last night, this has not been all for naught … Pash has admitted to having recently liquidated a big unit of Merv Wing. That is fine. Unjust Hope has not made a huge deal out of it. That was always his way, despite the losses. He will want to keep this quiet for a while … Usually you both meeting up with the Messenger, whom you call *the Angel*, would have been very bad, but I think we may actually survive it. They were unharmed by the experience. I do not think we need to register Pash discharging a weapon in front of them *quite* yet, though when we do we may all be hauled in front of a firing squad … We are riding the wave. Let us see where it takes us. And whatever the case, Nona, you were impressive … Blood of Eden is quite impressed by blood and guts.”

Most of this went over Nona’s head.

“You’re not answering my questions at all,” she said fretfully. “Who *is* the Angel, I mean, the Messenger?”

“That is above your pay grade,” said We Suffer.

“You don’t pay us,” said Camilla.

“Yes. My little joke,” explained We Suffer. “All you need to know is that they are the one with the little arboreal dog who is elderly. That is enough to know.”

Nona said, “Is the Angel—important?”

“The Angel is Blood of Eden,” said We Suffer, but did not elaborate with anything other than, “In hindsight, not a good idea to keep the Angel anywhere near the place we were keeping you, even in the same city. The problem with putting all of your eggs in one basket is there is such a mess when somebody sits on that basket. But how could we know any of this would happen? In any case, we are back. They have placed me in charge of the next move, and Unjust Hope has been bumped to the very backmost seat … for now.”

Camilla said, “Which means what?”

“Which means I need you, Hect,” said We Suffer.

“Then take this shackle off my damn leg.”

“As soon as I can. They would not let me put you two in the same room without it,” said We Suffer. “They are impressed by her, as I said, but also very frightened. The Houses sent a Lyctor to negotiate, and then there *you* both are in the limelight, one of you able to shrug off a bullet to the brain and the other fully capable of necromancy. A necromancy I knew not of! If you had told me, Hect, I would have been able to spin it. If you had let me know, we could have thought of something together.”

Camilla said, “You can’t control your own people?”

“I cannot ask them to tolerate the intolerable,” said We Suffer. “I am not a tyrant. I exercise much control you are not seeing. For instance, this affair of yours and Nona’s … it has not yet made it to other cells, and the rest of Ctesiphon will not tell them, not yet. Today this is a family affair, and our hopes and attentions rest on another.”

Before Nona could even conceive of looking at Camilla’s leg and getting angry again, Camilla gave her the *cool it* expression, and the desk in front of We Suffer beeped urgently. She glanced at a little flip-top electronic screen in front of her, and she said: “Nine in the morning. She is in place. This is confirmed.”

Nine? How long had Nona slept? How little had Cam slept? When she looked at Camilla’s face, she saw that her expression had hardened like the

quick-set concrete at Pyrrha's work.

"This is your last chance," said Camilla tonelessly. "Pull her out."

"This is the only move we find it possible to make, and as a move it is sensitive to time," said We Suffer. "She volunteered. We need someone on the inside. Without understanding, we can make no move on that barracks, nor find the way forward. She is, perhaps, the only person for whom this would not be a suicide mission. She said it herself."

"You should've asked *why* she said that," said Camilla. "I could've gone in. I'm a citizen of the Nine Houses."

"After the last eight hours? Not one chance. In your own way, you too are too important to lose here," said We Suffer. "I need you to hear this as it happens. I need you to translate the nuances. And she needs you to be here for her plan to work, though she said she would do it alone. She said she was expendable, and that you were not. We agreed with this."

"You've been played," said Camilla.

Nona's legs felt weak. She slithered into the chair, and We Suffer quite nicely rolled one of the bottles of water in her direction. She caught it awkwardly, and it was nice to feel how cool the plastic was between her hands. She pressed it to her cheeks and her forehead briefly. She was still sweating.

Camilla said, "Listen to me. Pull her out. She can't do this."

"Lieutenant Crown knows what she is doing," said We Suffer calmly, though Nona would not have been so calm with Camilla making the face she was currently making. It was like the time Pyrrha had let Nona smoke a cigarette and Nona had accidentally eaten half. "I have also told *you*, many times. This is the swings and the roundabouts. A concurrent vote was called yesterday to set off bombs below the barracks and hope Ianthe Naberius did not live through it. There is a sense that we must play the aggressor. Blood of Eden has perfected the defensive game, never moving forward, perpetually shifting to our back foot. We owe Wake too much to keep playing that game. Crown understood. I think she plays to win ... and we now know we have more to win than ever."

Camilla crossed to the table, chain clinking. She adopted a posture that Nona had seen often: arms crossed over each other, head tilted a little in what Nona always thought of as the fly-upward expression. It was a Palamedes posture, and for a moment Nona thought it was Palamedes, but it wasn't. It was Camilla trying to *be* Palamedes.

“Listen to me,” she said. Every word was like a rock dropped into a tide pool. “This is a trap. It won’t get you intel. It won’t get you what you’re calling the key. You walk her in there alone, she won’t walk out. She’s giving in, not fighting.”

This was a lot for Camilla to say. Even We Suffer paused and furrowed her brow, and she said, “I cannot believe this girl would kill her own twin sister.”

“Kill her?” said Camilla.

The little electronic device beeped again. We Suffer tapped a button, and the speakers at the sides of the room made awful noises briefly. We Suffer held a hand up to Camilla in the universal *shh* gesture, and picked up a receiver: “Transmitting. Ready Mu in position. I want snipers ready in case anything goes wrong. Headshots are preferred. Cover Troia if at all possible, but we have been told to take the shot no matter what.”

“Get her out,” repeated Camilla, and for the first time, there was a raw edge of desperation to her voice. “Corona can’t lie to her.”

We Suffer looked at her. For a moment Nona thought she would really do it. Without the goggles and mask, it was so much easier to translate her. She had a trick of keeping her eyes perfectly even—pretty brown-green eyes with a touch of evenly applied black stuff on the lashes, very glamorous to Nona—but you had to watch the mouth. The hesitation showed in the thinning of the lips, just briefly.

Then it passed. We Suffer pressed a button and said briskly, “Eyes on the area. Are the crowds being held back? Keep the militia on the showboaters. I do not want any stray bullets catching the car or anyone coming out of the building … Yes … No, we’ll keep her to audio, the system cannot stand the strain … Yes. You have your orders.”

Camilla clinked back against the wall. Her eyes closed and she tilted her head downward so that her fringe, which really needed a trim by now, fell over her eyebrows. Then We Suffer put the receiver down and twiddled a button, and the audio leapt in the speakers. Nona unscrewed the top of the cap of the bottle of water and took a long pull from it, which rinsed away the sour acid taste on her tongue.

She nearly jumped out of her skin when the audio, exaggeratedly loud, suddenly tuned in to traffic, a car insistently honking so that people let it through. The audio crackled. Someone was breathing, hard, a little too fast. The engine sounded like you were standing right inside it. But you could

hear everything, you could even hear hands sliding over the car wheel. People were yelling outside the car. There was the noise of a big metallic bump, and then Crown's voice, indignant, barely a mutter: "Stop *throwing* things at me, you jackasses."

Her voice and the breathing sounded weirdly disconnected. But everything sounded huge, and strange for being huge. The car wheels sounded like they were bumping over something, moving to different terrain. Then Crown said, "I'm through," and a cranking sound screeched over the audio as the ignition suddenly died. The car door opened like a bomb going off. Crown's boots clattered on the ground. The yelling sounded far-off now but was still there, like a background radio.

It was interrupted by a distant voice, speaking House—"No step further."

Crown's voice, much more explosive and near on the speakers: "I'm unarmed! I'm unarmed! I am a citizen of the Nine and I ask for sanctuary in the name of the Third House—in the name of the Emperor Undying, please! For the love of God, I'm a sitting sniper target out here!"

There was a moment of absolute silence. Crown's voice went from panicky to tetchy: "My name is Coronabeth Tridentarius, crown princess of Ida, heir to the Third! My mother was Violabeth Tritos, my sister is a Lyctor, and my *brain* is about to get *spattered on the tiles* unless you open this gate and let me drive through!"

There was another clang. Something opening and shutting. Someone said hoarsely, "Coronabeth Tridentarius has been dead for over a year. Get in your vehicle, turn around, go," but another voice, even feebler, said, "*Look at her.*"

Crown, sounding desperate: "My sister is in the Cohort compound. She can positively identify me. Hurry up."

"Look, you understand—"

"I understand, Lieutenant—Lieutenant, right?—and that's why I'm saying *get Ianthe!* Get my sister! She can identify me, or identify my body, whichever you decide! Get me out of this crowd!"

There was another pause. Crown's breath was much softer now, less laboured, less strange. There were clangs and bangs that Nona couldn't parse. She took another swig of water and looked at We Suffer, who had one hand on her flip-top as though it were the trigger of a gun, and then she looked at Camilla. Camilla's eyes were closed and she was shifting weight

slowly from foot to foot—one to the other—so gradually that her shackle didn’t even clink.

There were far-off shouts on the speakers. More clangor. Voices saying something Nona couldn’t hear. Then there was a silence made up of all these background noises—a nonsense of sounds stuck together. Another far-off clangour. Then Crown drew the longest breath that Nona had ever heard anyone draw.

“Corona,” called out someone new. Nona had heard that voice once before, on the broadcast.

Footsteps, evolving into running feet. Something hit Crown with a big *thump*. A mess of sounds—clothes rustling, a sobbing, the audio squeaking as it tried to keep up—and Crown, sounding unlike any Crown that Nona had ever heard before, two voices trying to speak at once: “Don’t touch me. Don’t fucking touch me.”

“Shush-a-shush, my darling. Shush. Shhh. Here we are. We’re fine. I’ve got you, love.”

“Oh my God, you’re so cold. He’s so cold.”

“He’s dead, sweetheart. It’s me in here. I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.”

“How *could* you? How *could* you?”

“Please touch me. I’ll die.”

“I love you … I love you, I love you, I’ve missed you so much. Please be real.”

“I’m real—we’re real…”

“Oh, God, Ianthe,” said Crown, and her voice changed a little. “This is sick. Look at him. I *hate* you.”

“No, you don’t. You always say that. Don’t cry, honey … you can’t cry if I can’t cry with you. It’s not fair. I can’t cry at the moment unless I do the tear ducts manually. Look at you … more beautiful than ever, even with crappy jewellery and a million split ends. *Studs*, darling? Earrings on a diet?”

Crown was hiccupping, sobbing, laughing all at once: “Don’t do that. Don’t say what Babs would say.”

“You know I always said what Babs would say, except when Babs said what I would. We kept you honest. Come here, my heart’s love,” said the voice, and Crown’s sobs were suddenly muffled, then quieted, then silenced altogether.

After a while, Crown said—“How did you know I was here?”

“I didn’t,” said the other voice. “I’ve got people combing three other planets right now trying to find you. I never thought you’d be *here*. God, what a fuckup! He’s going to assume I did this on purpose. None of this has been my fault. How did you end up on this miserable rock, darling?”

“It’s a long story.”

“I’ve got time. Come on. Let’s talk inside … no, leave the vehicle, just get inside. I’m not at full bore at the moment, so it’s dangerous out here. Come on, hurry up.”

The hiccupping was sniffled away, and Crown said urgently: “No. No, I need the car. Ianthe … Ianthe, I need your help.”

“Anything, but come inside.”

“No, wait—”

Another clang. Footsteps. The noise of a car door opening. The other voice that had been so tender did not bother to hide its revulsion as it said: “Oh, you’ve got to be *kidding* me.”

“She needs your help,” said Crown.

Camilla’s head lifted.

“I thought she had exited this ghastly vale of tears,” said the other voice, not at all pleased.

“Didn’t Harrowhark tell you?”

The voice cooled and hardened like an ice cube.

“Didn’t Harrow—*what*? When did *you* talk to Harrow?”

“Just help me get Judith inside. You have to help her. The sedative’s going to wear off soon. Ianthe, you’re the only one … Ianthe, do not look at me like that. If you look at me like that I am walking away. If you want me, you take her too, okay?”

The other voice rose in drawling, disgusted plaintiveness. “Judith Deuteros? Judith calendar-for-every-birthday Deuteros? *Really?*”

“It’s the blue madness, Ianthe, she can’t—”

“Judith Deuteros, who, when we played Marry, Kill, Reanimate, you used to say *reanimate* because nobody would be able to tell the difference? *That* Judith Deuteros?”

We Suffer tapped the flip-top and pressed a button and said tersely: “Check the basement, now. Where is the guard? Who has eyes down there, what is happening?”

On the speakers, Crown was saying, “I can’t … I can’t be the one to let her die. Not when I’ve let everyone else…”

“Oh, God, honey, nip that in the bud. Nobody cares about *Judith Deuteros* ... Seriously, my plans cannot afford Judith Deuteros. She’s going to be absolutely crazy in the coconut until Number Seven leaves, Corona. It’s really nicer to kill her. Two-thirds of the barracks necromancers are dead already. There’s only a handful left, and I had to put down three of them yesterday who absolutely weren’t going to make it, and they looked significantly livelier than *Deuteros*. Stop looking at me like that. Do you like the outfit?”

“No.” Crown’s voice was chilly. “White makes Babs look peaky.”

“Wait till you see me in it.”

“I bet.”

“I said, stop looking at me like that,” said the voice languidly. “Come on, Corona, you’re pouting, and I’m immune. I am a Lyctor now ... I have seen, as the poets would put it, some *shit*. I really, really think you ought to let me put her down. I know what you’re thinking. You think you can’t come home again except as the conquering hero. Well, you’re wrong. One, absolutely nobody gave a hot toot about Judith, and two, they made our birthday a *memorial holiday*. Not a ‘congratulations on the Lyctorhood, our daughter of the Third’ day, a ‘Coronabeth Tridentarius, our darling gone too soon’ day. Talk about vom. When I heard, I nearly died laughing ... Have I hurt your feelings already, love? I don’t mean to.”

Crown’s voice was quiet. “Ianthe, please. Please. There’s so much I don’t understand. About you ... about what happened ... about Gideon.”

The voice did not sound at all pleased when it said, “So you do remember her name.”

“I was on a shuttle with her body for months and months. I want to know what’s going on.”

“There’s a lot to explain.”

“Are you going to let me come inside, or are you going to tell me out here?”

The voice said, “That’s up to you, darling.”

“What do you *mean*? ”

“Just because I’m using Babs as a butt puppet does not mean that I’m without resources,” said the voice. “I’m a Lyctor. Yes, multiple puppets are a pain ... I’m hoping the expert is out there somewhere admiring my handiwork ... but I’m not blind, Corona. My pretty golden girl, roughing it

in your jacket ... and your earrings. I'll give him this, he said earrings or necklace."

Nona watched We Suffer tense. Something else was coming through her earpiece. She said, "Not until we hear the call. No. No. The signal."

Crown whispered, "What the hell are you talking about, Ianthe? You're scaring me."

"You're scaring *me*."

Another sound. From somewhere to Crown's left, there was a low, brief sound like a call, a note that rose until something muffled it. It sounded like the Captain. Crown said, "I don't know what you want from me."

"Only what *you* want from *me*," said the other voice. And: "I'm going to be piqued if you make me be the bad guy here, okay? I am not having the world's most fun at the moment. I can't even hug you with my own arms, touch you with my own body. Only Babs's ... there's a metaphor in there. In conclusion, I am not self-soothing over here. And studs never suited you and you know it."

"Exactly how much necromancy can you *do*?"

"That's an interesting question," said the voice.

Another long pause. The voice said impatiently: "Nod or shake. Are they listening?"

There was no answer: none that Nona could see. Camilla's head had lifted entirely. We Suffer was saying into the earpiece, "Do *not* line it up."

"I understand," said the voice. "Don't worry, baby. I'm not mad at you. He told me what you were."

Something happened. The speaker crackled, and the second voice got much louder, like they were talking right into the receiver.

"Listen, dregs, to the Saint of Awe," the voice said. "I'm very pleased you handed my sister back to me. That's why I am not currently flattening a planet that, I'll be honest with you, nobody really gives a shit about. I'm changing the terms of the demand, but don't panic. You see, I don't particularly care about Blood of Eden. In fact, I wouldn't mind if you all survived for a few hundred more years. You think we're fighting *you* on Antioch? You think *you're* the main event? Sure, you've made a hell of a mess, but we're already doing cleanup. My eyes are not on you. Do you understand? Go and live another five thousand years. I only want every House asset you've got. I know what you have, and I'll be taking all of it. I want the Sixth House Oversight Body. I want Camilla Hect on my front

doorstep. And *most* of all I want Harrowhark Nonagesimus—as intact as you have her at this moment—or the whole planet is forfeit ... Corona, don’t cry again, I’m really not angry with you. It’s funny that anyone thought you could fool me.”

We Suffer said, “Line it up.”

Crown was saying, “Deuterros—promise you’re not going to touch Deuterros,” and the other voice said impatiently, “If I have to *look* at Deuterros a second longer I’ll die. I can’t believe you’re going this far because you think you’ll look good in a uniform. You always were nutty about uniforms ... Why Deuterros?”

Camilla said urgently, “No. Listen to her.”

We Suffer said, “What the *hell* is it?” in not a very nice way.

“She’s trying to tell us something.”

But all Crown said was, “She listened to me. I owe her.”

“Oh, that’s not special. *Anyone* would listen to you if you unbuttoned your top two buttons. Well, no, not Deuterros, you were never in her line. Look, I’m taking you both in, so you can relax. You just look so beautiful when you’re nervous.”

“You’re a dick,” said Crown, half-crying, half-laughing.

We Suffer’s eyes slid to Nona’s, or maybe they had always been there. Nona sat there with a mouthful of water, slowly going warm. A door opened and closed on the audio, close to where the voices were coming from. There was an unmistakable *click*.

The flip-top was held to We Suffer’s ear. Someone was speaking over it. We Suffer said quietly to Camilla: “They’re lined up. They can take the shot.”

“Don’t.”

“Our lives are at stake.”

“Don’t take it,” said Camilla.

Over the line, Crown’s voice suddenly changed. Her mouth had moved in some other direction. She said, “Oh my God! No!”

The other voice drawled, “Don’t freak out, darling. He’s a *tame* Lyctor ... he won’t hurt you. He can’t really hurt anyone anymore. You and your little firebrands took him in as a pet, didn’t you? Well, I’m taking him back to Poppa as a gift ... that is, if Poppa can look up from his mid-dismyriad crisis long enough to pay attention.”

A new and wonderfully familiar voice ground out, in tones that were unfamiliar—“Silence.”

“Shan’t. You might be the Saint of Duty, but *I’ve* been on call as Teacher’s whipping girl for the last six months, so fuck to you,” the other voice said. “I can say what I like about him. Anyway, what do you think? Do we take in the gate-crasher, or what?”

“Kill her,” said the voice. “Deadweight.”

Crown said, “I’ll walk back out to the streets and let the people have me if you touch a hair on her head. And I’m not going *anywhere* with ... him.”

The drawling voice despaired. “Fine. Get her inside. But he comes too, that’s not negotiable.”

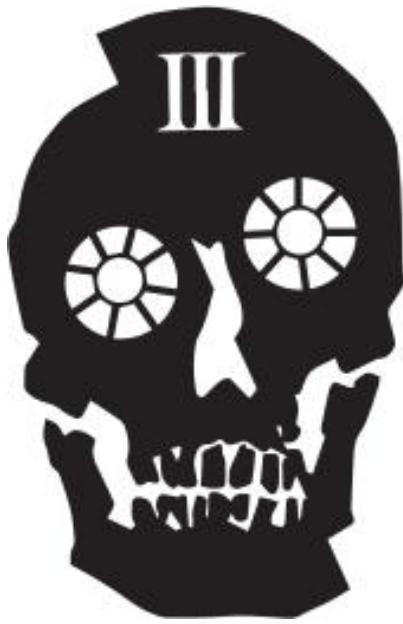
“He told you about ... Harrow? He told you about Cam?”

“He’s told me everything.”

The new voice said impatiently, “Get the fishhook out of the fish. Second earring. Right ear.”

The last thing the audio recorded was a blurry “Ow,” and then the line went dead.

Nona thrilled with recognition and relief; the new voice had been Pyrrha’s.



21

WE SUFFER LISTENED FOR a few more minutes, and then, in an unusual display of temper or misery or both, threw her earpiece at the table. Then she put her mouse-coloured head in her hands.

Nona, confronting the fact that she had too much in her mouth to swallow, hastily began gulping it in the tiniest of polite gulps she could manage, but her effort came to nothing. Her throat made a noise a little bit like the noise of a gull on the beach trying to get down a whole sausage, and it was really loud. We Suffer put down the phone and looked at Camilla and Nona with wild eyes: a wildness not far off the one that Nona had seen in Hot Sauce's face. But that didn't matter. Camilla said, "Don't move so quickly," which Nona thought was silly.

"But Cam," she said, "we've got to go to Pyrrha, you heard her. Didn't you hear her?"

"I heard," said Camilla.

The door slammed open. An Edenite in a mask but with panicked, uncovered eyes said: "The last shift got knocked out and locked in the infirmary. The necromancer's gone. The checks weren't done in order—the disturbance—"

"Leave your excuses. Go and tell Cell Commander Call," snapped We Suffer.

"Yes'm."

The door slammed shut again. When they were alone, Camilla said levelly, "That went better than you deserved."

“You are saying to me it went *well*?” We Suffer’s voice jumped upward. “In my opinion, Lieutenant Crown has betrayed us all with a promptness and the eagerness you do not normally see outside cheap plays at the theatre. And I *believed* ... she swore a thousand times ... *she* made the sniper order, you see. The headshot was not intended for the Lyctor. She ordered the headshot for her if she was found out ... And I believed her. I have seen people call for the headshot before, and their eyes are not all like hers were. She had the conviction. Then to steal Deuterons from under our noses ... and to have lost Pyrrha Dve without the slightest right of recourse. I *knew* we should have chipped her. Now they ask for you by name! We are betrayed doubly.”

Nona was immediately annoyed. “Don’t say that about Pyrrha,” she said. “Pyrrha wouldn’t betray us.”

“Child, your opinion doesn’t—”

“I wouldn’t make her mad,” said Camilla calmly, and to Nona’s great shame, We Suffer hesitated. Into that hesitation Cam said: “Scan the frequency. Check for active bugs in the location.”

“Explain,” said We Suffer, after a pause. Nona thought We Suffer was being pretty slow.

“Pyrrha just *told* us that everything’s fine,” she said, “but I wish she’d picked me up from school instead of going to the barracks, because then none of this would have happened. Thank goodness she’s all right.”

After a moment’s continued staring, We Suffer took the little flip-top pad and the receiver and dialled a number. Nona caught snatches of the conversation: “Put it on the shortwave,” and “No questions. Do it,” but she had lost interest. She turned to Camilla, pushed the chair back, and joined her at the wall. Camilla budged up so there was room for her.

“I don’t feel well,” said Nona, regretting all the water.

Cam’s eyes flickered. “Take it easy.”

“I hate that shackle on your ankle,” said Nona, feeling absurdly tearful.

“You keep saying that. I don’t care. Come here.”

And Camilla did something she rarely did. She put her arm tightly around Nona so that Nona could feel all the bunched-up muscles of her shoulders and biceps, and she drew Nona close. Nona rested her head on Camilla’s shoulder and put her arms around her middle. They stood like that, Nona holding Camilla, Cam holding Nona. Camilla was warm and

strong and safe and all her bones felt good: the hollow of her shoulder, the hard, firm line and ridge below her neck.

“It’s been a long week,” said Camilla.

“Yeah,” said Nona. “I want to go home with you … I want Pyrrha. I want Palamedes.”

They held each other like that. Eventually, somewhere around the top of Nona’s head, Camilla cleared her throat and said—“You know that tantrum you had? Do you remember attacking the guards with that chair?”

“I’m really sorry.”

“No, I mean—your stance was good,” Camilla said slowly, as though trying to figure out how to say something. “Good grasp … two-handed.”

“Just like practise,” said Nona. “With the sword.”

Camilla said, “But we practise one-handed.”

Nona pulled back a little and looked up into the eyes that used to belong to Palamedes, long before she knew either of them: Camilla’s face, her steady gaze, the reassuring jumpiness of her body. Nona felt something strange. There was a hot trickle from her nose, and when Camilla wiped her face with her sleeve it was revealed to be a bright red streamlet of blood.

“I need to talk to Palamedes,” said Camilla lowly.

Before Nona could say that Palamedes had said the same thing, We Suffer thumped the table so hard that Nona jumped.

“There *is* another node!” she announced, in equal parts horror and excitement. “We still have contact! There is an inactive line! But where?”

“It’ll be on Judith,” said Camilla, untangling herself a little from Nona. “Give them time. I knew the moment she brought Deuteros out. Pyrrha confirmed it. Nona was right. She gave us codes.”

We Suffer said intently, “What did she tell you?”

Nona said, “She said to fall in—that it was safe—and I *think* she said she found a whole bunch of cigarettes.” We Suffer looked as though she did not understand, so she used a phrase she had often heard from the Angel: “I’m afraid that’s typical.”

We Suffer looked like she wanted to ignore this. “Can you truly trust Pyrrha Dve?”

Camilla, contemplative, cracked her neck and tried to lift the leg that had the shackle, but it beeped at her, so she put it down again.

“I’m ninety percent sure she’s putting on an act. Pyrrha Dve will do anything to get at that shuttle.”

We Suffer said slowly, "Then you always intended to run."

"No," said Camilla. "You have our hostages."

We Suffer seemed to think about this. There was a long pause. Then she said: "Very well. Perhaps the game is not lost ... but it is very precarious, much more so than I would like. All the little chips have been put in the middle of the table in everybody's reach. We must proceed with great caution."

"No," Camilla said again. "Quite the reverse, actually."

Nona looked up in surprise. We Suffer seemed startled too, this was such an un-Camilla thing to say. Camilla's mouth said, "Update, please," and Nona rushed out: "Pyrrha's in the barracks. Crown went in and we heard her over the audio. The other one, Crown's boyfriend I think, smashed the bug, but there's another bug on the Captain only we can't hear from it yet. Pyrrha's talking funny like she's trying not to sneeze, and she said there's something we need and we have to go and get it. But—oh, also, Crown's boyfriend said he wants everything, especially Camilla and someone called *Harrowhark Nonagesimus*, and we have to give it to him by sundown."

"Yes, she was always demanding," said Palamedes. "In point of fact that's not actually Crown's boyfriend, Nona, it's her sister, but I don't think anyone could blame you for getting confused." Nona felt a little surge of relief at the idea that Crown did not have a boyfriend. "Commander We Suffer, I don't have a lot of time, so forgive me for railroading—my name is Palamedes Sextus. I'm the Master Warden of the Sixth House."

We Suffer looked at him very, very hard.

"That is impossible," she said. "Palamedes Sextus died during the Canaan operation."

"But you saw me earlier," he pointed out. "When I pulled the bullet out of Nona. Or did you think that was Camilla? She's not an adept, Commander, she can't do that kind of thing."

"Then you are—what? Possessing her somehow? You cannot expect—"

"Look, it doesn't matter," said Palamedes. "If you prefer to think that Camilla's got a psychological condition and sometimes flips her entire affect for no obvious reason, please believe whatever you find most comforting. The point is that there are some things you don't know and I'm the one best placed to explain them. Listen. If we can get the body of

Gideon Nav—the key to the Locked Tomb—out of that barracks, will you give us the Sixth House?”

“For the key to the Locked Tomb,” We Suffer said slowly, “I will give you almost anything that is in my power to give.”

“Great, but that’s not an answer.” Palamedes leant Camilla’s body forward like he wanted to spring out of the chair. “The Sixth House Oversight Body. *Assuming* you can get them, which I realise is nontrivial, will you hand them over? Yes or no.”

We Suffer sighed. “Yes,” she said.

Palamedes sat back. “Right,” he said. “Let’s talk details. Commander, Ianthe Tridentarius’s hand is nowhere near as formidable as it seems. She’s contrived to land on the planet by puppeting a dead body—controlling it at long range. That protects her from necromantic madness, but it also puts enormous constraints on her abilities. She’s in many ways less powerful right now than a regular necromancer. And she’s holed up in that barracks with a handful of bodyguards … and Pyrrha Dve, whom you don’t trust, but I very much do.”

As he talked, We Suffer’s face had begun to warm with recognisable traces of interest. “You are saying that we have her in the corner,” she said.

“Yes. Sort of. But in the same corner you have the body of Gideon Nav. I’ve got no idea why the hell Ianthe brought it along—presumably some sort of grisly power show, or maybe she was hoping to bait out Harrowhark—but everyone in this room needs that body. It’s your way to carry out your mission, and it’s *our* way to save Nona.”

We Suffer glanced over at Nona, then back to Palamedes, and said: “The child is—sick, somehow?”

“I’m dying,” Nona put in cheerfully. Having admitted it once, the words seemed a little lighter every time she said them, so she was quite keen to say them at every opportunity.

“Take this on trust, but yes, Nona is very unwell, and I—we—think the only way to save her is to get her near the corpse of Gideon Nav. It’s all a bit … theoretical, still, but our goals very much align here.”

“You are saying this as if it makes things worse, when from my chair things are looking only better,” said We Suffer. She was starting to perk up, by We Suffer standards, which meant that her eyes had narrowed a bit. “The same building contains both Gideon Nav—whom I want in a bag—and a

Lyctor, now apparently neutered—whom I want in a box. And here *I* am, with a bag and a large number of boxes.”

Palamedes’s eyes flicked down to the watch on Camilla’s wrist. “No. There’s another thing. Lyctors can travel near-instantaneously across huge distances. I don’t know exactly what Ianthe can still manage, but there’s a chance that, if you spook her, she’ll use that method to get herself out of danger—and more important, to get *Gideon* out of danger. They’re not in a corner, Commander, they’re bobbing on the end of a string, and I have a nasty feeling that string can be jerked back at any time.”

“Then it is back to the cloak and the dagger. We must extract Nav quietly, before there can be any spooking of the Lyctor.”

“And *that’s* where you need us,” Palamedes concluded triumphantly. “With the best will in the world—how long will it take you to set up and stage some sort of commando raid on that barracks? More than twenty-four hours, I’d guess—”

“You underestimate us. Abandoning check and balance, Ctesiphon may be ready in six.”

“Okay, sure. Make it six. But we can do it in half an hour, allowing for traffic. Pyrrha’s already inside, and by the sound of it, Ianthe gave us a gift-wrapped excuse to send Camilla in as well. We can blindside Ianthe, put the body in a sack, and get you everything Commander Wake ever wanted. But you owe us the Sixth House. Shit, my time’s nearly up. Nona, tell Camilla everything, okay?”

“I want to go to the barracks too,” said Nona. “I can help.”

“That’s—well, we can talk about that,” he said. “Commander, please do the right thing. Blood of Eden went back on its word. Despite that, you can get the Tomb *and* your honour, and all you have to do is trust a couple of zombies.”

Then Camilla flopped forward a little in her seat, like she’d almost fallen asleep and caught herself at the last second. She sat up and looked at Nona.

“Palamedes told We Suffer everything about Ianthe and Lyctors,” Nona said.

“I don’t know why I bother,” said Camilla, to herself. Then she blinked several times and shook her head.

“This was not a shadow-play, was it?” said We Suffer. She looked ... peaceful, almost, as if she’d been worrying about whether something bad

would happen and then had been told it was definitely happening. “This ... possession. This spirit-swapping. It is a genuine occurrence.”

“Yes.”

“You are not some virtuoso actor. I spoke with Palamedes Sextus ... and Palamedes Sextus died at Canaan House.”

Camilla said heavily, “Yes.”

We Suffer said, “I cannot give up the location of the Sixth House. *Yet*,” she said, holding up one hand, as Camilla’s mouth hardened. “*Yet*. Hect, what you must understand about Blood of Eden is that we own things in common, we share responsibilities and resources in common. She could have moved these resources at will”—a head-tilt to the dusty portrait of the big redhead lady with the chilly eyes—“but I must make one move at a time. And above all, I must place the safety of ... Blood of Eden’s continuity ... even above the mission.”

Camilla said, “Tell me you know where the Oversight Body is.”

“I know enough, and more than Unjust Hope wants me to,” said We Suffer.

“Tell me they’re alive,” said Camilla.

“I think they are.”

Camilla leant forward a little in her chair. Her fringe fell in her eyes. Nona felt as though they should have known better, and moved haircut day ahead.

Camilla said, “I’ll try to get Gideon Nav’s body. You’ll give me the info.”

We Suffer’s expression softened a little. The fine lines around her eyes bunched and relaxed.

“I am grateful you are willing to deal. I say, Done.”

“I said *try*.”

“Palamedes Sextus thought you could.”

Camilla’s mouth quirked minutely. “We have no info. I don’t know the first thing about where Tridentarius is keeping it. I have no idea what she can do. We can’t hold off a Lyctor for long. I need intel.”

“We will assist in any way we can.”

“We’ll want the shuttle too.”

We Suffer did not miss a beat. “With stipulations.”

Camilla did not say anything, and Nona got more and more embarrassed by the silence, so she said: “My friend had stipulations once, but the teacher

put a cream on it.”

“Thank you, Nona,” said We Suffer, very kindly, and Nona felt pleased. Then she looked back to Camilla and said, “If you find a way off-world … I would like you to take a package with you.”

Camilla raised her eyebrows. “Where?”

“Anywhere, away from here,” said We Suffer.

“We don’t carry metaphors,” said Camilla. “You’ve asked too much already.”

We Suffer sat back in her seat. She was looking at a patch of wall a few inches above Camilla’s head.

“Let us suppose—” she began, and then there was a soft *pop* from the audio speaker and a sharp *clack* that made everyone jump. The *clack* was quickly followed by a heavier *clunk*, and a rustle, and then Pyrrha’s voice said from a distance—“She’s alive.”

And Crown’s voice said, closer—“Good … for you, I mean.”

Camilla had immediately jumped up, grimacing a little, and retrieved a sheet of paper and a pen. She pressed it up against the wall and started scribbling. Pyrrha’s voice, still dead and tense, said, “Threats?”

“I don’t know your game,” Crown was saying, “but I don’t trust you. I don’t trust you with Camilla … I don’t trust you with any of them. I don’t know *who* you’re for at the end of the day, and I never did. I knew that from the moment I saw you. I don’t think you’ve had a sensation in the last myriad. Did you have a family, once? Have you thought about them in the last hundred years … in the last *thousand*? ”

“No,” said Pyrrha. There was silence. Then Pyrrha said, “I don’t trust you either.”

Crown laughed. Even over the crackly audio, Nona could tell it was not one of Crown’s nicer laughs. It was still a lovely, musical, rich sound, but Crown said, a little hysterically: “Nobody should ever trust me. Oh, poor old Gideon … poor Nav. It’s disgusting, what you’re doing. Why are you dressing her up like a doll and wheeling her around? Who’s it for? The troops don’t buy it, surely?”

“Wouldn’t know,” said Pyrrha. “Ask the Saint of Awe.”

“Don’t call her that … it’s ridiculous. Who’d want to be the Saint of *Awe*? It sounds like something you say about a puppy or a baby … *Why* do you keep the corpse locked up? This was all a dreadful plan to lure out the

Ninth, wasn't it? I'm a little heartbroken, you know. I thought Ianthe had come for me, but it was only a mission, after all. A honey trap."

"Yes," Pyrrha said. Did her voice sound a bit closer now? "It's a trap."

"You know why it won't work."

"Doesn't matter. None can get at that corpse."

"Oh, go away ... stop sounding portentous and go away and stand guard over wherever they've stashed her ... and leave Judith to me. When the sedative wears off there's going to be hell to pay. She can do a real number on herself, you know. I'm the only one who can make sure she's secure."

Pyrrha said, "Nice try."

Crown made a petulant sound.

"Okay. Fine. Stay here and watch while I do it, then ... but I think you're being stupid. If it had been *me* I would have put Nav in a suitcase and put the suitcase in a cupboard and locked the cupboard door. She's a corpse. It's not like you need to let her out to use the bathroom."

"I put all the corpses in the morgue," said Pyrrha.

"What? What's that got to do with anything—"

"If I find you in here again with this necromancer, alone," said Pyrrha, "she will join them."

Another silence. Another burst of laughter from Crown. Then a third voice broke in, much more distant: "What's the joke?"

"Ianthe," said Crown in a hurry, "this ... *thing* won't let us help Captain Deuteros. She'll be waking up soon and the blue madness is really awful with her ... she's almost as bad as the necromancers downstairs."

"Corona, dear, I told him not to let you touch her."

"Ianthe, you're making me mad," said Crown pleasantly.

"And I sincerely love it ... I've missed that face. Oh, for God's sake, here..."

The voice had crossed over the room. There were more noises that Nona couldn't parse because they were so loud so suddenly. They were right up close to whatever was picking up the conversation, and both Camilla and We Suffer's faces went tight. But then Crown's voice said with sudden steel: "Don't do anything to her."

"It's a ward, my paranoid little pumpkin."

"A ward for what? I've never seen a ward like that."

"How you managed to fool anyone you were a necromancer I do not know," said the voice, "except that I do ... it was because of *me*. Think

back to class, Corona. I'm only going to dab here, and here and here..."

"Use her spit," said Crown, still firm as steel.

"Forgive me. She did pay attention in class. All right ... this is much closer than I ever wanted to get to Judith Deuterros's tongue, mind. As far as I know, this counts as sex on the Second. Yuck. There we go, it's with *her* material so it can't be deleterious to her body ... top marks, Coronabeth, I really am impressed. D'you remember that pop-eyed tutor asking you what would be a good substance for a regenerative ward and you kept making rude suggestions in the sweetest little voice?"

"Yes," said Crown, whose voice had softened just a little. "Marcus Trio, right?"

"God, you always remember these extras' names ... You're right. It *was* Trio. Don't worry, the ward's going to keep Deuterros unconscious ... for a little while. Come with me now, Corona. I want you and I to shut ourselves up and talk and talk and talk ... alone. You've hardly told me anything. That's a hint to make yourself scarce, by the way, Duty. God, how to refer to you? We're going to need to give you a nickname to differentiate. What did Harrowhark used to always call you? *Tortoise?* *Blorgus?*"

Pyrrha's voice was cool. "You cut slits in her brain."

Crown said, "You *pardon*?"

"Long story. Very funny. Come and hear it," said the third voice. "Let's lock this door ... I don't want Deuterros crashing the party, sweetheart."

Nona and We Suffer and Camilla were very silent for a while, but there was nothing after that. Camilla had written a whole page of scribbled nonsense. We Suffer said tightly, "Was that anything to you?"

Camilla didn't answer at first. She had taken her pen and was underlining things, her lips moving soundlessly as she repeated phrases to herself. Nona sat down in front of her, tired from listening and from holding her breath to help her concentrate. She put her cheek up against Cam's knee. Cam did not seem to notice or mind, until she looked down at Nona, and then at her paper, and she said— "What are Pyrrha's nicknames for you?"

"Kiddie," said Nona immediately. "Junior. Small Fry. Cutie Pie. Li'l Bits. Small Cam. Hairy Maclary."

"Keep going."

"Nums. No-No. Nope. None. Sweet Nons. Nona-Palona. The Big No."

"She should be arrested," murmured Camilla, then: "Got it."

We Suffer leant forward eagerly. “What have you got?”

“Nona,” said Camilla, putting the paper aside, “look at me.”

Nona, already so near to Camilla’s knee, was happy to raise her chin and have both of her hands taken—unusual!—by Camilla. Camilla squeezed her hands briefly, then paused, then put one of her hands to Nona’s forehead, and said: “You’re running a temperature.”

“Oh—I’m dying, that’s probably why,” said Nona. “Don’t worry though, I’ve got whole days if I don’t do anything stupid.”

Cam’s expression said that she found this both surprising and unfortunate. She said, “Stupid how?”

“It’s complicated.”

“Does Palamedes know?”

“Yes, I told him.”

“Okay,” said Camilla, with what Pyrrha always called her *I will talk to your mother later* face. Then— “Nona, Pyrrha thinks you’re the key to something we want.”

“The body.”

“Yes.” And: “You’re going to have to be brave.”

“Oh, *please*,” said Nona dismissively. “Just tell me what you need me to do.”

Camilla smiled at her. For that smile Nona would have lived, if she had had any say in the matter. She did not answer, but said to We Suffer: “How long until sundown?”

“You have over eight hours.”

“Can you get the Sixth House by then? Can you get me some materials right now?”

“As you promised me, so I promise you—I will devote every resource I have to the attempt. Tell me what you need.”

“A pair of scissors,” said Camilla. “Iris dye.” She looked at Nona’s button-up shirt, which was unbuttoned to show the T-shirt underneath. “And the blackest clothes you can find.”

JOHN 9:22

IN THE DREAM he finally took her to the front of the concrete wreck. It had taken him a while to clear the rubble away from the door. He seemed to want to do it by hand. After watching him for an hour, she helped. The rocks cut their fingers and strained their wrists, and the cuts knitted back up so quickly that they were in danger of healing their skin over the sharp edges of the jagged concrete chunks, of sucking slivers of glass into their hands. Sometimes they *did* suck glass in. Every few hours they had to pause so he could get rid of all the grit that was accumulating underneath their skins, stuff they'd healed over by accident.

When the doors were clear he took her into a room he said was the old reception area. The water had smashed it to bits, but he said it had been smashed to bits before. At some point the desk had been broken up and pushed in front of the door but then the door had burst open and flung piles of desk on either side of the room. There were puddles of foetid water, and bones—leftover bones, bones in clothes, bones with meat still clinging to them. She pointed out that some of the bones still had meat on them and he said to stop.

He wouldn't go any farther inside for a while. He stood there in the smelly hole-pocked rubbishy darkness and said— They made it clear that they'd arrest anyone who tried to join us. Floods of people came anyway. It felt like half the world. In reality it was, what, maybe a couple thousand? Coming out as a necromancer didn't exactly win me the popular vote, but the police were pushed to a fever pitch with anxiety. The international party line was that the problem had to get taken care of. Overseas relief troops were being flown in by the UN and our government didn't like it. They said it wasn't a war zone and they didn't want a blood bath and was it even legal. We took who we could behind the wall. I was extending that thing outward metre by metre, didn't need new cows by then because I could grow the original material, but that just freaked everyone out more. It even scared A—. He was all, *Matter doesn't play by these rules! You're doing bone parthenogenesis!* I told him his mum did bone parthenogenesis. A— told me he'd kill me one day.

He said, What I could do wasn't simply freaking out everyone outside the walls. We were running out of tests to run on me. I was getting stronger minute by minute. The last frontier I couldn't cross was the soul. M—'s nun

of all people was convinced this was the element I was missing, and that finding it—the last link between what made someone alive and what made someone dead—would bring us closer to God. She was right, but I'm not sure she was right in the way she meant.

He said, I was getting so frustrated trying to figure it out. The soul. Element X. I knew the only way I was going to get closer was to see more people die. I got my wish—a bunch of new faithful appeared outside the walls hoping to come in, and they refused to back off, and they exchanged fire with the crowd keeping watch outside, and five people died.

He said, And I saw something.

He said, I was too distracted to do anything with it because it was then that I found out fresh deaths were like—like crack cocaine. I'd never taken crack cocaine, but I thought that must've been what it felt like. It was like my brain was hyper-attuned to the moment of violent death. I could feel it like it was happening to me. Like it was injected into the bottom of my spine. I could see everything. I could feel everything.

He said, I took the energy from those five dead people and I dropped everyone with a gun in a kilometre radius. Stopped the hearts of the army guys, the rent-a-cops, the peacekeepers, the locals. There were over a hundred of them, but I didn't discriminate. A couple of them were in helicopters, but I didn't get the pilots, just the guys inside. Just, bam! And they were down. It was so easy. It was like I was dreaming. I could see them all like I was standing right there, from the heat of their bodies and the blood chewing through them. It took no effort and it took no time. It simply happened. And the more I did it the more I could see. I was on the verge of something insane.

He said, I came to when P— started shaking me. Talk about police abuse. She asked what the fuck was I doing. She was angry, one of the only times I'd seen her angry, one of the only times I'd seen her scared. Because I'd stopped the hearts of all those guys, right, and I hadn't started them again. I said I forgot. She said you've never forgotten before. I said I swear to God, I didn't know what I was doing. A bunch of the guys were her old coworkers—guys she'd gone through training with in Porirua, beer buddies. I kept saying sorry, I'm sorry, I freaked out, it was an accident, I don't know what happened, when they opened fire I lost my head. I said I made a mistake. She let it go eventually because the others were telling her to lay off. Just said, *Guys as careful as you shouldn't have accidents. If you've got*

a gun learn how to aim it. This is too big for fuckups now. Poor G— didn't know what to do. He never knew how to pick between me and P—.

He said, In the end we dragged in all the corpses. For the skeleton army, I said. And I'd stopped kidding.

For a while both of them stopped talking. He kicked at some of the old, wet rubble. A bad smell came out. He did not fix the bad smell.

She said, "Did you ever find out what happened? With your accident?"

He turned to her and he smiled a funny little smile. It only used one half of his mouth. In the dream his new eyes did not show happiness or unhappiness.

And he said, "Come on, love. Guys as careful as me don't have accidents."



22

FIVE HOURS LATER, NONA did not know herself. This was a good thing as she wasn't meant to be herself; she was only meant to turn her head and answer if she was called "Harrowhark," or "Nonagesimus," or "Ninth." Her complete inability to answer to "Harrowhark" or "Ninth" meant that Camilla had given up on anything other than "Nonagesimus," and a sigh of — "Remember not to smile."

"I won't smile at the time," Nona promised.

"Or turn to me when you're scared," said Camilla.

"I promise."

"Or nervous."

"Okay."

"Or turn to me as though I know anything or could assist you in any way," said Camilla.

If Nona hadn't known if she wanted to be redhead, princely, or necromantic, she wasn't at all sure she wanted to be Harrowhark Nonagesimus either. Cam had cut both of her braids off and sheared her almost to the bone, which made her look like Beautiful Ruby's mother's baby, but much less beautiful or intriguing. They had taken away her Salt Chip Fish Shop T-shirt and requisitioned a black button-up shirt and trousers off of the smallest Blood of Eden member they could find, and these had to be cinched around Nona's hips with clasps. Harrowhark Nonagesimus lived by rules. She had to stand up very straight, and never slouch, and never scratch if she had an itch, and not make any expressions that weren't a frown. And—

"Remember, Harrow," said Camilla, "you can't see. You're blind."

They had taken some iris dye and a little plastic applicator and changed Nona's eyes. She could still mostly see through the dye and the applicator—although it made everything fuzzy around the edges—but catching a

glimpse of herself in the mirror had nearly made her go into hysterics. The dye coated her nice yellow eyes with a thick, eggy film that made them grey and white. Everything about the whites looked cloudy and sticky. We Suffer of all people had done the application herself, rolling up her sleeves and being quite nice about it. Another Blood of Eden person in a mask had approached, but We Suffer had said, “Let me. I was always a dab hand at the application of camouflage,” and had not even been mean when Nona blinked.

We Suffer had said, leaning over Nona’s face and checking the position of the plastic films: “I am glad you did not tell us this. We had no idea there was any recourse from Varun the Eater’s effects, nor any Beast.”

“It’s pure theory,” Camilla said curtly. “Something’s being transmitted in the light spectrum. Absorption through the eyes is worst for the brain.”

This made Nona think of something. It tugged at the edges of her memory and stayed there, nagging.

“They would have shot everyone with cataracts,” said We Suffer.

“You already shot all the madmen,” said Camilla.

“Survival through caution,” said Our Lady of the Passion.

The Blood of Eden base became a hive of activity. The meeting room was a constant parade of Blood of Eden soldiers bringing materiel and reports and sandwiches and rubbish bags in and out of the door. At first there was the problem that nobody but We Suffer—and Pash!—was willing to be in the same room with Camilla and Nona unless both were shackled to the wall, and Nona had refused. Pash had lugged in chairs and boxes and a roll of what appeared to be wire fencing and made a kind of barricade that Nona was being treated behind. A couple of the Blood of Eden soldiers were willing to come in if Nona and Camilla were behind that, in their masks and with their guns.

“Fucking idiots,” said Pash. “Wrote down all their names. Psychological wrecks. This barricade’s nothing. A zombie could bust it in seconds. These guys ever apply for strike teams, *pow*, they can go whistle.”

“You misuse your power in an incredible fashion,” said We Suffer.

“Commander, I wouldn’t misbehave if you hadn’t given me the worst job of my life.”

“It was meant to be privilege enormous.”

“Not saying it’s not,” said Pash, “but it’s still the worst job of my life.”

Nona quite fancied Pash at this point. She had got to see her up close during all the preparations. She hadn't put her mask back on and she was wearing a thin-strapped top along with big trousers with heaps of pockets to put things in. She had wrangled her short dyed-blue hair behind a sweatband so that the longer bits didn't fall in her scarred eyebrows or green eyes, and every so often she scowled at Nona like she could cause Nona to melt away dead. Nona had kept giggling, and that got her told off because Harrowhark Nonagesimus didn't giggle.

At one point, Nona had been worried because Camilla had shut herself away in the corner to write backward-and-forward with Palamedes. Palamedes had focused nearly all his attention on writing, except at one point he'd looked Nona over and said, "Look at me like you've worked out how to kill me," and then, "More eyebrows," and then, "Good God, perfect. Do you know, I miss Harrow terribly." Then he'd gone back to his letter. When it was done, Camilla read it heaps and heaps and heaps of times, and then she had to lie down with her knees tucked up to her chest while breathing out through her nose. Nona came to lie down next to her.

She whispered, "Did you overdo it?"

"Yes," said Cam shortly, then: "It wears off. We're fine." Then: "Let's take a nap."

Nona had been going to ask Camilla lots and lots of questions, but at the idea that they would get to take a nap together she forgot all of them. She was tired herself and had been obliged to eat two sandwiches. When nobody was looking she had gone searching in We Suffer's little case of pens and things and found a whole bright pink eraser, and she had taken a huge bite out of it and that had made her feel better, but getting to sleep next to Camilla was the best of all.

When she had woken up the dye had all come out because she had scratched it off in her sleep and the plastic bits had peeled out too, so We Suffer had had to put them back in but didn't even complain about it. No one even forced her to tell them about her dream. When We Suffer was doing this, Camilla said—

"Keep to yes or no answers. Ianthe may try to talk to you. Refuse to answer."

"Rudely or nicely?"

"Rudely."

Nona felt she could do that.

“The rest of the time,” said Camilla, “you need to act like the Captain.”

Nona wanted to say, “You mean lying down?” but it did not seem the right time to try to be funny. Cam looked so serious. She said slowly, “Like I have the blue madness?”

“Yes—you’re well enough to stand and you know what’s going on, but you’re going to keep having fits of blue madness.”

“When?”

Camilla thought about it.

“Whenever you’re asked something difficult.”

This was Nona’s only task, except for being dressed as, pretending to be, and answering to the name of Harrowhark Nonagesimus. Cam had told her that her main job was to be a Distraction. Nona asked if Harrowhark Nonagesimus had been a Distraction in life, and Cam said it always was the quiet ones. It seemed as though Camilla’s part would be the more challenging. We Suffer and Cam spent a long time talking quietly over maps while Pash leant against one wall and pared her thumbnails with a knife; Nona’s heart throbbed romantically.

At last We Suffer made her eyebrows go together and said, “We will provide the getaway. The rest is up to you.”

Camilla said, “Your part?”

“Ctesiphon breached one of Merv Wing’s cells two hours ago,” said We Suffer. “The interrogation was underway within fifteen minutes. By the time we will have to answer for our intercell crimes, I will either be a conquering hero to whom everything is forgiven … or I will have to shoot myself. I will be disappointed if I must shoot myself, Hect. I have very often *not* had to shoot myself. Our Lady of the Passion will accompany you.”

Pash’s knife stopped and she said, “No, I won’t. I’m on duty.”

“Your duty and I have had a talk, and they would like to be present,” said We Suffer smoothly.

“They shouldn’t go anywhere near that super-zombie,” said Pash, incredibly startled. “Commander, fuck this, I’m taking them to the safe house the moment dusk hits.”

“I am not telling you this as any kind of command,” said We Suffer. “I am telling you *I* have been served my marching orders, and Aim says that Aim desires to oversee this operation from a place of safety next to their

lifeguard. You are the only lifeguard on duty, as Merv Wing is currently suffering unavoidable pangs courtesy of us.”

“I’m not going anywhere near that thing.”

“You have met a Lyctor before,” said We Suffer.

“I don’t mean the *Lyctor*.”

“It is only a body,” said We Suffer.

“Why do I detect your finger in this pie?”

“You are budging curiously close up to insubordination again,” said We Suffer.

“Commander, my ass is already grass if the council finds out about anything I did yesterday. I signed myself over to Ctesiphon when I was a kid. I’m with you. But the Messenger shouldn’t be near th—”

We Suffer said, “They may have a working shuttle, Pash. Quiet, please.”

Pash went quiet. We Suffer said, “Hect. You say you only need one good chance—an element of surprise—and the Lyctor will be out of the question?”

“In all likelihood, not permanently,” said Camilla.

“If not permanently—what happens after that?”

“We’re flying blind,” said Camilla.

We Suffer said, “A Lyctor out of the question impermanently is more than any of us has ever achieved—nearly any of us,” she amended. But then she sighed again, explosively, and said: “So long as the key is secure, I may get away with anything ... You are *certain*, one simple touch?”

“Yes.”

“Convenient,” said Pash, in a not-very-nice voice.

“I will not salute you both,” said We Suffer. “It is too much to ask of me. But if you do this thing, I will salute ... I will frankly pin my own medals on your fronts. Crack the sky, Troia cell.”

And then there they were in the truck—the same big truck that had picked up Hot Sauce and Nona, the one with the grille for running people over. Cam and she were at the back, and Pash was at the front, and Nona was startled to see the Angel—Aim—in the passenger seat, even though she had known she would be coming. It was strange to see her peering back through the mesh, looking like she always did, as though she were about to ask Nona for a cup of coffee.

“Where’s Noodle?” Nona blurted.

“In the footwell, poor old man.” The Angel cleared her throat and said, “I like the haircut, Nona.”

“I don’t,” said Nona a little wrathfully, a little shyly. She wasn’t quite sure where she stood with the Angel. “I liked my braids—my head feels strange when I move it.”

“Easy to brush though.”

Camilla said, “No names. Nonagesimus needs to concentrate.”

Nona tried to look as though she could concentrate and stared out of the window, her heart hammering, her palms greasy with sweat. It was not even that she was nervous, not really. Her body had been playing strange games with her ever since she had recovered from the last tantrum. She was beginning to feel like a floating balloon on a string, with a weight tied to the end—the balloon bobbing, the weight dragging behind. She was the balloon, and also the string, but she wasn’t sure she was still the weight. Looking had become quite difficult—she didn’t want to blink too much in case the white came out again—which made the buildings all one great smear, the crowds brightly coloured stick-people. People with their hands in their pockets standing around on the street corners—people walking, people thronging, people righting bins that had been knocked over, as though nothing were happening, as though her whole life really were nothing more than a balloon passing by overhead.

Pash drove them through the city scientifically, which meant that she constantly leant on the horn of the car and occasionally mounted the pavement until Camilla said—“Pull over. We’ll go the rest of the way on foot.”

“You’ll get shot.”

“We’re used to it.”

Pash said, “Zombie, you betray us, you fuck this up, you know we blow that barracks sky-high.”

“I’m relying on it,” said Camilla.

The Angel said quietly—“Will it really be so simple?”

“Yes,” said Camilla.

The car pulled to a stop. Pash got out of the front and slid the big side door open. Nona breathed in the nice smell of fresh air and plastic fumes and fire. There were people huddled on the street and in the buildings and on stoops, looking at them suspiciously, but nobody said or did anything.

Pash, with her fierce soldier's face and attractive eyes, stared at Nona and Camilla hatefully—and then at Cam.

"Chances?" she said shortly.

Cam said, "Fifty-fifty."

"What happens on the bad roll?"

"I die."

Camilla unbuckled Nona, and Nona and Camilla staggered out to stand beneath the blue-tinted sky. Nona, with her altered white gaze, saw everything obscured through fog; Camilla helped her to stand, and then she crossed over to the boot of the car and waited quietly for Pash to open it. Nona was surprised to see that the boot was filled with boxes from home, from the cupboard with the fake board in it. Camilla flipped open boxes and took out a belt, which she tied around her waist, and she secured a hook to the side of the belt. To this hook she reverently attached a long plain black scabbard, then a shorter plain black scabbard, and she tested the hilts in her hands. Cam sighed—really sighed!—as though she had gone to lie down in a hot bath.

The last thing Camilla did was reach into her pocket and take out the sunglasses, and she perched them on her nose.

Pash said, "Your people ... that obsession with swords."

"We are our swords," said Camilla. She shrugged on a crisscross halter of black plastic straps and clipped it tight across the front of her chest, and then she opened a box and took out two long, plain knives, the type of thing they used to chop up fish at the market. *All of Cam's secret knife stash*, Nona thought, numb with anticipation.

"Yeah, you're outdated, just like them," said Pash. "They're a weakness. A hand-me-down form of complete fucking insanity."

Camilla said, "You use machetes yourself."

"Wanted to get inside your heads," said Pash.

Camilla considered her, her clear grey eyes narrowing to slits in the sand and the sunshine.

"Did you?"

"Occasionally literally," said Pash.

Both of them fell silent. Nona twiddled her thumbs. Pash seemed to be the one pent-up with something she couldn't quite say, standing there with her arms folded, until she ground out—"Die quick, die cold, bring 'em with you."

There was a movement on Cam's mouth a little like her old smile. "That one yours?"

"No. Came down from someone much bigger than me," said Pash shortly. "Don't get me wrong, wizard slave. *You* die quick—stay dead—and don't get up again. But if you kill a guy who would've killed me, I have to give you that, right? I pulled a trigger next to you, that doesn't mean *nothing*. But it doesn't change who you are."

Camilla held out her hand. Pash shook her head.

"I'll touch you at the end of the world, but not before."

"Might be your last chance," said Cam.

Pash barked a laugh. "In my final minutes, Hect, I won't regret not shaking your hand."

"Nonagesimus," said Camilla, "let's go."

It was hard to see, but Cam had said not to reach for her or to try to hold her hand. Nona held herself and thought of Hot Sauce, so still and real and royal, so sure-footed, who walked like she never needed anyone. By the time they reached the broken-down, bombed-out, bullet-littered road that led to the barracks, Camilla murmured—"Keep going."

The gates to the barracks swung wide for them. They did not need to yell at anyone to open them up. Nona perceived a scurry of movement to the side, and then they were let into the wide-open courtyard where Crown's car still sat—its back doors wide open, its windows pockmarked with bullet holes from disappointed snipers. Nona had never seen the barracks before, not up close. It was a huge concrete building, square and tall, with long slits cut next to a second-storey porch for people to fire out of, and bars over the grand lead-lined windows. It was a building unlike any others in the city. It was big and dark and magnificent, but chipped and dirty and dented, like a lady in a burnt-up ballgown. Its ornate crenellations were so crumbled that it was hard to tell what their original pattern had been, and once brightly coloured flags had been unrolled down the sides of the windows in all kinds of colours, but they had mostly been torn off by the roots with only dull coloured floss left behind.

Nobody shot at Nona as she crossed the courtyard, and nobody shot at Camilla. Great double doors waited at the top of a short flight of stairs. Nona mounted those stairs, and the doors creaked slowly open, revealing cool wide blackness within—a floor of checkerboard black-and-white tiles,

peeling white walls, old brown stains that someone had tried to clean but not very successfully, and a terrible foul smell.

She wanted to let her nose wrinkle, but Harrowhark Nonagesimus did not seem the type to wrinkle her nose. Camilla said, "Fall back," and Nona fell behind her, sight softening into near-blindness as she followed Camilla down into that cool, foetid darkness.

They did not walk far. The first door on the left was open, and a strong white square of electric light fell on the tiles. The door was bracketed at either side with old broken piles of rubbish and chair and desk and wood. Camilla hesitated on the threshold, and Nona walked into the light first.

They had walked into a broad hall, floored with the same black-and-white checkerboard tiles. The walls and ceiling were carved with grand white friezes, and both sides of the room had more rubbish and detritus pushed up against them, as though a great wave had swept through the centre of the room and deposited the contents of a tip on either side. Paler squares lined each side of the windowless room where posters or paintings had probably been hung but were nowhere to be seen now. The room smelled strongly of the type of thing they used to clean the school toilets with. At the end of the room was a raised dais, the same raised dais that had been in the broadcast; and there on a plain and simple chair sat the Prince from the broadcast, and behind the Prince on the left, Pyrrha. On a chair to the right sat Crown.

Crown looked so beautiful that for a moment Nona focused on her to the exclusion of everything else. She had her big beautiful golden hair down around her shoulders in a profusion of smoothed, rippling curls, and she was wearing a lovely pale yellow slip that left her golden shoulders and throat bare. The dress was slit all the way up to the thigh and she wore soft black leather trousers beneath it, and sandals on her big shapely feet, and the usual rapier girdled her waist. She was so stunning that Nona was devoutly grateful she was in clean clothes and not her fish-market tee. Then her attention wandered past Crown, where Nona thought they had lined up lots and lots of statues; but they weren't statues at all. They were dozens and dozens and dozens of people in uniform, standing in two ranks pressed up very close to the wall. They were not breathing. Their eyes were wide open. They were dead. When the Prince stood from his chair, their shoulders—every single shoulder—twitched minutely.

In person the Prince was much shorter than she thought he would be, slimmer and slighter; especially next to Pyrrha, who stood like a stone column. She was standing so unlike Pyrrha that for a moment Nona was fooled: she was standing so ready, so waiting, so upright, so uncomfortable in her own skin, that it was like seeing a mirage. But moving broke the spell, at least for Nona. Pyrrha crossed and uncrossed her arms in a way so comfortably and familiarly *Pyrrha* that Nona couldn't mistake her.

Nona was impressed with the Prince's looks. She had never seen anybody from the television in real life before. Thanks to the eye stuff, Nona could stare all she liked and not feel rude: at the Prince with his waxen skin and his lovely jacket and his glossy hair and his bluish-coloured eyes, standing poised a bit like a snake would stand, if it had legs.

The Prince said—“You’re nearly a minute late, Harry.”



23

NONA CROSSED THE BLACK-AND-WHITE floor beneath the electric lights. There was a big red square carpet laid out in front of the dais, so she stopped at its threshold, and she got a less shortsighted look at Prince Ianthe Naberius. The Prince suddenly came down off the dais and walked toward her briskly, and Nona inadvertently took a step back. This stopped the Prince.

“Look at me,” she said.

Nona said and did nothing. She swallowed, but felt it was all right to swallow; Harrowhark probably swallowed, every so often.

The Prince said—“What you’ve done is ridiculous. It *can’t* work. That can’t be your handiwork … not that I’m not impressed. Sure, you look dreadful, but I’ve had to turn up in some old thing from last season.”

Crown made a small noise in the back of her throat. The Prince turned to her and said, a little accusingly, “You didn’t tell me *this* little detail. Has she been blinded this whole time?”

“I told you she was here,” said Corona. Her eyes were red-rimmed and her eyelashes looked a bit too sooty. “I left out the details. So what?”

“There is *so* much you are not telling me and it makes me *so* cross,” said the Prince. “You see, my emotions are being expressed through two nervous systems, so I really don’t know what to do with them. I’ve been in Babs’s body for nearly three whole days. I hate it … Come on, Harry. Don’t you have anything to say for yourself?”

“No,” said Nona.

“I don’t know why I asked. I knew the answer. Ah,” she said, as Camilla caught up and stood at Nona’s elbow. “The dullest prodigal son returns …

Those *aren't* your glasses, Hect, and I am amazed you are permitted to wear them.”

“Noted,” said Camilla.

“Well, never mind ... it's just curious, is all. How's it hanging, Hect? How's tricks? Getting used to life without your necromancer? Going to parties, self-actualising, reshaping your identity? I don't suppose you had much scope for it before.”

Crown said a little warily, “Ianthe, don't push it,” but Camilla said — “I don't care.”

“I love it when people don't care,” said Prince Ianthe warmly. “‘Don't care was made to care; don't care was hung.’ Really, why should you care? Who cares what *I* think? I'm only a Lyctor, a sacred fist and gesture holding the power of life and death, having ascended to the state your pompous moralising blowhard of a necromancer disdained ... whereas *you're* the big girl who made the Sixth House secede. Tell me, do they love you for that in Blood of Eden? You don't need to answer, I know how the field lies ... Corona's the beautiful and talented token, and you're the grim weirdo who never realised the price of revolution. And, I suppose, Harrow's nursemaid. Well, it must have been nice for you ... she *is* Sextus's tedious distaff counterpart. Oh, come on, Harry, really? No comeback?”

“No,” said Nona.

“Well, this isn't turning out how I wanted it to. I thought you and I would share a couple of saucy quips ... I thought you'd come in here demanding the body of your cavalier.”

This was dropped into the conversation like a bomb. Nona let her gaze fall straight forward, blindly, not reacting at all and not knowing how to. The room was silent.

In the end, Ianthe said: “Has that fire cooled? Have you changed your mind on that one? Is Camilla the better model? I consider Camilla Hect an obvious upgrade; I imagine she hardly makes one ass joke a day...”

She let this trail off. Nona kept saying nothing. The silence extended until Ianthe filled it again, but this time her voice had changed to flat impatience. “Well, Hect, thank *you* for coming. I suppose you know why you're here.”

Camilla said, “I don't play guessing games.”

“Surely you can make an exception.”

Crown said quickly, “Camilla, don’t bother. Everything’s going to be fine,” and Ianthe said pettishly, “Honey, stop telling people things are going to be fine. Things are, I promise you, *not* going to be fine. Things are, frankly, going to be *antonyms* of fine.”

“You want the Sixth House back,” said Camilla.

“Not I,” said Ianthe. “I’ve read Sixth House juvenile moral novels about very smart children who save the day with logic, and I think you can all go drown. No, *God* wants the Sixth House back … badly. It was unfortunate timing, you know. First, we hear that the Sixth House facility is missing. Teacher assumes it melted as result of a little domestic drama, which sets him off wallowing all over again. Then we find out it really is missing, not burned. Who knew the whole station was portable and built to propel itself wherever it wanted? Not a thing to feed the troops on, I must say. How’d you get it through a stele? With the weight of that thing, you’d never survive River displacement.”

“Five hundred and thirty-two obelisks,” said Camilla.

“Really? I’d guessed in the six hundred range.”

“Deleterious effects past five-fifty.”

“What’d you compensate with, purely out of curiosity?”

“Prefer not to say,” said Camilla.

“Boo to that,” said Ianthe Naberius. “Oh, well, I’ll have to ask one of the members of your Oversight Body … whichever one I pick for asking questions, that is. We really don’t need all of them.”

Nona’s eyes were beginning to itch. It was very hard not to rub them. She focused instead on Crown, who was saying in tones that sounded very reasonable and deliberate: “Ianthe, you can’t get away with killing off the entire governance and administration of the Sixth House.”

“Watch me.”

“No. I’ve told you before, if you’re already dealing with morale failure … you’re much better off leaving them in place. Put them under secret House arrest if you have to, come up with some incentive, get them to see reason. If you kill them, everyone will know…”

“*Nobody* will know,” said Ianthe. “Nobody knew that you and Deuterons and Hect didn’t die at Canaan House. But everyone knows about the day Dominicus flared. The Houses will celebrate any scrap of the Sixth they get back. Very tragic that all sixteen members of the Sixth House leadership died, but that’s how it is.”

“Don’t be a dolt. The Sixth are so clannish, so set on systems, you’ll never truly have them again—”

“It’s called the *boot*, my darling,” the Prince said patiently. “Did they teach you nothing in that terrorist cell of yours? It’s called applying the fucking boot, and I’m going to teach God all about it. He’s been very hands-off for the past myriad … lazy, frankly … and now he’s reaping what he’s sowed. It’s called *fear* … I have seen fear and understand it now, and I am going to become wonderfully versed in its transmission. I am the Saint of Awe. Hect, you’re smiling.”

Nona, astonished, turned to Camilla without thinking; she tilted her head back immediately, afraid of being caught out, but by then she had seen Camilla’s face. Camilla *was* smiling: an easy, loose little smile, as though she were listening to a story. She said, “Yes.”

“Share the joke with the rest of the class,” Ianthe demanded.

“Does God know why the Sixth House left?”

“I’m assuming some grisly moral reason that you’re about to impart,” said Ianthe, “and I want to warn you against sounding like a tract.”

“The Sixth House,” said Camilla, “doesn’t move for moral philosophy.”

Ianthe Naberius spread her hands wide in impatient supplication. “Then for *what*—so much panic and mess and drama for *what*—”

“Cassiopeia the First left us instructions years ago,” said Camilla. “We left for a Lyctor.”

For the first time, Prince Ianthe Naberius’s mouth dropped open, giving Nona a dim view of exquisitely white and even teeth. She flounced up the dais, threw herself back into her chair—the dead bodies jerked their left hips convulsively, all in unison, like the kind of dance move Born in the Morning thought he was good at but wasn’t—and then she flung over her shoulder to Pyrrha: “You all said she was dead!”

“She is,” said Pyrrha. “We watched her die.”

“Then *how*?” But Camilla and Pyrrha didn’t answer. The Prince passed one hand over her dead blue-and-brown-spattered eyes and said, “Oh my God. This is the last thing we need. If he hears that yet another one of his duplicitous sluts betrayed him, he’s never going to come back from it. He’s so fragile right now. Not even if we scourge Antioch and fly the First flag from the tallest tower.”

Pyrrha said, “Cassy played long games.”

“This is—this is *shitty*,” the Prince pronounced, sounding curiously young and woebegone and frustrated.

Crown threw herself out of her chair and went down on her knees in front of the Prince—wrapped her arms around the Prince’s legs and put her cheek on the dead right thigh. The Prince reached out and tangled one hand in her bright, springy curls, and sighed a cold, dead, defeated sigh. When Crown spoke her voice was low and tender, the lowest and tenderest voice Nona had ever heard: “Baby, it sounds awful.”

“Corona, it’s death.”

“So stick it. Stick all this and come home with me … throw this all in and come to *me*.”

Nona would have immediately thrown everything down and gone to live with Crown, but the Prince was not so moved. She laughed a little and pulled at a handful of curls, dropped them to watch them bounce, and said: “Don’t be ridiculous.”

But Crown did not relent. “Come to me. I need you … we’ve been apart for such a long time, Ianthe. They took you away from me. They took me away from you. Let’s let them hang and go off on our own. Drop Babs. I’ll take that shuttle and meet you wherever you want to meet me and we’ll go … we’ll start over.”

At the bottom of her voice, Prince Ianthe Naberius said—

“There is no starting over, Corona.”

“There is. I know there is,” Crown said eagerly.

“But we’re closer to the goal than ever before.”

“Of course we are, you perfect genius,” said Crown, lovingly, and she took the dead gloved fingers, and she kissed them.

Every single dead soldier’s fingers twitched. Prince Ianthe Naberius raised hers, an involuntary movement almost, and that waxen, handsome face was an expressionless mask, with only the cool grey eyeballs moving in their sockets.

Then Crown said quietly, “We can do good work, Ianthe. I know people who *need us*.”

For some reason that was what broke the spell. The hand fell, and Crown’s face with it. Prince Ianthe Naberius smiled, ruffled those deep burnished curls, and laughed in the coldest way that Nona had ever heard.

“‘People.’ Oh, darling, you’re always everyone else’s girl. Don’t worry … I fully intend for us to be *us*, together, now … but I have the

framework for it and you, my poor dummy, do not. Don't worry about anything. Seriously, you need to relax. And to moisturise. And to cut your hair," the Prince added critically, moving to stand. "I'm hagged as hell ... believe me, you'll know that when you see me ... but you need some serious triage before I can do anything with you. I doubt you even have a skincare routine right now."

She gently shook Crown off her legs. Crown sprawled back against the plain chair and closed her eyes as though something had hurt her. Prince Ianthe Naberius looked around the room, and remarked, "Where's the live ones, Duty? I see a sad dearth of breathers."

Pyrrha said, "Outside Deuteros's room, as discussed. They're ready."

"What, every single one?"

"No. Five. Others on standby." When the Prince turned to Pyrrha, Pyrrha added, "Didn't like moving the bodies."

"What? They need to harden up. We do much worse on the front."

"They were never on the front."

"Yes, that is becoming tragically obvious. We should have doubled troops here eight months ago. Well, hindsight is its own aptitude ... Corona, now *you're* laughing at me. This is not going down as a good day in my diary."

Corona was laughing. She said, in a sickly-sounding voice, "Listen to you, talking military."

"It's a bit disgusting, I know, but habit forms quickly ... habits do form quickly with me. Speaking of..."

Nona was not prepared for Prince Ianthe Naberius to step off the dais, stride lightly over the carpet, and stand in front of her again—she was too busy trying to will her eyes to stop streaming. She tried to step back again—she was too slow; the Prince caught her by the front of her shirt with one hard, gloved hand. Camilla turned her body toward them both, with her hands placed flat near her scabbards, but the Prince didn't seem to care.

"Harrow's never this quiet," said the Prince softly. "Nor this passive. What are you doing, Harry? What's your plan? Or, more worryingly ... what is *wrong* with you? What happened after Mercymorn stabbed you, Harrow, and where did you go? You never came back, and God said he thought you might be lost to us ... How are you surviving, Harrowhark the First? How can you stand beneath the light of Number Seven? Unless I am addressing..."

The fist tightened. *No* would not do; *Yes* was worse; Cam had told her to pretend to be the Captain. Nona decided to pretend to be the Captain, and opened her mouth, and screamed like the Captain had screamed.

She had never been good at coming up with conversations. Nona simply made her mouth go as the Captain's had gone—she could remember the movement, it was easy—and she screamed, “*Help! Help! Help!*” for want of anything better to say.

The scream moved through her chest and up her throat and out of her nose. When *she* let it out, it did not at all sound like when she had heard the Captain do it. The scream somehow seemed to take all the lining of her throat with it. It was like the scream was made of her insides—her insides dissolved and resolved themselves by coming out her lips as a vocal bomb. The electric light sizzled in its housing. The room went dark. Prince Ianthe Naberius dropped her and staggered back, and Nona completed her Captain impression by pitching forward, onto the carpet, facedown, practically senseless, aware of nothing but the scream—a noise that seemed to keep coming out of her nose and ears and mouth. She went away from herself briefly.

Nona came back, dimly aware of a yell, a huge scuffle, then movement. When she lifted her head off the carpet she was frightened that she had vomited, or bled, as her mouth and nose were streaming; but she hadn't coughed up anything except water.

The new situation was much worse than before she screamed. She could see Prince Ianthe Naberius's shiny knee-length boots, one of them at least. She was down on one knee, but had drawn a rapier from that scabbard at her side and the tip was pinked with blood. On the dais, Pyrrha's red, rangy body was down—*Pyrrha!*—on her hands and knees, trying feebly to rise. She had drawn a gun from somewhere—Pyrrha was good at drawing a gun from somewhere—but it had been knocked out of her hand and lay glittering in front of the plain chair. Crown was standing, flanked by two dead people but not being held by them. Camilla, on the other hand, had her arms pinned to her sides by fully four of the dead guards. She had drawn her knives, but her hands were forced outward in front of her, unable to move. The light glittered again, and Nona could see long, cold shadows on the carpet behind her, could feel the press of dead people moving. Some of the dead people had fallen down just like she had, lying jumbled-up on the tiles, and some of them were so close that Nona could see they had been

dead for a long time, and some of them had bits missing. Honesty and Hot Sauce and the others had been right. She didn't like this zombie stuff *at all*.

Nona thought that she had seriously bogged it.

"Okay," said the Prince, rising unsteadily to stand. "All right. Okay. Wow. Fine."

As she rose, some of the other dead bodies rose with her, much less gracefully; others kept still.

The Prince pointed at Nona. Before Nona could react, or struggle, she was seized from behind by strong arms. She tried to make her body fight but she was too dazed even to be angry. She kept snorting and sneezing and shivering, still trying to get the last bits of water out of her nose. One of the cold, gloved, bad-smelling hands took her jaw firmly, and squeezed it shut hard so that Nona could not even say "Yes" or "No."

"*You*," said the Prince, "are coming home to the Emperor tied and gagged, and not as a sex thing. *You*"—this was to Pyrrha—"prep to leave. This is over. I'm not wasting any more time here. Ready the shuttle to get us out in an hour. We have too much to lose. Duty, are you alive?"

Pyrrha said, with difficulty—"Yes." And: "Everyone with a necromantic body is down."

"Yes. I think my real body just threw up. We're going."

Pyrrha said, "The Sixth House—"

"Oh, fuck the Sixth House! Daddy can have you three safe and sound ... well, soundish ... and like it. I'm extracting my sister before anything else happens. *You*"—Corona had opened her mouth to protest—"you get what you wanted. Deuterros is coming with us. I can't make any promises, God is capricious about Edenites, but I'll take the rap, so don't whine. You can hand her to her father on a silver platter and maybe he'll stop moaning about supply lines. As for *you*..."

This was to Camilla. Nona dragged her attention to Camilla, and was upset; Camilla had a long, growing red stripe sliced through the soft grey material of her shirt, carved straight down her chest. It was bleeding freely. It did not look too deep, but it was long and nasty. Her dark glasses were trembling on her nose.

Camilla said, "Did you ever intend to emancipate the city? To resettle the people?"

"Absolutely not," said the Prince. "I only wanted the Sixth as a goodwill gift for God. The moment I got down here I knew *I* wasn't

staying. This trip was a fuckup start to finish, not my fault, and now I have to carry the entrails. There's a *Resurrection Beast* up there, Hect, don't know if you truly know what that is, but I'm not staying anywhere near. Honestly, the people here don't know how good they have it. We're dealing with some *shit* back on Antioch, and really, God can't spare the Hands. No, the Sixth isn't a priority. Which means ... I really don't need you. I don't want the details about Cassiopeia, and *God—doesn't—need—to—know.*"

Each last word was punctuated with a rise in volume, delivered like she had a mouthful of seeds and was spitting them out one by one. There was a pause afterward—Nona saw that Pyrrha had dragged herself to stand—Crown had advanced forward a step, and so had her bodyguards.

The Prince sighed. She said, "So you see, Hect, you're a bit superfluous, and you got inside my guard quicker than I liked. So here, I'll make you an offer ... I can kill you here, *or* I can take off your arms and your legs, pack you up for interrogation, and kill you later."

"Psychological," said Camilla. "Familiar."

"Yes. You remember, don't you? You intervened for me with Cytherea the First. You saved my remaining arm and my legs, I'll give you that ... but you weren't so quick off the mark that you saved my arm, so I admit a great, seething well of deferred and probably unjust anger toward you."

Camilla thought about it. "Sorry?" she said.

"Apology not accepted, asshole," said the Prince brightly. "So, what do you want? I can kill you now, or I can settle some old ghosts by disarming you ... and dislegging you."

Crown said, strangled—

"I will never, ever forgive you if you do this, Ianthe."

"*Traitors*, Corona, remember," said the Prince. "You're all traitors, so I've got to pick my battles. You're my sister, so you're my priority. You won't come without your Captain Deuterons ... I've given you one thing you wanted very badly and as per usual, you only want more. Someone's got to pay the piper, my dear, one way or another. Hect—you can't say I'm not being fair."

Camilla said, "You're consistent. I'll give you that."

"Yes. Thank you. Nice to be acknowledged. And now ... Head off, or arms and legs off and head off later? I don't mean to sway you, but I've done *arm off* and it ruined my day."

Camilla thought about it again. She thought about it for so long that Nona assumed, for a moment, that she was really considering these options.

"You challenged the Sixth for its keys," she said eventually. "You named the time. You backed down, but I had right of reply. We didn't consent. Or reject. I accept the challenge of the Third."

Prince Ianthe Naberius looked at her. The expression was—strange.

"That was a lifetime ago," she said. "Over a year."

"The challenge is valid."

"The prize isn't, not anymore. What are the stakes?"

"If I lose, I die," said Camilla. "If I win, I walk away."

"What—you and Harrow? I'll never accept."

"Not Harrow. Only me," said Camilla.

The Prince sounded quite interested and reasonable. "You can't kill me in this body, Hect, or even disable me. And you wouldn't just be fighting my cavalier ... you'd be fighting me *and* Babs. And you've got to know that between Naberius and me, there are no more weaknesses. I took those away ... and now he is perfect. You've no way of winning."

"No," said Camilla. And—

"I want to die on my feet."

"How beautiful and lovely a sentiment! Therefore, I refuse," said Prince Ianthe Naberius, much more impatiently. "Piss off, Hect ... an unlosable battle against a wounded swordswoman with *no* aptitude, *no* backup, who obviously wants to die? Not only is that fishy, but it's unoriginal. The outnumbered, overpowered hero against the narcissistic villain. Yuck. Just like a storybook. As poor old Augustine used to say, *It's impossible, and what's more, it's improbable. Kneel her.*"

The two uniformed soldier zombies knelt Camilla, roughly. They squeezed her wrists until, with an agonised hiss of breath, she dropped her daggers. They clattered softly on the carpet. Another zombie jerked her head back.

There was movement by the chairs. Ianthe Naberius jerked her head toward Pyrrha—some of the zombies were lurching toward her—but Pyrrha had reacted too late. Crown had Pyrrha's gun, and although one of the zombies was bear-hugging her around the middle, she had made the gun make that soft *ker-KLUNK* noise and pressed the barrel up into the soft part of her throat. Prince Ianthe Naberius cried out, "For the love of God, Corona—!"

“Let her go,” said Crown.

“The Captain or Camilla. Make up your mind, and take one. You know I can’t let them both go. Put the gun down, darling, I don’t want to hurt you getting it off you.”

“I wouldn’t get hurt. I’d just die,” said Crown, her bronzed throat working against the barrel. “You’re not all-powerful here. All you have are wards and puppets. I shoot, the bullet goes through my palate and into the brain, and then you’re the Crown Princess of Ida … like you never wanted.”

“Stop being so fucking dramatic—”

“*Staaahp being so fucking dramahhhtic,*” Crown mimicked, in a high-pitched voice.

“This isn’t the time, you dumb, hilarious bitch!”

“You don’t even know how to fix Naberius’s hair! He needs it done pompadour! He looks awful!”

“That’s your opposition? Seriously?”

“I’m going to shoot myself and you’re going to watch,” said Crown, with deep satisfaction. “Like when we were teens, but this time I’m going to really tie the rope … really drink the poison…”

“You didn’t then and you wouldn’t now—Corona. Coronabeth!” Crown had closed her eyes. Nona found that she had started to leak tears from sheer fright, and her eyes felt gritty and awful. The Prince said even more urgently, “I can’t let Hect live. You know I can’t. I can fast-talk for Deuterios … *your* life is safe…”

“Then duel her!” Crown cried, in obvious agony. “Duel her and give her what she wants! None of us ever could!”

“It’s not fair. You’re going to be mad at me when I kill her. It’s going to be a massacre.”

“I won’t. I swear I won’t. Just fight fair.”

“I’m a Lyctor, for fuck’s sake. You can’t get a fair fight between a flea and a flak cannon.”

“You watched her annihilate Lieutenant Dyas—”

“Little girls playing with sticks. If my league exploded, you wouldn’t hear the boom in their league for half a myriad. I’ve become three times the swordsman Babs ever was.”

Crown was pleading, “One fight … one last duel. *You* challenged her with Babs, you know, back on Canaan House. I didn’t do it. So follow

through, for me. You always do things for me, don't you? My heart's own ... *my necromancer*."

Prince Ianthe Naberius shuddered.

"Drop the gun and I'll do it."

Crown hesitated. The Prince stepped back from Camilla, one step, then another; Crown fumbled with the gun. It made a backward *KLUNK-ker*, and then she dropped it loudly to the tiles, where thankfully it did not go off.

Prince Ianthe Naberius's shoulders sagged forward. So did the shoulders of every zombie still standing, including the ones holding Nona. This loosened their grip a little bit, and she was able to breathe out. Her nose and eyes were leaking. The zombies clutching Corona dragged her back to her seat and sat her down, not gently at all, and they held her wrists flat to the arms of her chair. Another zombie took their booted foot and punted the gun to the other side of the room, where it skidded over the tiles and disappeared into a pile of rubbish. Nona watched Pyrrha's eyes follow it.

"Fine," the Prince said petulantly, "*fine*," and she turned around, and she stalked to the centre of the carpet.

"The time and place were named," she said, "now, and here. Corona. You arbitrate."

Nona watched Crown's throat work. There was a bright, dark red mark there, from how hard she had pushed the gun into her neck. She hesitated and said forlornly, "Parietal to calcaneus, I suppose. Full range, full right. Weapon restrictions limited, but blades only, no necromancy..."

"I'm made of necromancy. Necromancy literally moves my limbs," said the Prince.

"No active necromancy," amended Crown.

Camilla said, "What about me?"

"Well, you're beginning to see the problem, aren't you?" snapped Ianthe Naberius, slithering her long and shining sword free from its sheath. "You're fighting a dead man, you suicidal Sixth House pea-brain. You can't pink me or kill me. I leave this body when I *say* I leave. But I'll tell you what ... for expediency's sake ... here."

Prince Ianthe Naberius reached into her pocket. She removed a very pretty lavender handkerchief with a lace edging. She waved it at Camilla with an exaggerated *see this?* motion, then tucked it into her jacket, stuffing it deep down her shirt.

"Get that off me, and you can leave," she said.

Camilla said, "Can I keep it?"

"What—my *handkerchief*?"

"It's a nice handkerchief," said Camilla.

"You're not taking this seriously, are you," said the Prince.

The zombies advanced. Prince Ianthe Naberius said, "Close ranks. Nobody gets outside," and they made a square around the carpet. Nona found herself being dragged out, forced to watch the action from between the shoulders and heads of the dead soldiers. They had closed off the dais too. A few of them shuffled out of the way so that Crown, pinned to her chair, could see the action. Some of the dead men threw Camilla roughly down on the carpet. Her glasses were now very squiff on her nose, and she rearranged them more securely behind her ears. She mopped a little at her chest ... she was bleeding freely and messily ... and she picked up, from where they had fallen, her two long, plain, one-sided knives. Camilla shook out her arms like they were stiff, and she rolled her head from side to side, cheek passing across her chest, and she relaxed.

Nona wanted to scream again, but she was dizzy. Waves of something like nausea kept passing up and down the length of her head. She had blinked everything free from her eyes, so she was terribly worried the dye and plastic inserts had gone—certainly it was much easier to see. This was awful, like watching Beautiful Ruby do a flip trick off a bin without being able to filter it through your fingers to see whether he landed it or not.

The only fight that Nona had ever been invited to was between Hot Sauce and Honesty and some much bigger kids who didn't even go to school. She could barely remember why they were fighting—she had still been quite new and confused as to her role as their friend—but she had been told to go down the street after school, past the dairy, to the old athletics stadium, and Hot Sauce and Honesty would fight the others there. Nona had dithered and thought she ought to tell the nice lady teacher about it, but Honesty said if she did she would get scragged. She hadn't known yet what scragging was and was horribly afraid it was the thing Honesty did where he licked his finger and put that finger in your ear. When she had gotten to the fight she had been so nervous and excited that she was sweaty, but then Hot Sauce arrived and said the kids weren't going to show up because one of them had got hit by a car. Honesty had said, Oho, who did you pay, and Hot Sauce said, Nobody, because I drove the car. Everyone went home happy.

Crown said, “Parietal to calcaneus. No exceptions, no mercies. Challenger has right of execution; may the River show mercy on the challenger; defender has right of property. Point, blade, ricasso, offhand. Call.”

Cam called out, “Camilla the Sixth.”

“Ianthe the First,” said the Prince.

“Three paces back,” said Crown. “Turn … and begin.”

When Crown said, *Begin*, Nona expected Camilla and the Prince to rush at each other. They didn’t. They circled each other instead, like they were beginning a dance and weren’t fussed about starting any time soon. Camilla kept both of her hands tucked up close to her chest, knives high, as though she wanted to defend her head. The Prince’s sword was held forward, light and ready and slender, gleaming under the lightbulbs and red where its polished surface reflected the carpet. It seemed too pretty to do any harm.

Camilla said conversationally, “No offhand?”

“I didn’t mean to take anything to this planet I couldn’t replace,” said the Prince. “I shouldn’t have bothered. Why two knives?”

“Shock and awe,” said Camilla.

The Prince stepped forward and flickered in and out, extending somehow and then snapping back to the same place she’d been standing, like a shadow jumping up a wall. Camilla did a graceless little shrug-step to one side. The Prince cocked her head like a bird, then jabbed her sword down toward Camilla’s thigh, but Camilla had already moved one of her knives to meet it so the sword just went *ching*.

They circled another couple of steps. The Prince jabbed again; Camilla’s knife went *ching* again, up near her heart this time. The Prince exuded the dispassionate curiosity of a child poking a dead cat with a stick. Camilla was focused, like the Prince was the only thing she’d ever been interested in.

“If this is all some dreary attempt at stalling,” the Prince began, “I’m going to be annoyed—”

She tried another jab, this time with a hint of petulance. It went *clang*, not *ching*, because Camilla hit the Prince’s sword hard with one of her knives; the tip of the sword swung wide and Camilla lunged with the other knife aimed at the Prince’s belly. The Prince seemed to flex to the side, making her body flat, and simultaneously snapped her sword-hand inward so it caught Camilla in the side of the head. Camilla staggered and backed

hurriedly away as the sword-tip came slicing down past her shoulder. She kept stepping back until there were several paces between the two of them. Nona understood innately that this was not a good sign.

“You’ve got better,” said Camilla. “You’ve been training with someone who knew what they were doing.”

“You’ve gone to pieces,” said Prince Ianthe Naberius. “Oh me, oh my. The locals not much good for sparring?”

Nona squeezed her eyes shut and tried to control her breathing, tried to ignore the horrible glove clamped over her mouth. She wished she could get one good deep lungful of air that didn’t smell awful. She felt as though if she could stay calm, that would somehow make Camilla calm, and if Camilla could stay calm everything could still be okay. There was another *ching*, another *clang*, then a scuffle of steps on carpet and a huff of breath that sounded like Camilla’s. Nona’s eyes flicked open: they were still facing each other, closer now, Camilla crouching a little with her knives crossed, the Prince regarding her with that same dead-cat analytical gaze.

“No,” the Prince said, “no, this is a bore, I’m afraid … a disappointment all round. How like the Sixth to take the fun out of suicide.”

Camilla flipped the knife in her left hand so she was holding it backward, which under normal circumstances Nona would have found enormously exciting and cool. She slashed upward with the other knife, and as the Prince stepped back disdainfully, Camilla rose up to her full height and swung her right arm back over her shoulder like she was going to try to chop something in two pieces. The arm whipped forward: there was a blur of confused motion and a wet *thud* as a knife grew out of the chest of a dead soldier; the Prince had moved rapidly to the side so the knife didn’t hit her, and Camilla had ducked the same way and was driving inward and upward, left hand first, blade flashing back round into a normal grip as she came.

For a moment Nona could see the shape of it, like the shape a mouth made right before the sound came out. Camilla had put herself behind the Prince’s sword, so there was no way the Prince could get the blade round into a position where it could hit her; her hand was swinging round toward the small of the Prince’s back, and the knife-flip meant that her arm was going to end up longer than the Prince would be expecting. It wasn’t quite clear how Cam was going to get the handkerchief, but presumably she could think about that once the knife was safely stuck in the Prince’s body.

Then the Prince did some sort of complicated dance-step back, bringing her sword in close against her chest, and she kicked out with her front leg. Not like when Honesty tried to kick a tin can off a fence post, just a little sharp shove with her foot, down low, like she was scaring off a stray cat. Camilla's leg folded and her lunge collapsed in on itself: she dropped to her knees and started to roll backward, landing awkwardly on her left arm, still holding the knife. She braced one foot against the floor to push herself off and up, and the Prince simply turned to follow her motion, flicked the sword up, and struck decisively downward.

Nona stared. Camilla sprawled on the carpet. Her empty right hand was grasped round the Prince's right wrist; the Prince's right wrist turned into the Prince's right hand and then into the Prince's lovely thin sword, which ran all the way down into Camilla's belly. The point was somewhere quite far inside Camilla, and Nona couldn't see it anymore.

"You really don't know when to throw those things, do you," said the Prince a little sadly.

Camilla said, "Match to the Sixth."

Ianthe said, "*What?*" and then her eyes rolled backward in her head and she fell.



24

EVERY ZOMBIE SOLDIER IN the room crumpled up like Kevin had tipped them out of the soft play box onto the classroom floor. Nona fell with hers and suffered the incredibly disagreeable experience of two big, dead people landing very hard on top of her, and in no way becoming less heavy or less dead.

Nobody came to help her—everyone ran to Camilla. Nona didn't mind at all, except that she wanted to run to Camilla herself. Camilla had risen to her knees, the sword driven through her midsection like a kebab with just one thing on it, and she was grimly—solidly—holding the hilt steady, her dark hair sticking on her sweat-stained face. Crown had tumbled next to her in a handsome heap and was trying to hold the sword steady from the other end, with the presence of mind to wrap her hands in her dress so she didn't cut herself to ribbons. She kept saying, "Stay with me, Camilla. Stay with me," until Cam murmured, wetly and thickly—

"Not going anywhere."

"I'm holding you to that," said the body of Ianthe Naberius.

It sat up all of a sudden, like Nona getting woken up by the sponge, only all at once instead of in stages. It jackknifed in two. Pyrrha had rushed to retrieve her gun the moment all the soldiers started toppling like dolls; now she walked forward holding it in both hands and released the safety, her aim on Ianthe. Then she saw something that Nona couldn't. She lowered the gun. She said—

"You fucking legend."

Ianthe's body ignored her. It grasped the hilt of the blade that was buried in Camilla's body. Camilla did not look up, but only said, to Pyrrha:

“It’s missed the pelvis. Take it out.”

“It’s still a gut wound,” said Ianthe’s body. “You’ll be out of commission.”

Curiously, Cam kept addressing all her remarks sideways, as though she could not bear to look at or address the dead body. She said, “I’ll cope.”

Nona was horrified—she could not tear her eyes away—as Ianthe’s body grasped that hilt, supported itself on its knees, and pulled.

The body unsheathed the sword—all that slim metal came flashing out—Camilla’s chin snapped upward, then back, and she stared at the ceiling, and she did not make any more sound than an unready exhalation. The body flung the sword away—it spun over the tiles, splattering Cam’s blood as it went. Ianthe’s body tugged off its right glove, and Pyrrha dropped down on the other side, unfolding Cam’s shirt. Cam was really a mess now. Crown said, “I’ll get bandages,” and left Cam propped up by Pyrrha and Ianthe’s body.

Camilla didn’t like this. She said roughly, “Give me space. I’ve had worse.” Pyrrha moved away, wiping her hands on her trousers, but Ianthe’s body didn’t. It placed its arms over the flooding wound in Camilla’s side, and Cam’s chin lolled on her chest. Her breathing was wet—then still and quiet.

Ianthe’s body said—

“Won’t you look at me, Camilla Hect?”

Camilla murmured something that Nona could not hear. The body said, “I died, and you carried me. I gambled, and you covered my bet. You kept the faith, and were the instrument of both my vengeance and my grace. And now I have fought through time, and the River, and Ianthe the First—fought and bested Ianthe the First, and I hope I never fight her ever again … Will you not look at me now, Cam, and know me?”

Camilla raised her chin. She looked at the dead face. She said quietly—

“Yes, Warden, I will always know you.”

Their foreheads touched. Camilla reached out with her slippery hand, and Palamedes clasped it with Ianthe Naberius’s cold, gloveless one. Because both of their hands were very messy it made an embarrassing *squelch*, but neither of them appeared to notice or care. Nona had to look away.

She heard Palamedes say, in the voice of Ianthe Naberius—“Pyrrha, I can barely do anything. I’m only the hand in a sock puppet. I don’t think I

could unpick a single ward, and I can't do a damn thing for Cam's bleeding —thank God nothing's protruding.”

Cam said, without opening her eyes, “Don’t worry about me, Warden. I’ll walk it off.”

“Yes, thanks for your input,” said Palamedes pleasantly. “I’ve taken it under advisement and will add it to the next agenda.”

Camilla smiled that wonderful hot-metal smile that Nona had loved as long as she had been alive.

“Jackass,” she said.

“Don’t try anything thalergetic, Sextus,” Pyrrha said. “Focus on the big picture, we don’t need fine-tuning. All you need to do is read the body you’re in—it would have touched the corpse. Discounting this room, there shouldn’t be any other remains. Where’d she stash it?”

Palamedes took off the other glove on Ianthe Naberius’s dead hand. He blindly grasped about, trying not to dislodge Camilla, and put that hand on the tiles. He had to think about it, but then he said— “I can’t get fine details. There’s some kind of corpse stashed in a downstairs annex room. Two lefts will bring you to a corridor with Ianthe’s fingerprints all over it—then there’s remains, and that’s the only corpse sig for two hundred metres, which doesn’t really account for—”

“Sextus, I was in the military, that’s not fine details, it’s a full intelligence briefing,” said Pyrrha.

“Good. Go and get Gideon’s body. Take Nona—poor Nona, dig her out before she’s squashed any more.”

“Thanks,” said Nona.

“But you’re—”

“Pyrrha, we have no time. Ianthe’s still alive and kicking—up here.” Palamedes tapped his perfectly coiffed head. Crown had emerged from a side door clutching a hard-shell plastic box, crossing over to join them. When Palamedes said, “Alive,” she nearly dropped the box. Her expression was terrible.

Pyrrha said, “Sextus, that wasn’t wise.”

“Probably not,” said Palamedes. “But I fought Ianthe Tridentarius within an inch of our lives inside her head, for … for a long, long time. How long did it take out here?”

“Four, maybe five seconds,” said Crown, ashen-faced.

“Lucky you. To me, it was a little longer,” said Palamedes with a slight smile. “It would have been a disgrace to kill her … No, Cam, I mean it. I currently have more respect for Ianthe than she ever won from me previously. I’m going to hold her back as long as I can, but if I hold her for more than an hour I’ll be astonished. Your Highness, go and get Captain Deuterros, then meet us back here.”

Crown kept fingering the package of bandages. Her eyes were huge and purple and glimmering, like pools of violet water. She said quietly, “You are a good man, Sextus.”

“No. If I didn’t think it was safer to trap Ianthe than to let her retreat back to her body, out there in deep space somewhere, I’m not sure I *wouldn’t* have killed her … Just because I feel good about not killing her doesn’t mean I *wouldn’t* have. It wasn’t mercy, Princess.”

“I don’t care. Thank you—thank you for not … not hurting her. Let me help Cam, I know how to dress a field injury…”

“I’m without resources,” said Palamedes with dignity, “but I think I can still bandage my cavalier’s abdominal wound. Can you carry Judith Deuterros?”

“Of course, but the guards—”

“Unconscious or locked up,” said Pyrrha. “I clonked half of them on the head, and the other ones are in the mess. Deuterros’s door should be unlocked, but don’t move her without sedating her. Nona—you’re with me.”

Crown dropped the scraps of her dress. When she looked at Palamedes, Nona was suddenly struck by the idea that Crown wasn’t happy at all, or grateful—and yet she obviously was, hungrily and thirstily grateful; she put Nona in mind of Noodle, suddenly, wanting to go out but wanting to stay in the basket, wanting to run around outside but wanting to come back. Then Crown deflated like a beautiful balloon and fled.

Nona felt wobbly and unreal. Her body was able to walk and move and hold itself upright, but she still felt very light-headed, disconnected from herself. As Pyrrha steered her out of the room, Nona kept looking back over her shoulder at Camilla and the body Palamedes was inhabiting, still kneeling on the floor, bloody and bent. Palamedes looked as though he were talking quietly to her—but Pyrrha closed the door behind them.

Once they were out of the room, Pyrrha took Nona by the shoulders and said, “You all right?”

Nona's eyes kept crossing and uncrossing. "I'm not sure," she confessed. "I feel strange."

"Did those corpses falling on you hit a nerve?"

"No, I only feel funny."

"You want me to pinch you, kiddie?"

That was so banal and unwelcome that Nona shook back into her body out of pure disgust.

"No. I don't want to be pinched. Why do you always offer to pinch me? I never want to be pinched."

"Just proving I'm me. Look at you—not sure I like the couture. Who did your eyes? It's all coming off. Here, use my sleeve, not yours." Nona obligingly used the sleeve, and quite a lot of white, gummy stuff came off on it. "Smart way of hiding it though. I should've thought of that. Good to go?"

"I can do it."

"Okay. Shake a leg," said Pyrrha.

The barracks had not got any less foetid or dark—in fact, Nona balked at the dark flight of stairs as they smelled so bad, and had to hold her breath as Pyrrha escorted her down—and there was so much rubbish, so many strange things laid out in strange places, that at one point they had to pick their way over piles and piles of boxes in order to pass. "This place is a maze. I never would have found her myself," said Pyrrha, lifting Nona over a busted-up bedframe.

"Pyrrha—you're not *really* a Lyctor again, are you? You're you, not your other self?"

"No. I was only pretending, like you were only pretending. You can check my eyes," said Pyrrha.

"I hope you don't mind being the last one to know," said Nona, dusting herself off a bit self-consciously, "but I'm dying."

This fell completely flat.

"Course you are," said Pyrrha.

"I mean it, Pyrrha."

"Yeah. I suspected you were, though," Pyrrha said cheerfully. "I didn't make a big deal out of it. We've all got our secrets ... but the soul longs for the body, Nona. Even a fucked-up soul ... even a soul that's been changed forever. It takes a *lot* to acclimate a soul to a body it wasn't born in, if that original body's around for it to miss."

“But you’re not sad,” said Nona.

“Of course I’m not sad. You’re not dying on my watch. Kiddie, when you were yelling...”

Nona was still a little embarrassed about that.

“I took Cam a bit too literally.”

Pyrrha opened her mouth to say something, but then they rounded the second left and she shut her mouth.

The hallway corridors were made of good white interior bricks braced with concrete and metal struts—lots of buildings were; the white stone kept out the heat—but one short section of this particular corridor had been decorated in delicate blood filigree and squiggles: not only the walls, but the floor and even the ceiling. The squiggles were thickest in a square on one wall, like someone had wanted to mark off a door. Pyrrha glanced at the wall, and then she barked out a laugh.

“Is that writing?” said Nona.

“Sort of. It’s a ward—a mark meant to keep us out. Necromancy. *That* bit’s writing though, House.”

“What’s it say?”

Pyrrha pointed. “*Don’t go through here.*” And pointed again. “*I mean it, idiot. You will disintegrate.* A bit obvious ... everything else was good and paranoid. These things are all over the barracks—her bedroom, the shipyard, the downstairs tunnel exits. Some of ‘em were blinds though. She never trusted me fully. The corpse must be down here.”

“Okay. What’s the trap?”

Pyrrha took up a piece of trash from a box that had half-tumbled over—a piece of broken pipe—and tossed it, underhand, toward the door.

It shivered into bits before Nona’s eyes, and a fine patter of dust came out the other end and dribbled on the corridor floor.

“It’s a shit version of Mercymorn’s old entropy trap,” said Pyrrha. “Not half as good. Done entirely through wards—brilliant—but entirely reliant on wards—fucking ridiculous. Good at keeping people out though ... and almost impossible for anyone but another Lyctor to break. See what it’s made out of? That’s blood. Blood wards age, and they burn out if you make them work too hard ... And I’m sorry, No-No, but that’s where you come in.”

Nona didn’t understand. “If you want us to stand here chucking stuff at it we’ll be here all day.”

“Nona,” said Pyrrha, “your regeneration ability is a million times better than any normal Lyctor’s. None of them could regrow the way you do. I’m not sure you’ve *got* a limit … not with the kind of damage you’ve come back from. So I’m really sorry … we’re going to have to use you, and it’s going to hurt like fuck. I wouldn’t ask you to do this if it were not literally the most important thing in the world.”

Nona found herself giving a fluttery sigh. She felt a little bit envious, and a little bit weary. “What’s so special about this body we’re going after, anyway?”

“In general? She’s the key to a door that’s been kept locked for ten thousand years,” said Pyrrha. “Personally? She’s the last thing I have left of a woman I tried to trick into loving me, and got played myself. And for you? She might be you, kiddie.”

Nona found herself sighing again, like her body wanted to let out all its sound at once. One of her ears felt slightly blocked, and when she tilted her head and blew her nose and pulled at her earlobe a little trickle of water came out.

“What if I don’t like me?” she said.

But Pyrrha didn’t seem to understand.

“Well, you’ll probably start visiting clubs and trying to hit on the dancers, and going from relationship to relationship not really being able to commit.”

Nona was severe.

“You talk too much, Pyrrha.”

For a moment she could not decide what to put in—she considered the foot, on the understanding that the foot was the furthest away from the head so maybe it would take the pain longer to travel—but that would have messed with her shoe. Shoes never grew back. And she had never liked her hands. Nona reached out with her left one, trembling a little—she never minded pain as it happened, but she was a terrible baby *anticipating*—until she gasped, “Pyrrha, help, I can’t, I’m frightened,” and Pyrrha took mercy on her and grasped her by the elbow. She thrust Nona’s arm forward. The tips of her fingers breached some invisible barrier, and they dissolved.

Something awful was happening where her fingers met the barrier. The tops of her fingertips became a red and grey mist. A fine spray splattered back on her hand or became tiny white drops of steam when they hit the barrier and then those drops of steam became nothing. Pyrrha was holding

her still as her hand burned apart, her hand felt sick, her hand felt like throwing up. It was like the lurching pain of having a tooth knocked out, if it was about one hundred teeth and they were all at the ends of your hands.

But the worst part was what her hand was doing, because her hand freaked out. Great gouts of skin were suddenly travelling up where they shouldn't have been, looking like red-and-brown-and-white lumps of wax—soft ferny sprouts of what she realised was her own bone were poking and trembling out of that flesh, spiralling forward as though trying to find something to grasp on to, as though they could regrow her fingers in a safer place. That was what frightened her, watching that flesh resolve, watching that flesh resolve into *extra fingers*. Out of the wax another hand sprouted, reaching back toward her, as though it were a mirror—and Nona screamed, sickened, and thrust her hand in to the wrist to get rid of it.

With a retort like a million tiny fireworks the red marks covering the corridor exploded. One went, then the next, then the rest all at once—*POP*—*POP-POP-POP-POP*, like Honesty had bought them cheap at the dairy and thrown a match in the box. There was a noise like a car backfiring, the air shimmered, and a fine bloody powder rained down from the ceiling.

Nona dropped to her haunches and clutched her hand between her thighs, afraid to look at it. Her heart was beating so hard that she was worried it would burst. Her gaze lurched drunkenly, as though her eyes were independent of herself. For a moment she wanted to yell, *Help*, like she had done before, pretending to be the Captain. She wanted to shout. She wanted to be listened to. She wished the barrier had taken her hands. She wished she had thrust herself into it—become that big seething mass of flesh and meat and tendrils—ruined her body, just *melted* it; come back messed up, so that nobody could want her body but her, so that it would be hers and nobody else's.

This was a horrible thing to think. Nona hated herself immediately and fervently.

Pyrrha had dropped down beside her—had gathered her in her big dark wiry arms, smelling ferally like sweat, her cheeks a little rough from the bristles where she hadn't shaved. Her throat was scratchy and nice, and Nona buried her face in it and made little *ah, ah, ah* sounds until she felt better.

Pyrrha had reached down and seized her hand—was saying, “You’re fine. There’s nothing wrong. Look.” But she couldn’t make Nona look for

fully twenty seconds. When Nona looked at last it *was* fine—her hand was perfectly normal—except the fingernails had grown way too long, massively long, so that one of her hands looked like a claw. Pyrrha immediately took out her pocketknife and shaved them down for her, a bit ragged, but much better.

“Brave girl. Sorry, Nona, no time to catch our breath. Go start opening doors,” she said. “I’m going to clean this up in case any of the wards are partially intact. Don’t want the body losing chunks on the way out. She’s going to be hell to carry.”

Nona’s head swam again briefly, but she nodded. She set off down the corridor. She opened the first door on the left, but it was only a cupboard with some brooms. She jogged to the next one, a heavier door, with a key still in the lock. She turned the key, pushed the handle, and stood on the threshold.

It was just an ordinary bedroom. It didn’t have any windows—they were probably at least a floor underground—and it was only lit by a single lightbulb, so it was pretty dim. It looked wide: there was room for the whole bed, and would have been room for another if you pushed it up against the wall. And stretched out on the bed—nearly too big for it—was the girl from her dream: the girl who might be her.

Nona tiptoed in, feeling absurdly that it was wrong to make noise, and peered at the body. She had not seen many dead bodies close up. The long corpse was dressed beautifully in white: white trousers, brown boots that looked nearly new, a white jacket with silver frogging and toggles. The jacket had been unbuttoned some. The girl looked like she had gone to sleep with her shoes on after a long, tiring day: her face had that half-past-a-dream expression. Her red hair was even redder in the dark, brighter than Pyrrha’s and redder than Honesty’s, and the little wreath of bones and blossoms was askew over her temples. She had a decided chin and a nose that was the complete opposite of Nona’s nose, one that put her in mind of those big poison desert cats Born in the Morning was crazy about.

Nona wasn’t at all sure she was beautiful. The face wasn’t bad. It made her think of something, but nothing bad really, only dead. Her skin was very much dead-person skin, ashen and tinted the wrong colour around the nostrils and the mouth. But even if she hadn’t been dead, Nona was critical. Her eyelashes were very dark, but short and curly, whereas Nona thought all eyelashes should be long and straight (her own eyelashes were long and

straight). The corpse had too much mouth and a dimple (nobody in her home had a dimple). You could not, at least, see the veins in her eyelids, which were heavy and cold and deep-set. But Nona thought it was going to be a shame to go from being so lovely as she was to being so—*redheaded*.

Nona put her hand close to the corpse's cold hand, very tentatively, expecting something to happen, once she touched it; that she would suddenly melt away, or pop out of existence like a soap bubble. What happened made her think much better of the corpse. It opened its eyes—and its eyes were yellow, the gold of the old sky, like hers only much foggier. Those were beautiful: Nona had always adored her eyes, and here they were again, on the corpse, only partially spoiled for being dead. They looked like treasure at night.

The corpse looked at her in such mute, helpless appeal—spoke to her in her first language—that Nona did not have to think about what she did next. She leant down and laid a kiss right on that cool, dead, crooked mouth.

She kissed her just the once. The corpse's mouth was soft and rough and cold, and did not respond to Nona's mouth, but a tremble went through the upper body. Nona was surprised and relieved to find that the corpse girl tasted like toothpaste.

At the tremble, Nona pulled back, self-conscious. The expression on the corpse's face could not have been more rigid with shock and disbelief. She found herself saying, a little defensively—

“You looked like you wanted to be kissed, that's all.”

A shadow crossed the doorway, blocking out quite a lot of the outside light. Nona turned around and said, “Pyrrha, I'm really sorry, I messed up,” but Pyrrha was staring at the corpse girl as though she had seen a ghost, or maybe two.

When Nona turned to the girl, she was taken aback: the corpse's eyes were closed and she lay completely still on the bed—arms loose, limbs heavy and untidy, the very picture of deadness.

Pyrrha crossed over, stared down at the barely illuminated corpse, and said—“Yeah, that's Gideon Nav, all right ... I'd know her anywhere. I wouldn't need to be told. Talk about being the mother's daughter.”

Nona was puzzled. “Who?”

“You've seen her photo,” said Pyrrha, and she reached over—hovered a hand quite close to Gideon's face—and then pulled it back, apparently having thought better of it. “Blood of Eden mass-manufactured 'em ...

wasn't even a good shot. But this kid's the spit of her ... nearly. She's *him* in the eyes and brows ... amazed Mercymorn didn't see it. But she wasn't looking for it, I guess."

"Her mother was the woman who broke your heart," guessed Nona.

"Yes," said Pyrrha. And: "Let's not get too cute about it, though. My best friend and I punched her out an airlock. Apart from that, I was ready to commit."

For some reason, Nona felt vaguely hurt and envious. *She* didn't have a mother for Pyrrha to have punched out an airlock. Nor had Pyrrha ever looked at her the way she now looked at the dead corpse with red hair—a kind of soft, guarded want; a hunger—a living desire to take the corpse in her arms like Kevin's wanting desire with his dolls. To own, to squeeze, to cosset and destroy.

She remembered, and said hastily, before Pyrrha could say anything too personal: "Pyrrha, she can hear you, I think she's awake."

Pyrrha looked at Nona. She looked at the dead body. She put her hand on the dead body's forehead—worked her fingers into the funny little scarf at her neck—and the corpse lay as inert and as dead as it had when Nona walked into the room. Nona said, "I mean it ... I woke her up ... I, uh, I kissed her."

Now Pyrrha looked at Nona. The look on her face was nothing but a very sad, rough kind of amusement, less desire than a kind of understanding that Nona suddenly didn't want. Pyrrha touched Nona briefly on the cheek and said: "Why?"

Nona found her cheeks growing hot.

"I just did, no reason."

"Nothing happened? What'd it feel like?"

"That's private, thank you," said Nona primly.

"Huh," said Pyrrha. "Well, you're not in a heap on the floor, so we can rule out pneumatic reversion." She scrubbed a hand across her eyes briefly. "There was a bad option where your soul snapped straight into her body, leaving your body stuck with no soul at all, and that would have been a shit time all round."

"Would I have died?" Nona asked, interested.

"You'd have tried to," said Pyrrha. "The body needs thalergy *and* a soul to keep the lights on. Anastasia's tripod principle. Body plus thalergy, but

no soul, is basically a very weird vegetable ... after a while it gives up and shuts down.”

“She looked at me, Pyrrha,” said Nona, and to demonstrate, reached over and prodded the body hard, in the ribs. The body did not respond.

“Did you catch her eye colour?”

“Gold—like mine, but cloudy.”

“Good. Ianthe couldn’t transfer,” said Pyrrha. “God, that little shit shouldn’t be running around in this day and age ... would’ve taken Cassiopeia *and* Cyrus *and* Ulysses *and* Cytherea just to keep her in hand. She’s good and she’s imaginative and she’s very frightening, and now there’s no one to stop her. Why the hell did John let her bring the kid’s body? He must have known that Blood of Eden would go apeshit the moment they saw it. Well ... heave-ho.”

She squatted down, then heaved the corpse over her shoulder; the girl’s head hung down over Pyrrha’s back, and her legs hung across Pyrrha’s front. Nona saw that the girl was wearing a beautiful jewelled scabbard on her hip, with a lovely sword hilt right above it, all in a sort of pearly white colour. There was something clipped to her other hip that she couldn’t quite make out, also pearl-white, a jumble of clear white blades and plate rivets. Everything she was wearing *was* lovely, as lovely as Ianthe Naberius’s clothes had been if not lovelier. But the pristine whiteness of her uniform made her look that much more dead, except for the hair.

Pyrrha grunted and said, “Fuck me, she’s heavy. It’s all this crappy First House tat. I don’t know what the fuck John’s thinking, dressing everyone to look like the military wing of disco.”

Nona was beginning to doubt herself furiously. “Pyrrha, I’m still not sure...”

“Tell Sextus and Hect once we’re upstairs,” said Pyrrha. “Also, hey—I have half a protein bar in my pocket. I want you to eat that. I bet you haven’t had anything in hours. Cam can’t make you eat like I can, right?”

Nona subsided into glum silence. She stared at the head of the corpse prince as Pyrrha carefully walked her out of the doorway—hoping briefly that Pyrrha would clonk the corpse’s head so that the corpse maybe said, “Ow”—but Pyrrha manoeuvred her smoothly. The eyes kept shut—Nona trailed behind watchfully the whole time, but they kept shut—and even when Nona caught up to Pyrrha and gently touched that cool dark corpse hand, nothing happened.

As they passed through the broken wards of the corridor, now completely scuffed out, Nona found herself staggering. Pyrrha said, “You okay? Can you keep up just a little longer?” and she said, “Yes,” and tried to keep up. They took two rights, and thankfully Pyrrha didn’t ask for help as she heaved the corpse prince up the stairs.

Crown was waiting for them in the corridor. When she saw the body, her lovely violet eyes widened, and her hand went reflexively to the black-hilted sword at her hip, and she said—“It *is* her. Poor Gideon...”

“Don’t get your hopes up. It might be a doll copy,” warned Pyrrha. “I can’t see why John would ever let her corpse out into the world, even with a Lyctor to guard it. She’s a walking suicide note.”

Crown had been tentative, but she suddenly surged forward and cradled that very red head in her hands, smoothing her fingers through the hair, playing with one of the little winking leaves that scintillated in the wreath. She said, wondering, “But she looks exactly like she did ... apart from the outfit. Ianthe couldn’t have done the outfit. She’s more minimalist than that.”

Her fingers caressed the ashen, upside-down cheek. “Poor Ninth ... imagine the hopes and fears of the whole universe contained in one dead little red star.”

“If that’s poetry, don’t quit your day job,” said Pyrrha. “What’s the status of the shuttle?”

Crown dropped her hand from the corpse’s hair and grimaced. “You’re carrying the only good news. Palamedes says the shuttle’s fucked ... his words exactly, he got surprisingly filthy.”

“What? How? Is it warded?”

“No, but the fuel is,” confessed Corona, “and that stuff’s not only combustible, Dve ... it’s pyrophoric. If we mess around with it too much, this whole barracks is going to go up and set light to most of the quarter.”

Nona said feebly, “I could probably—”

“No,” said Pyrrha.

“Camilla says forget the shuttle for now, we can come back for it—she wants We Suffer to secure the Sixth House and we’ll take it from there. I left them with the Captain, in the main hall,” Crown added. Her forehead crumpled into its worry pucker again and she said, “That’s the other bad news—Judith’s acting up. Her sedative’s taking forever to kick in. The

Warden's working on her, but he says he can't do much. Why could Ianthe do necromancy through Babs's corpse but Palamedes can't?"

"Just answered your own question. Ianthe's a Lyctor working through the corpse of her own cavalier—that body's hers to make a revenant out of," said Pyrrha. "He won't be able to do anything until he's back in his cavalier, and at this rate..."

She cut herself off, and said, "Help Nona. She's worked too hard."

Nona was about to protest, but then Crown turned around and offered her back for a piggyback. Nona couldn't resist, even if it was purely a kiddie thing to do; she let Crown pull her legs around her hips and heave her up onto her back, arms twined around Crown's neck, with Crown saying in her gallant, flirtatious way, "Now I have you, my pretty maid," and making Nona laugh, if weakly.

Past the big, broad corridor leading to the open front doors, night had fallen profoundly on the city. The honks and nice fresh car-flavoured night air came surging through the doors with a warm breeze. It was disappointing to go back into the big tiled room with all the dead bodies in it, which smelled bad and closed-in, but she was delighted to find Camilla looking much better and even standing up. Her whole abdomen was swathed in bandages, they had taken all the clothing off her top, and she was wearing Ianthe Naberius's white jacket draped over her shoulders, but she was standing. Her face still looked grey beneath its nice normal olive, and she was shiny with sweat, but she was healthy enough to shift her weight from side to side and jiggle one foot impatiently.

The Captain had been brought into the big room and laid down with some rags rolled up as a pillow beneath her head. She kept moving restlessly—like lightning kept jolting through her arms and legs—like her knees and arms were attached to some drunken puppeteer. Her mouth kept opening but Nona was devoutly grateful that nothing came out, nothing except a noise like: *ah, ah, ah*.

When Nona and Crown came in, and Pyrrha with the corpse, both Palamedes and Camilla looked up at them keenly. Something in Palamedes's face changed and creased, and he said— "What—no reaction?"

"No. Nona even gave the damn thing mouth-to-mouth," said Pyrrha.

Nona was embarrassed at how her voice peeped when she said, "*Private information*, Pyrrha," but Palamedes said, "Does that mean—is it just a

copy? Put it down.”

Pyrrha fell to her knees, and Nona was interested to see how gentle she was with the redhead corpse prince, which really did seem completely dead—its arms and legs were heavy and limp. Crown squatted down so that Nona could slither down off her back.

Camilla said, “If that’s a copy, this is all over.”

“It can’t be,” said Crown blankly.

“It very much can,” said Pyrrha.

“No—I mean, that doesn’t make sense,” she said. “If it was a copy, my sister didn’t know it. She’s been acting like she’s been standing on hot coals this entire time—and she wasn’t doing it to fool me.”

Palamedes said, “Give me a moment.”

He fell to his knees next to the corpse—quite awkwardly; he wasn’t moving as nicely as he usually did. As he fell he said mildly, “Mm. Think I displaced a patella. It’s not as easy as with you, Cam … Right, Gideon. Let’s have a look at you.”

He undid her scarf, and Nona looked away. Beneath the scarf a huge wound in the throat made the neck yawn wide open. When she peeked back, wishing she had her braids to screen everything, she saw that Palamedes had unbuttoned the shirt partway and there was another big wound in the chest—a big purple bloodless puncture wound, with white teeth peeking out coyly from within.

“Damage is consistent with reported injuries. There’s another wound lower down.”

“If it’s John’s copy, that doesn’t prove anything. It’s going to be exact,” said Pyrrha.

“I know. But I do have a personal advantage here—I’ve touched her when she was alive.”

“Yeah, but—”

Palamedes had placed Ianthe Naberius’s hand over the wound. He closed his eyes—really his eyes, his nice dark grey ones, not the strange blue ones with flecks—but almost immediately after closing them, he turned his head and sneezed violently; shuddered with the same violence; pulled his hand away, and said—

“What? What *is* that?”

“You just met God,” said Pyrrha.

“I didn’t like him,” said Palamedes.

“God’s preserving her … or God created her, or both. Good luck seeing anything through that. His aptitude’s like a punch in the nose, Sextus. Once he gets his fingers on something you’ll never find any other fingerprints on it. Too much noise.”

But Crown’s exquisite face had puckered again. “But that was the whole point. When Blood of Eden picked her up—that was why they thought she was strange—Gideon never showed any sign of decomposing. She was always like a corpse that had been dead for only minutes. They wrapped her in plex and dropped her in rivers, trying to see if that would do anything … I was there. It was awful at first,” she added, “and then it simply started being very funny … Shh, Judith. I’m here.”

The Captain had started fussing again. Crown, distracted, moved to her side. She said tenderly, “If it wasn’t for you I wouldn’t be in all this trouble. You thorn, you pest,” but the Captain subsided, merely jiggling her arms and her legs.

Palamedes said—“This may well be what’s keeping Nona out too. Doesn’t matter. We have to operate on the basis that she really is Gideon Nav. First, lift her head so I can reach her neck … let’s make sure Ianthe can’t transfer to her again, whatever happens. *Surely* I’m good enough for a simple ghost ward. Cam, I’ll use your blood—it’s the one resource we’ve got basically sprayed around the room.”

“I can give you some more,” said Camilla. “There’s a spoonful left, somewhere in here.”

“Camilla Hect,” said Palamedes, “I would slap you—except Naberius Tern trying to slap you would force me to kick my own ass.”

They rolled the corpse prince over. Palamedes sketched some squiggles onto the back of her neck with the pad of Ianthe Naberius’s littlest finger, using Cam’s bloodied clothes as a kind of paint box. He did this very carefully, then started fanning his hand to dry the mark. Camilla said, “Warden, do we continue?”

“Yes. We get the Oversight Body. Then we get out of here.”

Crown said, “But the shuttle—”

“Oversight Body, then the shuttle,” said Palamedes. “Master Archivist Juno Zeta is pretty damned good with wards; she’ll probably have ten ideas I never thought of, once she rips through all the ideas I have.”

This did not appear to fully convince Crown. “But even if we get the shuttle working, what next?”

“The Sixth House installation,” said Camilla, and Palamedes finished—

“We join up with the rest of the Sixth—we get the necromancers out of this system and out of the halo—we find some way to lure the Resurrection Beast away from this planet so that the population gets some breathing room, while at the same time safeguarding it from any more House strong-arming—we fix Nona … we stop the war, we sue for peace … and we go to the Ninth House, and we begin the real fight.”

Nona found that all eyes were on her. She looked around, in case there was someone behind her that everyone was actually looking at, but it was just her. She did not know what the Ninth House was. Nobody she knew had more than One House. Honesty barely had a Quarter House. She did not know what the Ninth House was—and yet her teeth were chattering, quite apart from herself, and she had to clench her jaw very hard to make them stop. This made everyone look away, which annoyed her, because the way they moved their faces was pure pity.

Palamedes started heaving the corpse over to lie on its back again—Camilla tried to approach and help, but he shooed her away—and once rolled, it lay there awkwardly, splayed, its clothes and sword in disarray. He said, in obvious satisfaction, “There. That’ll be a first barrier to stop her doing any kind of revenant transfer. Now, Cam, pass me the syringe.”

Camilla rootled around in the medical kit that Crown had brought in, and retrieved a big needle. She removed the webbing from around it, and Pyrrha said: “Sextus, don’t think I haven’t thought about this. If a blood sample was going to be enough, I would’ve said to do it first thing. Harrowhark Nonagesimus couldn’t have rolled aside that damned rock unless it was fresh out of the vat.”

“You never know,” said Palamedes calmly. “Look at her—her colour’s even, there’s no trace of dehydration or gravity acting on the internal fluids. If you examine the wounds, they look clean and cauterised. I can probably get a decent sample.”

“Even if the blood survives outside the body, we’ll need to take her along as a backstop.”

“If it survives outside the body, it’ll tell us something really interesting,” said Palamedes. “I’m going to puncture the femoral sheath.”

Camilla passed him a little pair of scissors, and he cut a short slit in the thigh of the corpse’s soft leather trousers. Then Palamedes prodded around with his fingers—he placed the needle to the dead skin—and the corpse’s

hand shot out and ringed around his wrist before anyone could stop it. Nona noticed that one of the corpse prince's sleeves had worked up, and that on her wrist was a funny fat bracelet: a braided cord of many colours, none of which matched.

"One, that's not going to work. Two, I fucking hate needles," said the corpse. "Three—Sex Pal, if that's how you get a lady's pants off, holy shit, no wonder I stole your girl."

Palamedes rocked back on his heels.

"Not *my* girl. Unlike some of us, I've never much seen the allure of an evil cougar," he said crisply. "Good morning, Gideon."



25

PYRRHA'S GUN MADE A fast *ker-KLUNK*. She hadn't pointed it at anyone, exactly, but it was in both her hands and her arms had tensed. "Back up, Sextus," she said.

"Who's that?" said the corpse, not letting go of Palamedes's wrist. She craned her neck to one side. "Oh, hey. Long time no drown. You're the one who bragged about spading my mum."

"Anyone who spaded your mum would brag about it," said Pyrrha.

"Ninth?" said Crown, sounding almost nervous.

Pyrrha ignored her, and said: "He brought you back. He's made a revenant out of you."

"Yope," said the corpse prince.

"But that's impossible. He shouldn't have been able to separate you. Your girl didn't manage full fusion, but what she took from you not even John could've got back. And ... he didn't bring you back all the way? He brought you back like *this*?"

"Sextus, if you don't put that needle away I'm going to break Naberius's fucking arm," said the corpse irritably.

"I can't," Palamedes said. "You're still holding onto my wrist."

"Oh. Yeah. If I let go of your wrist you have to not stick me with the needle and then run for it, okay?"

"How exactly do you think blood samples work?"

"Please," said Crown. "I'm so confused. You're ... actually the Ninth? Gideon the Ninth? You're—what—alive?"

The corpse let go of Palamedes's wrist. He withdrew his arm, still holding the needle, and sat back on his heels. The corpse levered herself up

into a sitting position, then braced her arm against the floor and scrambled upright with surprising ease. She dusted off the thighs of her trousers.

What shocked Nona was not that the corpse moved. It was the way in which she moved. Nona was so distracted that she couldn't stop watching. She had never seen anyone move like that before.

"Nope, and nope," she said. "I'm Prince Kiriona Gaia the First, Her Divine Highness, First Lieutenant of the Cohort, Emperor's Life Guards, non-auxiliary—honorary title but who cares—heir to the Emperor Divine, first of the Tower Princes. And I'm *mega* dead."

"John, you mad bastard," said Pyrrha softly. She hadn't taken either hand off her gun.

"*Heir to the Emperor Divine?*" said Crown.

"Kiriona?" said Camilla.

"I mean, it's fine, you can call me Gideon if you want," said Prince Kiriona Gaia the First. "I kind of keep forgetting it's me when people say *Kiriona*. Anyway, who've we got?" She glanced round the group with interest. "Corona—looking great, ma'am, may I say—Cam, though probably not for long by the looks of it—Mumfucker Prime—Judith Deuteros for some reason, or, like, her corpse—and Sex Pal. Oh, and this fake Nonagesimus over here." She paused. "Everyone but Corona can leave. How come you're ambulant, Sextus? Thought you went *bang*."

"How long have you been awake?" asked Palamedes, standing up with noticeably more difficulty than the corpse prince had done.

"Whole time. I've been playing possum. Pretty clever, right?"

Nona was indignant enough at Prince Kiriona Gaia's whole demeanour, but this last piece of self-congratulation was too much to bear. "I knew it!" she burst out. "You didn't fool me—I saw you looking at me, back in the other room! You know, when I—"

"Yes, congratulations," said the Prince sarcastically. "No, babycakes, I didn't fool you. Who is this literal goddamn infant? Can someone give her like a rusk or something and shut her up?"

Nona opened her mouth to say the worst thing she had ever said—she didn't know quite what it was going to be, but she understood that when it emerged it would be really bad, perhaps the worst thing anyone had ever said, she could feel it bubbling in her throat—but Palamedes shot her a beseeching glance and she forced her jaw to clamp shut.

“Nona, sorry, but hold on,” said Palamedes. “This isn’t making as much sense as I’d like it to, and we’re short on time. Nav, why did Ianthe lock you away in the first place, if you’re moving under your own steam?”

“Oh—she got big pissed that I came along for the ride,” said Gideon. “She shut me off in public so I wouldn’t screw up the very important Sixth House mission.” She made a sort of insulting noise by blowing air out very fast through almost-closed lips, like *pvvvvbb*.

“The ride?” said Palamedes. “Wait. You mean you *both* dropped through the River? In that shuttle?”

“Can’t be,” said Pyrrha, who was watching the Prince narrowly. “Not anymore. You’ve got a *soul* attached to you, kid … or part of one, at least. John would have had to go with you to stop it being stripped bare.”

The corpse prince tilted her head to one side, like a curious bird. “You haven’t been in the River lately, have you?” she said.

“What’s that meant to mean?”

“Guess you’ll find out at some point,” said the Prince. “Anyway. You’re going to the Ninth House, right? I want in.”

“Why?” said Camilla.

The Prince shrugged. “Why not? Nostalgia. Boy, how I miss the old place. There’s no skeleton like a home skeleton, you know? I have so many happy memories there.”

“Nav,” said Palamedes levelly, “if you’ve been awake this whole time, you know perfectly well what we’re doing. Given that you’ve introduced yourself as *Prince Kiriona Gaia the First*, should you not be trying to stop us in the Emperor’s name?”

Prince Kiriona Gaia smiled. It was not a very friendly smile: it went slowly up her face, and there was something a little bit hungry about it.

“Oh, Sex Pal,” she said. “Do you—do you want to *fight* me?”

“No,” said Palamedes, at the same time moving one hand up and to the side to stop Camilla, who had taken a first step forward. “I very much don’t. I’ve already fought one of the so-called Tower Princes today. Besides that, I consider you a friend of mine.” This filled Nona with vague outrage: she could not believe that someone as kind as Palamedes could be friends with someone as awful as Kiriona Gaia. “But I’m struggling to understand why you’re here … what you’re doing … what you *want* out of this. What do you want, Gideon?”

The corpse prince considered this. “I don’t want much of anything anymore,” she said brightly. “I just don’t really give a shit. I got on Ianthe’s shuttle because it looked like it was more fun than standing around at home watching parades and getting saluted. I could kill all you guys and John would probably give me another medal or something—okay, not you, Corona, Ianthe would never shut up about it—but … eh, medals. I want to go where stuff’s *happening*. And I feel like … I feel like I’ve got unfinished business on the Ninth. Very cultural, very personal.”

“She’s lying,” said Nona instantly. With all the white noise coming from the corpse prince, she couldn’t tell exactly where the lie was, but it was buried deep around her smile.

“I thought I told you to shut your stolen goddamned mouth,” said Kiriona, not pleasantly, and Camilla said—

“Don’t push it, Ninth.”

Nona’s heart fluttered. It didn’t even matter when Kiriona said, “Sure, Cam. Marry a moron, then die. I get the urge.”

Palamedes repeated, very patiently: “What do you want, Gideon?”

The corpse prince didn’t turn an eyelash.

“I want to go back. Who cares about my reasons?”

That didn’t look like a lie. Crown looked at Nona; Nona shrugged. Crown looked desperately at Palamedes. Palamedes, Nona noticed, was looking curiously rocklike, giving nothing away.

Crown said, “Warden, please. We *need* her.”

“Yeah, you do,” said the Prince. “I don’t come in test tubes. So you can either let me hitch back to the Ninth, or you can all come at me, together, and see if you can draw a single drop of my dead-ass blood. Go nuts. I get a little bit of excitement in my day whatever happens.”

Camilla twitched forward, and the Prince saw her. She grinned. “Yeah, that’s the spirit,” she said. “Come on, Cam. You’re still mostly alive, right? Here, look, I’ll make it easy on you.” She rolled up one sleeve and stuck the bare forearm out in front of her, fist clenched, steady. “Try it. I’m ready for my shot, doc.”

Camilla stepped forward more deliberately, keeping her eyes on the Prince’s eyes. Palamedes said, “For heaven’s sake, Nav, lay off the grandstanding,” but Camilla took the Prince’s wrist, positioned the needle, and pushed the syringe decisively home.

The needle snapped in half, like she'd jabbed it into the tiled floor. Camilla staggered back as if this had thrown her off-balance. Kiriona Gaia opened her hand—moved it to steady Camilla's shoulder—then, like she was flinching, roughly shoved her away. Camilla fell back into Palamedes's arms.

The Prince stared at them. Her eyes weren't like Nona's at all now: they were hard and dead and bright, like something that had been dug up.

"My father has made my body's bones denser than titanium plex," said the Crown Prince coldly. "My father has made my skin turn away bullets. I am the perfect sword hand and the final expression of the art of the Nine Houses. Don't you get it? I am the Emperor's construct."

Pyrrha said—

"Shame he didn't get some spackle for your extra holes, right?"

"Those are my speed holes. They help me go fast," said Kiriona quickly.

Then Kiriona looked over at Camilla, and the red splotch on Cam's bandages, and her crooked mouth screwed up, and she said: "You're seriously going to end up like me if you keep fucking around."

Camilla said, "Nav. What would have happened if I'd gotten that sample?"

"What—used a sharper needle? No dice. My blood burns up outside my body, turns to ash," said Kiriona. "You need to preserve it to get it out—you know, like, impregnate it with thalergy to stop the short-term thanergy reaction. When it reacts with air, the preservation, like, rolls backward—it's not static."

When she looked at Palamedes's face, she laughed again. "Come on, boy. I'm Gideon version two. I know up to five necromancy facts now."

For some reason, it was this that made Palamedes look as though he'd been slapped; Ianthe Naberius's face screwed up, briefly. Then he shook himself clear, and he said—

"If Blood of Eden knows you're up and walking, Gideon, they're going to handcuff you in about sixteen different places. How do you feel about that?"

Kiriona turned her body to look at them. Nona couldn't quite believe that they couldn't all see it; but they weren't watching, goggle-eyed, they hadn't even seemed to notice. It was in Kiriona's every movement—the bright, swift flexions of her arms, and the way she swung her legs, big and

brash, and the weirdly easy, light grace with which she moved her dead body.

Nona had never seen anyone so sad in her whole short life. It made her nearly afraid to die.

“Nobody locks me up anywhere,” said Kiriona.



26

THE COMMANDER HAD NOT brought along Pash's truck with the grille. They had packed everyone into one of the big people-moving trucks with the seats that faced the sides, the kind you saw mercs riding in around the city but with a cover so that nobody could see inside. It was a dark and blueless night—thick clouds had gathered over the tops of the buildings, an unusual amount of atmosphere. It made everything sticky and hot and awful.

"And now the deluge," We Suffer said, in as close to a good mood as Nona had ever seen her.

Pyrrha had the corpse prince over her shoulder. Kiriona Gaia was very good at playing dead, Nona had to admit; completely limp and believable. It was a good thing too. Even in her good mood, We Suffer did not like it when the body of Ianthe Naberius turned up, even once Palamedes explained. Nor did We Suffer want to put Kiriona Gaia in the same truck as them. "Eggs. Basket," was all she would say. Palamedes was forced to relent. Nona was strangely relieved that she wouldn't have to ride with the Prince, or have to look at her, even if the Prince was playing dead.

The moment We Suffer saw Camilla, she called a Blood of Eden medic over, who declared they could not do better on the dressing but immediately gave Camilla quite a lot of drugs. Camilla had tried to say, "No pain meds," but Palamedes said briskly, "Every pain medication you have, please."

Nona had never seen Camilla so meek or malleable. It was like all the times she had ever seen Camilla happy, all at once.

When We Suffer had declared that the body had to be kept apart, Camilla said instantly, "I'll ride with it."

Pyrrha said, “No. I will,” but Cam said, “No. You stay with Nona.”

Nona thought this was a bit cruel. “Don’t you want to stay with Palamedes?”

Camilla and Palamedes—Palamedes in the handsome, nice-haired body that smiled in a much nicer way than it had ever smiled for Ianthe Naberius—looked at each other. They had not moved much more than an arm’s length apart since Palamedes had fought for rights to the body and won.

Amazingly and fearfully, Cam looked at Nona and winked.

“We need some space,” she said. “I’m getting sick of him.”

“Not surprised,” said Palamedes.

And they parted with nothing more than Cam leaning forward to touch his forehead to hers again, very briefly. So the Prince and Camilla got their own truck.

They were only two trucks in a cavalcade of people-moving trucks, and theirs and the corpse prince’s and Cam’s were the middle ones, and theirs didn’t seem very full at all. The moment an unmasked, wild-eyed Pash hopped out of the truck to pull the ramp down for Pyrrha, she had looked at the corpse of Kiriona Gaia and said in the loudest possible voice, “Oh, *fuck no*,” and gone to sit in the farthest corner of Nona’s truck instead.

Commander We Suffer sat in the centre with a headpiece and a flip-top computer, and Nona crowded in next to Pyrrha and Palamedes. Palamedes sat next to Crown and Crown had laid the Captain down across three seats.

The Captain wasn’t looking very good, but she wasn’t saying anything. Palamedes had checked up on her—looked at her eyes and listened to her breathing as Crown watched, chewing on her littlest fingernail. In the end she said, “Is there nothing you can do, Master Warden?”

“Not in this body.” Palamedes levered open the Captain’s jaw—Nona craned her head to watch, knowing it was nosy but not caring—and noticed that the Captain’s tongue was bluish and purplish and swollen. He said, “She’s suffering micro-seizures. I’m worried about her brain.”

Crown said urgently, “Master Warden, please, she’s come so far and fought so hard.”

“Let’s trust her to fight a little harder,” said Palamedes, and he rolled the Captain onto her side. He tilted her head down a little, and threaded a strap across her middle. “Make sure she doesn’t choke.”

Meanwhile Pyrrha kept twisting her neck to look at Pash, of all people, scowling maskless in the corner. Nona was desperate for Pyrrha not to do

anything stupid, like flirt with her. She really thought Pash would do something awful to her kneecaps if she tried, and if that happened Nona knew she would throw up. It had been a very long day already.

We Suffer said to Palamedes: “The shuttle?”

“Secure,” said Palamedes, which Nona thought was a flawless way of telling the absolute truth.

“I have left my most trustworthy guards at the barracks.”

“Tell them not to explore. Prince Ianthe Naberius left behind wards and necromantic traps. I have control of this body, but I can’t do anything about any nasty surprises she prepared for us,” said Palamedes.

We Suffer said, “You know that we would neutralise your people, not kill them.”

“I think they’ve been neutralised long enough.”

Crown said, “There’re fewer than twenty Cohort soldiers left in there, ma’am. They’re not in good shape. They may well kill themselves rather than be taken in by Blood of Eden forces … especially if my sister isn’t there to help. Their morale will break. Please wait.”

And Palamedes said, “Tell me everything. Where is the Sixth House Oversight Body?”

“I have the good news and the neutral news,” said Commander We Suffer. “Merv Wing has been forthcoming … in their own way. Your people are being held underground, being moved constantly from place to place to avoid detection. The tunnels, you see … a lawless and dangerous area, but Unjust Hope has perfected his art of hiding in the most dangerous places. And he always was fond of the mobility doctrine.”

“How many underground sites—” began Palamedes, but Nona’s neck had gone stiff of its own accord. Her short-term memory, never very good, had developed a sharp picture in her head: she could hear a high, frightened voice saying *fucking nuts man, fucking nutter*; she could taste little green fruits.

“Multiple. The tunnels underground are both extensive and very unsafe. Collapses, you see. My people have refined the search to four possible locations, but you desire thoroughness, swiftness, *and* the safety of your people. I offer you two out of three. And it is more likely one and a half.”

Palamedes said irascibly—

“Are you telling me that Blood of Eden locked them all in a truck and drove them around the city? This entire time?”

“Classic Blood of Eden move,” said Pyrrha. “Fucking insane, surprisingly effective, relies on a lot of soldiers pissing in a lot of bottles.”

Our Lady of the Passion made a sound that, to Nona, was unmistakably a laugh, and obviously hated herself for this so much that she curled up into her seat and glared all around at everyone.

Palamedes said, “Make it safe and swift. We are *very* short on time.”

We Suffer moved aside the flip-top computer and crossed her long legs. She was wearing trousers with lots of pockets, but she sat as though she were wearing something much prettier. In the olden days Nona would have immediately commenced practising how to sit like that, and been able to do it perfectly the first time round; but now she looked at the commander with her elegant older face and she felt a great, hot pang inside her. Some kind of sorrow related to legs.

“That will involve sending my people in on lightweight vehicles—cycles and whatnot—in small groups through the service tunnels. They may cover a lot of ground and not draw attention from drivers … the problem being that the service tunnels do not cover all the ground. There is a risk in each area that we would miss Merv Wing’s trucks entirely … we might count one area as clear, and find ourselves mistaken.”

Pyrrha said, “You worked this out? What’s the estimated success rate?”

Crown plucked one of the clipboards from We Suffer’s pile, and the commander pointed to certain areas. Crown said, “Different for each site. Fifty-seven percent … forty percent … thirty-two percent. Commander, these numbers are worthless.”

“If you want heavy vehicles in the tunnels, I cannot assure you that Merv Wing will not liquidate the asset. Unjust Hope is not having a good night … and he may assume he will never have another good night ever again.”

Palamedes asked, “Is there no way to make those numbers better?”

“Listen, you snivelling jackshit,” said Pash (Nona was glad Cam wasn’t there), “you sound like every admin suit there ever was. ‘Can we make the numbers better?’ Oh, yeah, sure, let me pull the good numbers out of my fucking asshole, where I stashed them for safekeeping. These are the best numbers you’re going to get!”

“I really, really hate to say this about Pash,” said Crown, “but she’s right, Warden.”

“Thank you; fuck you,” said Pash. Pyrrha looked at her again, and Pash made a big *harrumph* and looked away.

“Apologies. I *did* sound like I was at Resource Committee,” Palamedes admitted.

All of a sudden, the Captain made a horrible gurgling sound. It sounded weirdly like guttural laughter. Her feet twitched, and Crown held her down and checked her over until the loudest sound was the Captain’s breathing.

Nona cleared her throat, then cleared it again, just in case. “I know where the Convoy was earlier this week,” she suggested.

Every single head turned to look at her—even Pash’s—and she felt hot in the face and she said indignantly, “*I do, or—*my friend saw it—and it had a bunch of people in it with white eyes, like they couldn’t see, except they could see, and then Honesty got his face smashed. Ask the Angel, she’ll—they’ll tell you I’m not lying.”

To say that Commander We Suffer looked astonished would have been an understatement.

“Are you *certain*? ”

“You’ve been talking about the Convoy,” Nona said eagerly, pleased to have any sign of encouragement. “We all know about them, or at least my gang does. At school. Honesty went down there to make money by stealing air-conditioning systems, but it ended badly and he says he’ll stick to drugs.”

“But this—this is a story being told by—what, a child? A teenager? About some other person who says they saw some people in a truck—Is your friend to be trusted?”

Nona dithered. “I don’t think he was lying this time,” she said. “Really. Seriously, ask the Angel—I mean, ask Aim.”

The commander put her flip-top computer in Crown’s arms and stood up. She kept her balance using the swaying handholds at the top of the truck, and she turned her face away from Nona so that Nona could not see what she was saying, which made hearing and understanding nearly impossible. While she was talking, a muffled *crack—boom* of thunder sounded overhead, then another, softer *crack—boom*, followed by long whistles, like something breaking a far-off sound barrier.

Pash said, “Missile launcher?”

“Wrong sound,” said Pyrrha.

The commander turned around. “Nona,” she said, “would your friend Honesty tell us the exact location where he saw the trucks?”

Even in the circumstances, Nona had to laugh.

“No, never. Honesty says never tell anything to anyone in uniform.”

“Would he tell you?”

Nona felt very grave. “If you had asked me that yesterday,” she said, “I would have said, probably yes, because Honesty’s my friend, but—Hot Sauce shot me when she found out I was a zombie, so I’m out of the gang.”

“Ah … children, they are very forgiving,” said the commander, proving to Nona she had never been around children. She said into her receiver: “The Messenger will tell you the street. Split us off and take us there.”

Pyrrha leant over. “Do you want me to go with you, junior?”

But Nona knew that she couldn’t take Pyrrha either; it just wouldn’t work.

“No,” she said drearily, “at least, I want you to, but you can’t. At least if Honesty tries to hit me,” she reasoned, cheering herself up, “I can do one of my horrible screams. That’d impress him.”

A hard wind had whipped up when they dropped Nona outside the decrepit building where Honesty lived. Pash jumped out of their idling truck, and so had several other Blood of Eden soldiers bristling with guns. Nona felt very vulnerable ducking up the rickety stairs—the wind suddenly blew upward so hard as she mounted the second staircase that she thought she would fall backward and off—but she pulled herself along doggedly. It seemed to her that her entire brain now lived somewhere in her forehead. Her body knew it was tired, but it was as though someone else were feeling it; or maybe that she weren’t feeling it at all.

Honesty lived in what had used to be a utility room, so it didn’t have any numbers on the door. Honesty always said he found that comforting, staying in an unlisted apartment. She hammered on the door, and when nobody answered, she despaired. She hammered again and hissed, desperately—“Honesty, it’s me! Let me in!”

There was still no sound from within. What if Honesty had gone out? But then the door cracked on a rusted chain, and a watery blue eye was visible in that seam between door and frame, and she heard his familiar hoarse voice—

“Nona?”

“Honesty, *please* let me in,” she said.

“I can’t.”

“Will you talk to me, then? Just here at the door?”

His eye flashed one way, then another. He said, more conversationally: “I mean, it’s not—it’s not like I don’t *want* to, Nona, but … you gotta understand, it’s that … well, you see…”

Nona knew immediately, and was miserable. “You’ve talked to Hot Sauce.”

“Is it true?” said Honesty. “*Are* you a zombie?”

“Even if I said I wasn’t, would you go against Hot Sauce?”

“Hell no,” said Honesty.

“Good,” said Nona, “I would think less of you if you did, you know, Honesty, because—because even if I’m not in the gang anymore, I want you to know, I think it’s important to believe Hot Sauce first.”

Honesty looked backward and forward again, his pale eye roving restlessly over her and her surrounds.

“You’ve cut your hair,” he said.

“Camilla did it.”

“It makes you look mean as.”

“I know,” Nona sorrowed.

“It’ll grow back—maybe,” said Honesty cautiously. “If you can push a bullet out your head your hair’s probably okay. What do you want, anyway?”

“It’s—it’s the Convoy,” she said, wringing her hands. “I need to know where you saw them. What street you went down, when you went on that job with the Convoy. Honesty”—for he had tried to shut the door on her—“Honesty, this is a matter of *life*.”

The chain rattled and the door hesitated.

“You’re s’posed to say ‘and *death*,’” he supplied.

“I have started to not believe in the other one,” said Nona. “It’s stupid saying ‘and death’ when most of the people who die get up and walk around again. Maybe if I said ‘a matter of *life* and *double death*.’”

Honesty said, “How about, ‘Life and death where you don’t come back?’”

“That’s so long,” said Nona. “Honesty—*please* tell me the name of the street and I’ll go away—I’ll go away forever, I think. And I want you to know that if I go away forever, and you go into the Building and someone

lets you into my room, I want you to have all the coins in my ceramic fish, and if you check at school they keep my old wiping rag in the desk.”

Honesty said, “What the hell would I want with your ole wiping rag?”

“Sometimes they put drops of turpentine on it, and you might be able to sell it to get someone high,” said Nona pitifully.

The door closed in her face. Nona felt like a failure. But before she could try again—stave the door in with a good solid shove, hoping that she wouldn’t wimp out at the last moment—it opened again.

It wasn’t Honesty. It was Hot Sauce.

Honesty was right there behind her shoulder, saying mulishly, “I don’t care—I don’t *care*. She’s always gonna be my friend, boss. I won’t ditch a girl like that, a girl who thinks of my business like that. I’d go into business with a girl like that, boss, okay?” but Nona had no eyes for him.

Nona stood on the threadbare, filthy carpet and looked at Hot Sauce, and Hot Sauce looked at her; her heart trembled in her throat.

“Come in. Sit down,” said Hot Sauce.

Nona sat down on one of Honesty’s chairs, which consisted of a big square of cardboard on the floor. Hot Sauce sat on another. Nona drew her knees up to her chest and said, “I can’t stay, so please don’t shoot me, because it’ll take up time.”

“Don’t shoot her anyway,” said Honesty, “bullets is expensive.”

Hot Sauce ignored him, and said—

“Are you going away?”

“Yes,” said Nona. “So are the other necromancers—zombies. I guess there won’t be any more here for a while.”

“There’ll always be more necromancers.”

“I suppose, eventually,” said Nona, feeling wet and depressed.

Honesty had spread the map that had hung in the classroom out on his sleeping bag. “Nicked it,” he said, to Nona’s quizzical glance. He was following something with his finger. He said, “Gimme a moment.” Then he said, “There, ’cause that’s the alley where the winos were, it’s the only one that ends in the triangle.”

Hot Sauce said, without looking—

“Write it down, idiot.”

“You know Nona can’t do written stuff, boss.”

“It’s not for her.”

“Fine. I’ll print,” he added generously. “My joined-up writing’s too sophisticated to read.”

Hot Sauce and Nona were left together. Nona kept stealing glances at Hot Sauce—at her closed-off, silent face, with its ridges like strange waves on the sea. Hot Sauce met her gaze levelly, and Nona said—

“Will you tell Born in the Morning and Beautiful Ruby and Kevin I love them? You don’t have to say ‘Yes’ or ‘No,’ but think about it, please. And will you tell the nice lady teacher I’m sorry that I had to leave work, but at least I didn’t die at the water treatment plant, and if they get a new Teacher’s Aide they have to be specially nice to the tinies? It’s not their fault they’re small.”

Hot Sauce said, “The Angel?”

Nona swallowed. “The Angel’s important, Hot Sauce.”

“Well,” said Hot Sauce, “we knew *that*.”

Honesty said, “Finished,” and he folded up the bit of paper, and he deposited it in Nona’s waiting hands. Nona immediately shoved it into her pocket, in case the wind wanted to blow it away. Honesty said, “Don’t get involved in the Convoy, you know what, Nona. That shit’s creepy.”

Nona decided not to tell Honesty that the Convoy was probably full of zombies.

“Don’t *you* take jobs like that again,” she said. “There’s lots in my ceramic fish, okay?”

She scrambled to her feet and brushed some of the wetter cardboard off her black trousers. Hot Sauce also rose to stand—Hot Sauce always stood so beautifully—and she walked Nona to the door, which took two and a half steps.

Nona looked at Hot Sauce. She was terribly afraid she was about to cry, but then she burst out—

“Hot Sauce, *why* are you called Hot Sauce?”

Hot Sauce blinked at her. “You really want to know?” she said.

“Yes,” said Nona. “Yes, yes. Terribly, yes.”

Hot Sauce looked up at the chipped ceiling of Honesty’s apartment, then down at the carpet, and then at Nona.

“Because I really like it,” she admitted.

“What?”

“You can put it on anything,” said Hot Sauce. “Spicy food’s always better. You can put it on rice but you can also put it on bread.”

Nona reached out. She wrapped her arms around Hot Sauce. She whispered, “Hot Sauce, forgive me—forgive me so I can know what it feels like.”

Hot Sauce was as still as a statue in Nona’s arms. Then she gently perambulated Nona toward the door—bumped her gently over the threshold—looked her dead in the face.

“We’re cool,” she said, and, awkwardly: “I’ll always love you, Nona.”

Nona found that huge tears were dripping out of her eyes, making it hard to see Hot Sauce.

“Can I be in the gang again?” she whispered.

Hot Sauce wavered.

“Yes,” she said, “but you’re on Kevin bathroom duty forever for being a zombie. That’s fair.” And she shut the door.



27

THE THUNDERCRACKS HAD INCREASED tenfold, with no rain to be seen—the night had grown so hot that everyone in the big truck had started to sweat. The moment Nona had moistly thrust the note into We Suffer's hand, the commander had barked into her headpiece: "Go. All units not on barracks duty are now deployed. Inter-wing rules no longer apply. Ctesiphon Wing cells, repeat, this is Cell Commander We Suffer and We Suffer. We have recommenced Operation Lock and Key—repeat, we have recommenced Operation Lock and Key." There was a ragged cheer from the drivers and a powerful *oo-RAH* from deep in Pash's chest, one hand steadyng herself against the rattling car seats as she pulled a pair of tough rustling overalls up over her day clothes. We Suffer continued, "No speeches. All I shall say is, revenge is a dish best served ice, *ice* cold. Cells Saaftinge, Zoar, Birmingham, Troia, Maputo, Taree, proceed. Memphis, Takṣa, Calakmul, Valencia, Opava, Dundee, proceed."

There was an aerial screech far overhead, another long, whistling crack of something atmospheric. The commander levered her headset away from her face, sighed nigh-hysterically, and said: "I never thought her operation would begin afresh by extracting *Housers* from another Blood of Eden wing ... and yet, it is unmistakably the first step."

Pyrrha said, "It's not one she would have taken."

We Suffer looked at Pyrrha inquiringly, tapping her fingers on one knee. "I have noticed you love to make these statements," she said. "'Commander Wake might have said this. Commander Wake would have thought that.' I have come to the conclusion that you are not simply trying to annoy me and others like me, but I have no idea what you are doing otherwise."

Next to Nona, Pyrrha gave an ineloquent shrug. “Maybe I just like talking to other people who knew her.”

“And should they wax so nostalgic with you—her murderer?”

Pyrrha was unmoved. “I like to think I knew her as well as anyone else, Commander … as well as anyone *could* know her.”

Pash viciously snapped shut the clasps on her trousers and pulled a vest over her head, putting her brightly dyed hair into complete disarray. “Say one more word on this fucking subject and I swear to all fuck, I’ll do for you.”

Pyrrha said, “Wake had your photo, you know. She kept it on her.”

When Pash’s head whipped around, Nona could see that this had shaken her badly. Her bird’s-beak features had all scrunched together toward the front, as though clustering for safety, and this made her scars zigzag up her forehead and her nose. She said, “Oh, *shut your mouth*,” but there was a desperate note to it.

“Knew it the moment I saw you. What were you, nine? Ten?”

We Suffer said, “Lyctor … Dve … I ask you to stop, from one alive human to another more or less so,” but Pash was saying quickly—“Let her. She’s bullshitting. Con artist stuff.”

“This might be my only chance to say this,” said Pyrrha comfortably, “and I’m seriously nicotine-deprived, which makes me sentimental. You’re the kid in that photo … She kept it folded up in her pliers case. You’re holding an automatic three sizes too big for you, right? One of your front teeth is gone. She holds up that photo to me and she goes, *If it wasn’t for filth like you, nice kids like this wouldn’t have to hold these.*”

Pash’s throat was working. Pyrrha continued, “I mean, I was all, *I’d buy this a lot more if you weren’t so obviously proud as hell*, and she only laughed in that mean-ass way she always laughed and said, *That’s my submachine gun she’s holding.*”

Pash closed her eyes. Nona held her breath, but Pash wasn’t mad or upset. She looked as though she were having a religious experience.

“I remember asking if you really were a nice kid,” Pyrrha said. “She said, *No. She’s my flesh and blood. She takes after me.* After that … I kept thinking about you for a long time. Sister?”

Pash swallowed once. Twice. Three times.

“No. My mother was her sister,” she said gruffly. And, “Not that it means shit to you, wizard. If you’re lying to me, I swear—”

Palamedes said mildly, “You know we’re conversant with the concept of *family* in the Nine Houses, right?”

Pash seemed genuinely surprised. “Why the hell would it matter to you?” Then she checked herself and said, “Scratch that. Why the hell would that matter to *me*? You don’t give a fuck about families when you’re carving them up—”

At a warning glance from We Suffer, Pash scowled expressively. She said, “Well, I’ll leave you with this: fuck you,” and then her vivid blue head disappeared under a helmet, her bright eyes beneath a visor.

Nona found a sigh escaping her chest. All her noises seemed to surprise her now; it was as though her body were capable of shocking her by doing things that did not seem connected to Nona. Pyrrha reached over and touched her hand gently, and said, “How’re you holding up?”

Before Nona could answer, there was another high-pitched whistle—far closer to them now, outside their truck, shockingly close—and a dull *thud*, and a huge pattering of stone. The truck screeched to a halt, then lurched forward again, and everyone inside held on to their seats as the truck juked left. It said quite a lot about life in the city that nobody really freaked out about this the first time, nor the second time, nor even the third time when they heard yelling coming from the front of the truck.

We Suffer’s headset crackled to life, and she brought it back down to her mouth. “Report,” she said, then: “*Pardon?*”

Pyrrha stood, swaying with the swerving movements of the truck, and picked her way along the handholds to the back where the cover had been lashed down tight. There was a clear window of soft plastic you could look through, so long as you didn’t want to see much or clearly. It would have been bad looking out of it during the day; at night, with a lot of the streetlights gone, it was basically impossible. Over the headset, We Suffer said, short and clipped, “Keep us together. Do not reroute either package. Do not engage. Take the first off-ramp you can find and get us underground.”

Pyrrha had gotten a long look out the window. She suddenly squatted down, working at the pegs that kept the cover tight at the back. A corner flapped free and slapped violently at itself, letting in gusts of hot, muggy night air, which in that space felt like a breeze. Strong, yellow lights from the headlights of the truck behind strobed over them all. Palamedes moved to clamp his arm around Nona’s and Nona held on to her seat and the

armrests tightly as Pyrrha leant out—the truck behind them honked in alarm—and stared out at the street.

When she leant back in, Nona was profoundly upset by her body. Pyrrha was so sinewy and tough, and she was so calm—unbunched, unhurried, unaffected by most things, sweet and slouchy and always the least afraid person in the room, even if that room had Cam in it—but now she looked at Palamedes and Nona with her deep dark eyes, and she had an expression Nona hadn’t seen there before.

“Sextus,” she said, “game over, I’m afraid.”

An air siren was wailing—the one they only used in the rainy season to announce a problematic amount of waves or water. Palamedes looked at Pyrrha and said crisply—“It’s not...?”

“It must have retracted a while ago,” said Pyrrha. “We never could’ve got out of here in the shuttle, no way, no how. The first wave is here.”

We Suffer said—

“No planet-killer has attacked a planet like this in my lifetime, or in the lifetimes of any of my superiors.”

“Number Seven—Varun the Eater—always was lively,” said Pyrrha. “But after killing my necromancer, I’d assumed the damn thing would go dormant for a good century. That’s how it was after it ripped apart Cassiopeia.”

“Is it after the Lyctor?” We Suffer said urgently. “If we neutralised *that* body, then...?”

Palamedes held out his hands helplessly. “If it were responding to the soul of Ianthe Naberius, wouldn’t it have responded days ago? From what I gather, it doesn’t take a Resurrection Beast that long to spin up—the slow part is getting in position, and it’s been in position for months.”

“It doesn’t matter why. There’s Heralds out there,” said Pyrrha impatiently. “If Number Seven’s blown, it’s blown. We’d need a Lyctor to lead it away—a fully instantiated, experienced, *serious* Lyctor, who’d need a start point halfway across the galaxy, preferably with two other Lyctors to engage it in the River ... and if we had all that, we’d hope to God it rerouted the Heralds the moment it found better prey. You want Cyrus, Augustine, Cassiopeia ... You want Gideon the First, and Gideon the First is dead. He’s not coming back. Oh, God, Gideon,” said Pyrrha, suddenly. “Gideon ... G—, you died for *nothing*.”

Suddenly the Captain started violently trembling. Crown immediately moved to hold the Captain's hands away from her face—said, in low tones, “Come on. Come on, Deuterros. I’m here. Fight this, goddamn you. Stay awake and fight,” and the Captain made a noise like *ah, ah, ah*.

Nona made her body stand on its two feet. Two feet—the worst number for feet; not so many that they were ever useful, not so few that you didn’t have to think about them. She walked to the end of the truck and stood where the wheels burred beneath her, and she pushed Pyrrha aside—Pyrrha fell back flat on her back on the bottom of the truck, and she was sorry immediately, but she didn’t have time—and she stood in front of Crown, and she held out her hand.

“Sword,” she said.

Crown said, falteringly, “Nona...?”

She took too long. Nona took her sword. She had to use her hands to bend Crown back, enough to get at the scabbard. It wouldn’t pull free—it was at the wrong angle—so she cut it out of its scabbard. The blade parted the scabbard and came out. It was very heavy on her wrist, and dragged a little on the truck floor with a bright, awful screeching.

There was a gun trained on her. Pash had jumped to her feet. We Suffer was saying, “Passion, do *not* shoot—” and Palamedes was saying, in the other body, “Nona, stop. Nona, talk to me,” and it was too much. Nona had to get out.

She pushed the flap aside—the truck behind them honked again—and she found the side of the truck with her hand. It was too hard to climb with the sword in her other hand—she needed two—so she sheathed it in her hip, making sure it wedged in firmly. Some of the shirt went with it, but it came out the other side. Nona was glad it was someone else’s shirt instead of her Salt Chip Fish Shop shirt. She wasn’t able to think on her love for her Salt Chip Fish Shop shirt—she had clambered up to the top of the truck and was standing there, in the hot wet blast of the wind in the night, with the truck roaring down the street, fishtailing occasionally, and she could see everything.

There was a rain of blobs falling out of the sky. They were shaped like teardrops, twirling crazily as they drove through the atmosphere, lodging themselves in buildings and in the road and in the tops of cars, coming down with an almighty splatter of thick grey mucus. Within these blobs, trembling—the truck was going too fast—Nona saw a thick pod thing like

the miniature sleeping bags worms made for themselves before they bust out as moths. The pods and the mucus were transparent, wreathed in smoke, and there were irregular shapes inside—irregular and shivering shapes—and some of the pods had wings poking through, flexing, pushing.

Nona looked at the truck ahead, which was about one truck length away, and the truck behind, which was about one truck length behind. She walked forward to stand on the hard shell driver's cabin, and with a little run-up she jumped forward and sailed through the distance to land on the truck in front. This hurt her feet briefly—it also hurt the thin metal shell on top of the truck, which dented. She looked up at the sky, and she bellowed: "You said you wouldn't do anything *weird!*"

Nona unsheathed her sword from herself, and nearly wept from fury. She put both her hands on the hilt. She did not know how to hold a sword, and she didn't care.

She could see the broad main drag, with the fisheries off to one side and the harbour far beyond. Her eye, desiring the familiar, looked to where the Building probably was, her home a little grey block among the other grey blocks. The truck made a sudden left turn, veering. The trucks were the only vehicles on the road, but big seething pods had splattered onto the asphalt, and the trucks were having to drive around them. Nona stared around herself as the things kept twirling out of the sky like huge and terrible drops of rain—made hard landings on the buildings, or on the road, or soft landings thudding into the far-off ocean. She could hear yelling—glass breaking—screaming—and the air siren, all at once.

Nona turned around. On the truck she had emerged from, someone was now standing where she had stood, on top of the driver's cab. It wore tattered old trousers and a thin old shirt, and it was the Captain.

The Captain opened her mouth and said, "Get him. Get him. Get him. He flees."

"I can't," said Nona. "I can't do anything. I don't want to do anything."

The Captain moaned, sharply. "All for nothing—you asked for help—you asked ... and all for nothing, only pain. You asked ... I gave you blood for blood."

Nona, grief-stricken, hollered—

"Not like this. I love this place."

"Do you love?" said the Captain's mouth.

Nona struggled. “Yes—no—yes,” she said, then: “I don’t know what it means. I say it, and I don’t know what it means … Did I ever know what it meant?”

“Green thing,” said the Captain. “Green-and-breathing thing, big ghost, the drinker, transformed, what will you eat now? Where will your body go? What did he do to you, to make you this way? You eat yourself. I gorge on unliving marrow.”

It was true; the Captain looked as though she were withering before Nona’s eyes. She cried out in haste: “Don’t … *stop* that! I can’t stop it, but you can stop it. Stop hurting her … She doesn’t know what you’re doing.”

“You cry mercy?” said the Captain.

“Yes—mercy—yes,” said Nona.

“I have crossed the face of the universe,” said the Captain. “I poison it to match my grief.”

“Yes,” said Nona, “but—but stop *this*, stop hurting the Captain…”

She rooted around wildly to find a phrase, and fell back on Cam —“You’re acting out. Maybe you should take five.”

“For eight thousand unjust bodies I will stop,” said the Captain.

Nona said, “No. I want you to stop *now*.”

“They concoct their own vengeance,” said the Captain. “Their justice is not my justice. Their water is not my water. I came to help. I am made a mockery. The danger is upon you, and you do not even know … they are coming out of their tower, salt thing. There is a hole at the bottom of their tower. I will pull their teeth. I will make it blank for you.”

Nona said—

“Hot Sauce never did anything wrong, or Beautiful Ruby or Born in the Morning or Kevin, and Honesty”—here she was compelled by the truth —“Honesty doesn’t know any better. Camilla and Palamedes never did anything wrong … Pyrrha says she did a lot wrong, but at least she knows it … and we don’t like the Captain, but we pity her. Stop hurting the Captain … don’t do this.” And Nona found herself saying— “I’m ready to die … really ready.”

“Nothing is really ready to die,” said the Captain.

Nona took a running leap as the truck rounded another corner; she misjudged—she bounced off the side of a building like a ball—she came to a rolling stop in front of the Captain, and knocked her down, and they both fell together. Nona looked at the Captain’s face with its closed eyes—still

wasted, but not dead, and looking a little less like a piece of fruit someone had sucked all the juice out of.

Nona lay on her back atop the stretched canvas, and Nona's mouth said — “Just wait. Just help me ... help me do this. I might be different ... soon.”

The big dark shapes were still twirling out of the sky, silently it seemed, although there were mismatched *boom—CRACKs* distantly resounding at the very tops of the tall buildings. Nona watched them anxiously—the sky was so thick with them—but were they thinning? Were fewer falling?

Nona stared up at the sky. She felt movement next to her. The Captain was looking at her, eyes open: normal eyes—the whites covered in little red spindles from where the veins had burst, the ring around the iris deeply black, the iris deeply brown. One of her hands was clasped to the back of her neck, as though it hurt her.

“Harrowhark?” said the Captain doubtfully.

Nona looked up at the sky. She was very tired—or at least, there was a tiredness happening to her: a huge, neighbouring exhaustion that lived, when she sought it, beneath her neck. It was hard understanding how her body fit together. She had to deliberately think about its different parts, when she wanted to feel a sensation.

She closed her eyes. “No,” she finally admitted. “And I never was.”

JOHN 1:20

IN THE DREAM they breached what he called the reception area and were confronted with a series of long corridors. At intervals down the hallway were more tidal heaps of furniture and stone—and bones, but the bones had been moved by the water and settled far away from where they had originally fallen. Bones and bodies and parts of bodies. He lingered by them and he said, “Those shitty fucking barricades,” and caressed the edges of desks and broken chairs. There were huge black scorch marks on everything, fragments of metal and bone embedded in the walls. Pockmarks everywhere. Little round holes. It was barely traversable.

After a while he hesitated and some of the bones got up. They assembled themselves into wet, splinterous heaps. Chips flew out of the walls and out of the water and they were perfect again, softly white and glowing in the darkness. They scrambled past him and her and started clearing a path. A slow way to do it, but he didn’t seem to mind.

He said, We couldn’t get anywhere near political conferences anymore, physical or online. But the guy I was walking around was still invited, so I got in for free. He was my eyes and ears. Nobody was arguing about the FTL plan at that point, Wave One was in place and getting ready for final international inspections. They were all arguing about us. How to deal with us. Who should deal with us. Always thought it was funny when I had to puppet my guy into doing speeches about how his government thought I should be brought to justice. I didn’t mind.

He said, What I *did* mind was the fucking state of the first wave of evacuee ships. I saw the inspection reports, I saw the questions about second-wave logistics, about exactly who was getting to ride those ships out of here. None of them could pass any kind of muster. See, back in our headquarters we thought the worst they would do was set up some kind of fucking pay-for-preference system to get the richest bastards out first and save everyone else for second wave, maybe third. I can’t believe how naive I was. It was M—who came to me one night looking like she’d seen a fucking ghost. Apparently A—’s little brother and her nun had been obsessing over bank movements and assets. Going crazy checking manifests. M— said, *I’ve worked out what they’re doing. I’ve worked out the plan. I thought they’d merely make people pay to see who got to jump the queue, but there is no queue.*

She said to me, *John, there is no second wave. There is no third. They're escaping. The trillionaires have converted everything to material resources. Half these passenger manifests are made up, these aren't real people. They've fucked everyone, even the governments. There'll be one single ship of internationals who think they're on Wave One to Tau Ceti, and everyone else will be corporate, or have bought a ticket, or be useful. They're leaving us to die.*

I had to have her breathe into a bag for a while, because she hated it when I tried to fix her anxiety attacks with necromancy. When she could talk I was just all, *Are you sure.*

She said, *John, there they go!!*

And I said, *Not as long as I have breath in my body.*

At this point the skeletons had freed some debris from an entryway and they could both get through. It led to an equally tumbledown, fire-smoked wreck that had not been improved by spending a few weeks underwater. More bodies everywhere—lots of them still with meat on their bones—another assemblage of furniture and a big cracked table with more holes in it. He said, “God, this kitchen’s fucked.” He stepped over bodies as his skeletons fought him a path toward a set of cupboards, and he squatted in front of them and opened a cupboard, and more foetid water came out. She was feeling light-headed by then. Eventually he returned with his arms full of cans, saying, “Hey—peaches in syrup.” He did not seem to know how to open the can. One of his skeletons came over and he fused their fingerbones into a kind of saw, and he sawed through the top of the can. In that dank and awful room they ate peach halves together, slippery and yellow and squashy, with their fingers. They were so sweet she stopped tasting them after the first bite, but they made her feel better.

After half a can of peaches he stopped and said—Our last chance was to talk to our government, tell them everything we knew. It wasn’t like they’d stopped listening, but we got the impression that they couldn’t listen to us unless we all came in with our hands up.

He said, We never should have talked to them at all. What we said spooked someone, who told someone else, and word got through to the fucking FTL project, who started moving like their asses were on fire. The timeline changed. We were down to days, not months. Our intel said they were getting their people on board, setting up the elevators to get to the orbital launcher, which we were told was fully operational. I was going to

have to physically stop those ships from launching. Problem was, they were launching from multiple platforms, and I didn't know if I could stop every single one.

C— had been saying, *Can't we gin up some kind of miracle? John, can't you do an act of good wizardry? Any way to stabilise the North America glacier? Any way to trap atmosphere over the Northern Territory, show them we can fix things here?* But A— said, *That's for later, first things first, bum-rush the ships, pull the bastards out, make them do the cryo plan instead. Get the population safely out, and we can stay behind and clear the planet. If John's up for it.*

He said, I was *trying*. I was so close to cracking this third thing, the soul. I'd realised there was the energy you produced from being alive and the energy you produced when you died, but the fact that energy was produced *when you died* meant there was another phase. I could get a corpse's heart beating and get all the neurons firing in the brain, but it wasn't producing the alive stuff anymore. It wasn't an on-off switch. I'd stopped sleeping and I wasn't eating much, I was keeping my body going just by fiddling with the processes.

He said, It made sense that every human had a well of this energy, this soul energy, but I couldn't distinguish it from anything else. Even on the day I'd killed all those cops there was too much noise and I couldn't work out what the noise was. I could tell it was the thing I was looking for, but I didn't understand why it seemed so *big*. And I didn't know what to do with it, or how to use it.

So I said to everyone, *I can't stop them myself, not yet. We have to stall them. We know they need Pan-Euro's orbital gate access, so let's make sure they can't get it. Let's make sure nobody wants to give them orbital gate access.*

He said, And all of us looked at the floorboards.

He said, None of us wanted to actually nuke anything. But a nuke's good blackmail, right? A nuke adds a lot of pressure, right? The people who knew it was there, they knew that if we talked about having a nuke everyone would find out *who gave us a fucking nuke*. So we said to our client, Pan-Euro cannot be allowed to let these people through. They're cutting and running. They're leaving ten billion people behind to die, having stolen financing and support and materials. They're leaving us to drown. And we said, We don't want to make a scene, but ...

They said, *Okay, okay, but hand the fucking nuke back, we've changed our minds. We'll stop Pan-Euro, we'll put our whole weight into making sure they don't get out of orbit. But we want the bomb back before you do something crazy.*

He said, They took so long that the ships were counting down to launch. We were about forty-eight hours away from Wave One at that point. A couple of nations were all, *Hang on, this is early, this isn't to schedule*, but the FTL project said they were doing a mock run because preparation was going so well. How the hell did anyone buy that? How much money was changing hands? Didn't they realise that if these bastards were giving away insane amounts of cash it was because they didn't think cash was worth anything anymore?

He said, So here's us, planning to meet these agents in neutral territory, across the ditch, over in the huddle where the Territory refugees were. They wanted us to pass the nuke back. We all voted to trust them, but A— and G — and M— and I came up with a just-in-case plan. Forty-eight hours became twenty-four so quickly. G— fixed up the case and carried it over alone, with caveats. Nobody liked that. They were all, *Shit, John, send someone dead, send a puppet*. But I wanted G—. P— volunteered to go with him, but G— said he wouldn't arm it if P— was in range. P— went off at him, but it was one of those times where he held his ground against her. I remember. She called him a stupid kid.

He said, I had—I had this weird gut feeling before we sent him off, on that private plane. And I was getting pretty good at that time, even if I wasn't good enough. I took G— downstairs and I got him to face the wall, and I took his arm off.

He said, He didn't feel any pain, and I grew him a new one then and there. Bit of a gamble, but I was sure I could do that by then. I wanted his arm ... his material. He didn't even ask me to explain. That was the kind of guy he was. He and I had grown up on the same street. I'd spotted him for mince pies all the time as kids, so stands to reason he let me cut off his arm and carried a nuke for me.

He added contemplatively, Should still be around here. The arm, I mean. I stuffed it in the morgue so nobody would find it. I've got plans for that arm.

Then he took a moment to eat another bright yellow wedge of peach.

After the peach wedge he said, Where was I? G— on his way with the nuke. The ships on the launchpad, twenty hours to go now, less. So much waiting around. Me in my bedroom with a nun and a migraine, her thinking that if she pushed me enough we'd instantiate the Trinity and we'd all be saved. Everyone else drinking. The clock ticking louder than ever before. C— admitting out of nowhere she's dating N—. All of us like, *What? We've known for a year? Go ahead and get married already, we've got a nun.* N— was all, *That's not legal.* C— of all people said, *Who cares.* That's how bad it was.

He said, C— and N— got married right over there, you can't see it now 'cause of the rubbish. I made flowers grow for them out of the garden, but they came out ... weird. Some of the roses had teeth. C— and N— thought that was hilarious.

He said, The dome meant we hadn't had full sunlight in a while. It was beautiful anyway, I cried the whole service. I couldn't remember the last time I'd eaten food.

He said, An hour and forty-two minutes later, G— landed and made his way to the meetup, and that's when I had to tell everyone that the nuke was armed and G— was a dead-man's switch. First I told our contacts, then I had to tell C— and N— and P— and everyone.

He said, They went apeshit. Which I don't think was entirely fair.

I said to them, *You think they weren't just going to shoot him first thing? You think there aren't six snipers with beads on G—right now?* But they weren't only aggro about G—, they were aggro that a nuke might go off and kill a couple million people. I was like, *Guys, it's fine, they're Australian.*

He said, Wow. Talk about jokes with no hope of landing.

He said, The contacts stayed pretty calm though. They said, *John, we're not doing anything until you dismantle the switch and disarm the bomb. It's not a fair conversation if you have this nuke on the table. Also, you will not be hurting any of us with this suitcase nuke. We are not even sitting in that country, so where would that get you? Who would you be hurting, John?*

And I said, *Yeah, I thought about that.*

They said, *Did you?*

I said, *Yes. On that note, do you remember the dead guy you've mocked up to look alive, the one who still has executive power over your own nuclear codes, who you gave me total access to?*

He said, By that time I had him in position. It was pretty easy. I just made sure that everyone around him wasn't part of the conspiracy, that nobody around could stop me, and I locked the doors. They gave him—me—the codes. I had his finger on the button. I told them: *You have thirty minutes to tell Pan-Euro that there is no way those gates are opening for those ships.*

They said, *You wouldn't. It would be nuclear war.*

I said, *I'd do anything. You know I would. Cows exhibit mourning behaviour for other cows.*

He said, At this point my people were like, *John, what the fuck? What the fuck is happening?* We were all yelling at each other. First time I'd ever seen C— angry. N— and P— were having a go at me too, and the nun and A—'s hedge-fund-manager brother had teamed up to try to mediate, which as per usual made everyone pissed off at them instead. A— and M— were on my side, kind of, or at least the side of *this will be fine, we can walk this back, nothing's going to happen, right, John.* I was pissed. I told them it would work. N— was all, *It's not going to work. This is going to end with the ships launching and G— getting shot, and you're going to kill millions of people for nothing. We followed you to save the world.*

I said, *We're doing that. This is how we save the world. Believe me.*

C— said, *John, your problem is that you care less about being a saviour than you do about meting out punishment.*

I said, *C—, I was just your best man!*

C— said, *You still are. That doesn't change the fact that you can be quite the most appallingly vindictive person I have ever met.*

He said, Things went from bad to worse. The other side scrambled pretty quickly. Like, what you've got to keep in mind is that we've got hundreds of cultists on both sides of the cow wall, and quite a lot of these guys are One Nation nutbars who think they're going to see out the end of the world in a bunker and live to build a beautiful paradise that looks a hell of a lot like *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*. And those guys have illegal semiautomatics. We've still got Wi-Fi, more's the fucking pity, and those guys are talking to their people on the outside, and they flip. So while me and the others are having this massive fight, we get the message that a hundred of these guys have changed their minds about us, and they've surrounded the inner building with guns and we're going down. They've

taken a hell of a lot of the other cultists hostage, so if I start killing anyone the hostages are dead meat.

He said, We kept on yelling at one another, but we mobilised while we yelled, making barricades. I *didn't* just kill them all. It would have looked completely fucking shitty, and I was trying to win an argument that I didn't solve all my problems with murder. Everything always happens at the worst time. We got everyone in the building on lockdown, using a bunch of procedures we developed in case some of the cryo stuff leaked. Shutters down, fire doors locked remotely, that kind of thing. And we built the barricades. You saw those.

He said, We tried talking to them, saying, *Wow, this is not the time. Be chill.* They didn't listen.

A— said they'd sold out. I didn't think so. They'd seen me fuck up once, killing the cops, and once people see you do something and come to an opinion about it, there's nothing you can do. People don't forgive, not really. Once they doubt, you've already lost them. That's what was scaring me about the others. Had I already lost my best friends? The only people I needed? I'd just caught the fucking tooth bouquet at C— and N—'s wedding. What if that didn't matter?

After a moment he said, Anyway.

The outside force of ex-cultists with guns were trying to force their way in, said they'd open fire if I didn't walk out, and I said, *Okay, do you want me to walk out, should I go,* and A— and M— and the others said, *Don't you dare, John.* Instead I sent out a couple skeletons to try to save the hostages. Lot of fighting, lot of confusion. We got some of the hostages inside the building, but then they charged us. We sealed up the hall when they busted through reception. You saw the front doors, right? They had Molotov cocktails. I was all, *Next cult, let's go for teenage girls instead, write that down somewhere.* M— was all, *Are you kidding, at least with these guys we have a chance of getting out alive.*

I was still on call with G— the whole time. He was holding up well, dealing with a lot of negotiators telling him pretty awful shit. He was immovable. That was why I wanted him in: G— only listened to two people in his fucking life. He wasn't going to listen to some white-collar asshole in a Kevlar jacket preaching about cost analysis. I was pretty sure he was safe: they were too scared to do anything to him. I was more freaked out about the guys hammering on the barricades. I couldn't even take them down,

because I was trying to do sixty fucking things at once. I was walking around a dead politician, I was having six conversations with people I was trying to negotiate with while making a barricade out of lawn chairs, and the hour was ticking down and I didn't—I didn't know what to do anymore. I'd lost my nerve. I didn't know what I was going to do when the hour ran out. I had to admit that to myself. It was taking a lot of effort not to ice everyone within a kilometre, if only to get some fucking peace and quiet. But I figured that'd lose me the moral high ground.

He said, They were skirmishing down the hall when I *did* freak out and lock myself in the bedroom. I didn't let anyone in except Ulysses and Titania, because they wouldn't fight with me. Here. Let me take you.

He took her from the kitchen, the can of peaches forgotten. The skeletons moved to clear all the rubble from their path. At one point they reached a solid mass of bone, and as he approached it collapsed into dust so that he was walking through a bad-smelling mist. She followed him. The hallway behind it was clear, no piles of broken furniture or broken walls, but everything was filthy with water. The walls bowed. The lights had been ripped out of their housings, and parts of the ceiling had torn open and revealed big black gaps above the roofing panels. At last one of the skeletons opened a door so that they could stand on the threshold of a room, just a few steps away from what on first blush looked like a pile of wet brown clothes. So much of what was left looked like wet brown clothes. But there was a body inside those clothes that had not come through the water well. She looked at it, but he didn't; he looked anywhere but at it. He covered his face, he uncovered his face. He looked away. It took him a long time to talk.

When he could, he said, M— and her nun spent a while yelling through the door at me. Well, M— was yelling. M— kept saying this was too far, she knew I didn't want to do this, I could walk this back. She told me everything could be okay so long as none of those buttons got pushed. She said the ex-cultists had made it as far as the labs, so what were we going to do? I didn't respond. Eventually M— gave up and went away.

He said, more dreamily, Not much left of the hour. Everyone would have been inside the ships, everyone would have been in place, they would have been doing last-minute checks. There was G— waiting in the middle of a city centre across the ocean, definitely half a dozen sniper beads on him, a nuke in his hand. I could feel it. I was there with him. I was with a

dead body in a command room, security detail none the wiser, with three guys with codes and their fingers on the buttons, everyone who knows this guy's a walking stiff locked out of the room. A nun praying for my clarity outside my bedroom door. A bunch of scared ex-cultists exchanging fire with the faithful down the hall. It was only a matter of time before someone I loved caught a bullet that I couldn't bring them back from. I needed to do something. I couldn't do anything.

He said, Eventually it was the nun who changed things. She knocked on my door and said very nicely, *John, how are you doing?* And I said, *Not great, honestly.* She said, *John, how close are you to finding the soul?*

And I said, *I can't, Sister. It's too big. I don't understand why it's so huge. I can't find the soul inside the body, I don't know where to look. I don't know what I'm doing.*

She prayed over me, and then she went away for the longest five minutes of my life. Call came down the line that they were trying to evacuate the city around G—but I was all, *You took too long, you know that won't work.* And they didn't talk to me again.

Then the nun came back and knocked on my door and said, *John, I think I have it. I know you're very scared right now, but I'm going to help you. Please let me in.*

He said: I let her in. She'd brought P—'s gun.

As they stood in that filthy hallway, he looked down at the brown collection of clothes and body. She did too, recognising, dimly, what she was looking at. He said, “Don’t. This isn’t what she looks like.”

And he said, as though he were underwater with the rest of everything: I guess in all the confusion P— didn't notice it was missing. I thought she was there to kill me. Titania and Ulysses were there, but I didn't have them jump in front of me, I didn't have them stop her. I guess I almost—I was feeling pretty bad, you know? I was feeling pretty shaken.

He said, She just smiled at me. She said, *John, don't misunderstand. I want to help you. I truly believe that in our most terrible hours we don't instinctively reach out to God; we push ourselves away from Him. Don't feel bad for not rising heroically to the occasion right now. Fear doesn't help us achieve a state of grace; it deafens the heart. John, I truly believe you can save everyone. So concentrate, please.*

She said, *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.* And she shot herself.

He said, Her soul hung there, for a second, nothing more. And I tried to keep her—all I was thinking was that I had to save *her*, had to stop this fuckup if I couldn't stop any of the others. I'd got a huge injection of the death energy close up, and it was like getting meth injected into my eyeballs. For the first time I could hold a soul and see its edges, pin it down. It was like a tiny atom bomb. I could tell immediately that this was the missing link. If I could only control it. I should have been able to take that bullet out of her brain and undo the damage. Fix the soul back in. Bring her back to life.

He said, But I held her soul in my hands and I knew why it had been so hard, because I was tuned in. I was looking at the code. I knew why I hadn't been able to see anything.

He said, When I touched her soul, I touched *you*.

He said, You were the noise that was everywhere. It was like trying to talk to someone down a phone line with someone screaming through a megaphone in the same room. You drowned everything out. You were so huge and so complicated, and you were screaming. You wouldn't stop screaming. You were so scared. You were so goddamn mad.

She said, "I was?"

He said, "It wasn't your fault."

He said, But that's when I realised you were there. And I realised the soul of a single human being was incredible, but at the same time—*incredible small potatoes*. I wasn't holding two nukes on the line. I was holding three. And compared to you, the other two were birthday candles.

He said, I left her dead in the bedroom. Did I take something? I don't think I took anything, not even Ulysses and Titania. I didn't have much blood on me. I wiped it off on a jumper and left the jumper in the bedroom too. Nobody noticed. We had the next problem to hand. While the crazies made us wait, they'd flipped some of the faithful *inside* the dome. Told them I was busy plotting nuclear war or something else wildly unfair. When I walked back into the kitchen they were all shooting each other.

He said, I just kind of stood there and watched it happen, I think. It wasn't like people shooting each other in a movie. You'd have someone shoot someone. Everyone would yell about it. Then someone else would shoot *that* person. It was all awkward, like they were angry but taking turns. A—'s little brother was there ... dead in the middle ... shot from both sides. Nobody likes a peacemaker. The more they shot each other, the angrier they

got. I don't think they even noticed me watching them. It was like I was invisible. They made each other dead in front of me, and I felt each one ... like popping bubble wrap ... only I held on to them, I collected them up. In the next room I found C— and N—. They'd shot C— first ... and right in front of my eyes they shot N—. Pop. Bubble wrap. I don't know what happened to them. This part gets a little weird, you know? Like I dreamed it. I remember P— behind a barricade ... not dead yet ... telling me, *John, run*. I remember A— and M—... they were alive ... we all hid behind a kitchen table. I remember their hands in my hands ... I remember A— telling me something, and M— saying, *We're together. We'll go together*.

But they found us, they were already there. They shot A— right in front of us ... hauled me out ... M— said, *Take John alive. He's worth more to you alive*. And they shot her.

He stood there and he said: "Do you remember what I said was coming?"

She said, "Yes."

He said, "This is the part where I hurt you. Are you ready?"

She said, "Yes."

He said, You were screaming. I wanted you to stop, I wanted ... I wanted you. I wanted you like a caveman wants a wildfire ... or the sun. I thought you were going to take me, somehow. Purge me. Use me as an instrument. But you didn't say anything ... I was babbling, Show me. Come on. I'm ready. You kept screaming and screaming ... like a baby in pain. So I tried to hurt you—I *did* hurt you. I reached out for you, and it hurt you ... but I wasn't strong enough. The caveman. The wildfire. The Neolithic priest staggering in front of the falling star.

He said, I felt P— go. G— was the last one alive. I reached out and stopped G—'s heart.

He paused and said, I'm still sorry it was Melbourne, honestly. Love a working tram service.

Abruptly, he turned around and walked out of the room, passed back into the kitchen. The skeletons knocked holes in the crusted-up glass so that air came rushing through to them, and he rattled the handle of the glass doors until they opened up and he could stand outside on the tiles. He stood there, his eyes glowing like lamps in the shadowed air, and he looked out at the sky.

He said, God, that hurt you. That stung. I ate every single death.

He said, I let go. In the body they'd paid me to puppet, I gave the command. That command was heard round the world ... so many men with so many fingers on so many buttons. The world went down in dominoes. Launch one nuke, you'll get twenty thousand anti-air missiles in response. SAM sites open up all over the earth, like wildflowers. One little nuke ... then a lot of bigger nukes ... Christ, why'd we have 'em? Nukes into nukes into nukes. They came out of subs and bunkers and scrambled jets. The funny thing is, it was all to try to make the other ones stop firing ... like an old comedy sketch.

He said, First, I became a demigod. I nearly fell out of my body. I put my hand around half the world's throats. Some of them I managed to snap before they were melted away by nuclear fire. I did them clean. Everyone died, but I helped a hell of a lot of them go before they knew anything had happened. I drank them in, and it wasn't enough. I needed those ships. I needed to extend my hand. I got it around the throat of the other half. I made them go away too. Then I had control of everything on the surface, but not the ships ... birds flying above the fire ... kids playing keep-away.

He said, I put my hands around your neck.

He said, I cupped your soul in my hands.

He said, I took you into myself and we became one.

He said, meditatively, I mean, I *tried*. There was so much of you—you weren't the small, stained soul of a normal human being. You were so much bigger than that. I opened my mouth and tried to cram you inside ... you didn't fit. I dropped to my knees—here, I believe.

He strode forward. She saw what he was pointing at: a pile of grassless dirt.

He said, So I dropped to my knees here, right ... I scooped dirt into my mouth ... ate until I vomited. I gathered up the bloody earth ... I realised you were too much for me. This is the problem, the incorporation, this is the hardest part ... It's the human instinct, to take. When you burn your thumb, you stick it in your mouth, right? And there was still too much of me that was just a human being ...

He said, I didn't stick my thumb in my mouth. Had more sense than that. Fuck knows what would've happened if I tried to absorb you all the way; I probably would've burnt to death. But I needed a house to put you in, if I wasn't going to put all of you in *me*. I made you one on the fly ... I

wasn't even thinking ... I ripped half my ribs from my body and made you from the dirt, my blood, my vomit, my bone.

He said, I wanted to make you the most beautiful body I could think of.

He paused and said: "But I was stressed, okay? I was insane. Most of what had made me John had gone somewhere else. There were a few little thoughts left ... a handful of things that made me *me* ... a couple scraps of id. It's not fair to judge me, right? I didn't do this *thinking* ... I didn't do it like *art*. When I was seven, you know, all Nana had to play with in her house was some of Mum's old toys. And my favourite out of all of them..."

He gave a long, shuddering sigh.

"My favourite was her old Hollywood Hair Barbie," he murmured. "I loved her little gold outfit and her long yellow hair. She was the best. She got to have all the adventures. There was also a Bride's Dream Midge, but Mum had cut Midge's hair into this weird mullet. It was Barbie for me."

She looked at him. He looked at her.

He added, "Not Hollywood Hair Ken. Mum had him too, but he was a creep. I gave him to Nana's dog to eat."

He said, From my blood and bone and vomit I conjured up a beautiful labyrinth to house you in. I was terrified you'd find some way to escape before I was done. I made you look like a Christmas-tree fairy ... I made you look like a Renaissance angel ... I made you Adam and Eve ... Galatea. Barbie. Frankenstein's monster with long yellow hair.

He said, As the world went up I remade us both. I hid me in you ... I hid you in me. And when we were together ... once the shaman had claimed the sun ... I became God.

He said, It wasn't enough.

He said, The ships ... the ships were still full of people. I reached our hand out into space. I extended. I struggled.

He said, I bit through the sun first. It's human nature. *That* started things going. Once you take down the sun, you're cooking with gas, pardon the pun. I sliced through Venus, Mercury, Mars ... by that point a couple of the tugs had already launched through the Kuiper. I had to kill Jupiter and Saturn in a fucking hurry. I reached ... they blinked away from me ... all I could do was hope that they'd watched what I was doing and all died from fucking terror.

You and I went full fucking Hungry Caterpillar. We took Uranus ... Neptune ... crunched down Pluto ... found every satellite and craft, reached

in, crunched up all the humans, moved on. I didn't know how to look, you see, only how to touch. The moment I found the fleet spinning up to enter FTL, it was too late ... I could only grab one of them ... and you and I held it in the palm of our hand. I was in there with them. All those frightened people. All those runaway rats.

He stopped.

She said, "Then?"

He said, Then they were gone ... lost to me in time, forever. That'll teach me not to hesitate.

She folded her arms across her chest. She wasn't cold, but she felt as though she ought to be. Standing out in the shadows, in the dust and the dirt, with the reeking concrete shell behind them, she wanted to be cold.

He said, lightly—"That's it. That's the story. That's what I did."

"Oh," she said.

Then he said—"Do you remember what you said to me once I had done it? When we stood here together?"

She looked at him and she said, "Yes."

He said—"You said, 'I picked you to change, and this is how you repay me?'"

She said—"What else did I say?"

He said: "You said, 'What have you done to me? I am a hideousness.'"

She said—"What else did I say?"

He said, "Where did you put the people? Where did they go?"

She said, "I still love you."

He said, "You said that too."



28

NONA WOKE ON THE COLD, shoe-smelling surface of the back of a truck, in the dark mostly. The seats seemed to close in on her arms and legs, and she panicked briefly, thrashing her head this way and that, until somebody said, quite gently—

“Chill.”

The back doors of the truck were wide open—the air was cool and damp and reeked of oil and cold road. From far off there were the familiar peppery sounds of gunfire—a yell, occasionally—metal creaks and moans that echoed sharply all over the place, as though she were stationed in a deep tunnel. This was because she *was* stationed in a deep tunnel, she realised. She sat up and looked out the back of the truck and saw blackness stretch before her—blackness occasionally relieved by pockets of pale pink light, the spluttery try-hard light you got from solar power, offering little relief to the eye. Much bigger spotlights had been placed at points on the road, like windows to some other world—big luminous rectangles, suckling on cables that were lying in thick coils over the painted concrete, in heaps and snarls. Some of them led back into the truck; and there was Prince Kiriona Gaia, stretched out on the seats, lying flat, looking at her from the shadows with those golden eyes like a dead animal’s.

Nona looked at her; she looked at Nona. They looked at each other for a very long time. The scarf at Kiriona’s neck had been tied back up, and her jacket had been buttoned up, so that you couldn’t see her wounds. The corpse prince looked at her, and her expression was flat, and cool, and metallic.

Kiriona said, “Where is she?”

Nona didn’t know what to say. The corpse prince urged—

“Come on. Where’d she go? Where is she?”

“I don’t know who you’re talking about,” said Nona miserably.

“Listen, she can be in hell for all I care, I won’t get mad,” said Kiriona. “She can be at the bottom of the sea or at the bottom of space. I just need to know—*where*.”

When Nona didn’t answer, the corpse prince said—

“Okay. Different question. Do you love her?”

“Take a walk, Nav,” said a new voice.

It was Pyrrha, at the back of the truck, looking stretched thin and worn out. There were long, healing grazes going up both of her arms, like she’d taken a tumble since Nona last saw her, extending up to underneath her neck. Her stubble was a glittery scrape of red across her cheeks and on the underside of her chin and upper lip. Her hard, familiar face looked impossibly tired.

Kiriona said, “Kind of pretending to be dead here.”

“All right. *We’ll* take a walk. Don’t go anywhere, and stop being a little shit,” said Pyrrha.

“It’s genetic,” said the corpse prince.

Pyrrha got up into the back of the truck, making it jolt and jostle, and shifted cables away from Nona.

Nona said, trying to find the words: “The fingers—the things...?”

“The Heralds have us pinned down in here,” said Pyrrha. “Not that many of ‘em, but even a handful is more than enough.”

“Oh, yeah, those things are bastards,” said Kiriona. “I fought a handful up close, back on the Mithraeum.”

“Yeah, well. We fight those things up close, the fight’s over. You have to take them out long range. Couple of BoE cars are taking potshots at them from the on-ramp, about two kilometres down. No—don’t move, kiddie...”

Nona had tried to slither her way up into the halo of Pyrrha’s arms, and found her legs felt like blocks of marble. They had never felt that way before: sort of fizzy and numb. Sometimes her gang had given each other dead legs and arms, and she had offered herself up for this treatment, but to her disappointment it had never worked on her. Pyrrha cradled her in her arms and worked her way, very carefully, out the back of the truck. It was dark and echoey outside, with small sanctuaries of light here and there on the oil-smelling road.

There was a barrier a little way from the truck, a waist-high slab of concrete. Pyrrha put her down with her back propped against it, then

crouched next to her.

Nona said, surprised: "I can't walk."

"Do you remember what happened after you blacked out on top of the car?" asked Pyrrha.

"No," said Nona.

"Maybe that's for the best," said Pyrrha. Then she opened her mouth and said quietly—

"A..."

"Don't," Nona found herself saying. "Don't. Don't call me that or anything like that ... don't make me remember. I don't want to ... You won't like it. Don't. Don't make me do it."

Pyrrha said, "Don't freak out, junior. Cool it," but she didn't feel cool at all, she felt horribly hot. Something itched wetly and warmly on the back of her neck, and she raised a trembling hand to touch the spot, but Pyrrha took her wrist and said, "Don't smear it. It's meant to keep ... to keep you in the body as long as possible."

The grip on Nona's wrist was firm and gentle and totally normal—how many times had Pyrrha grasped her wrist, before crossing a road, or helping her stand, or twirling her around to songs on the radio? But from some hole in the back of Nona's cupboard behind a fake plank of wood in Nona's brain, her voice said roughly: "Don't touch me."

Pyrrha dropped her wrist, and Nona's voice went on and on:

"Did you think this was *fun*, Pyrrha Dve? Did you think this was lovely? Family. Blood. Together. Kiss, kiss. A child's game. You say nice words and everyone pretends they are the words you say. Here is a house. We live in it. Worms slithering over each other ... Did you *like* playing pretend? Did you like being mother and father? You should have given into your desires and eaten us. Chew and swallow. More natural. Would have respected you for it..."

The voice died away and Nona, in agonies of hatred and repulsion and embarrassment, tried to curl up in on herself, only it didn't work. She felt as though she had been interrupted in the bathroom. White-hot, fatal shame seemed to start in her middle and travel outward, and she got her own voice and she said—

"Don't, don't, *don't*. Don't do this to me, Pyrrha ... Pyrrha, just let me die. It's nicer. I can't bear it."

Nona cried for a little while. The tears oozed out of her eyes and landed in her lap. Her face felt hot, and the back of her neck was sore and itchy. After a while the tears subsided, and Pyrrha said—“Better?”

“Yeah,” said Nona, and felt her voice tremble, but said more steadily: “Yes. Can I have a tissue?”

“Wait till Cam and Sextus get here. You don’t want any tissue that’s been in my pockets.”

“Did they find the Sixth House?”

“Yes—thanks to you. And the megatrucks weren’t hard to stop either. The moment Ctesiphon grounded the first one, the others pretty well gave up. It’s ... extenuating circumstances.”

This cheered Nona up a little. “That’s good, isn’t it?”

Pyrrha’s face did not look as though she thought it was altogether good.

“Nona,” she said carefully, “what if I told you I thought this was the end of the line, honey? I’m not sure any of us are getting out of this one.”

This cheered Nona up a lot, but she hesitated before saying so. It was an awful relief ... that she and Pyrrha and Cam and Palamedes were all together, and nobody had to worry about the next day, or the day after that; that she could put everything else out of her mind—violently put everything else out of her mind—and she did not have to try anymore. But her relief was hard to articulate in a way that did not make her sound awful. So she simply said, “I’ll behave.”

“Let’s go see the others,” said Pyrrha. “You okay to be picked up again?”

Pyrrha’s boots crunched on the shiny black surface as she carried Nona. A megatruck loomed out of the darkness, blizzarded over with luminous strips, bigger than any truck Nona had ever seen. It was as tall as a house. If it had been driven up somehow next to the classroom building you could have stepped out of the window and stood on the top. It rose up out of sight, its top lost to the blackness, and was so wide that it took Pyrrha something like twenty seconds to walk around its bumper. A huge shutter had opened, and a ramp had been laid down, and there were people milling around next to a much smaller Blood of Eden truck with the soldiers laying people down on rollaway beds: checking them over, doing something medical, fluttering in the darkness like moths. Nona noticed many of the people being helped had wide, watery white eyes just like the makeup that Nona had gotten earlier: the sticky, filmy gazes that had so terrified Honesty’s crew.

Camilla was sitting in a chair. The chair had wheels. She had a clipboard in her hands, and the body of Ianthe Naberius was there behind the chair, as Palamedes in his shoulders and the line of his head as ever. Various people tottered down the ramps, assisted by Blood of Eden soldiers—Crown and, astonishingly, Pash, helping an extremely feeble and aged person, about Nona's size. Palamedes looked very distracted as they approached. He was saying—“Cam, can we get any update on the tunnels?—For fuck's sake, can someone please stop my mother from walking around talking to Blood of Eden? Someone's going to put a bullet in her head. Go ask Kester Cinque to do it; he can actually talk to people, though I think right now he's wishing he never left Koniortos. *Where* are your fathers? Why is this like herding chickens? Nona, how are you?”

Nona felt very lost and astonished and weary. “Are *all these* your family?” she asked.

“Metaphorically yes, literally it's complicated,” he said. There was a great calm relief in his body, which Nona did not expect. Cam was slumped in her chair and she was about six degrees paler than she had ever been. “My mother wanted to meet you—too bad for her, I assume she's off asking one of the junior officers about the philosophy of violence and how these trucks work and what everyone does for a living.”

Most of the people being helped could not stand, and they all looked thin and crumpled and haggard, though quite cheerful in many cases, Nona thought. Pyrrha looked around and said, “Sextus, any Heralds get down here, I'm not sure these people will survive.”

Camilla said, “They wouldn't.”

Her voice was thin, barely a whisper. Palamedes supplied, “They're in pretty poor shape, yes ... but there's also everyone in the city to think about. I've tried to explain to them what's happening, and they've got the gist, but before you ask about necromancy, that's right out. The Master Archivist says any display of aptitude on their part crocks them for days—blinding themselves nearly killed them, and that was when they were much stronger. There's no hope of us taking anyone back to the barracks to work on something as fine-grained as those wards Ianthe left.”

Nona felt herself being shunted around in Pyrrha's arms, her weight shifted from side to side. Pyrrha said, “And Ianthe...”

“Kicking,” said Palamedes. He smiled again. “She's getting lively now. And quite shockingly angry.”

“Sextus,” said Pyrrha, “I’m not used to saying this, but I’m fresh out of plans, and either you’re so completely high on lovey-dovey cavalier shit that you’ve taken leave of your senses—and, you know, fair do’s, I’ve been there—or you know something I don’t.”

“It’s not that I *know* anything, Pyrrha,” said Palamedes. “It’s that I’m feeling ready to gamble. In a couple of minutes—once the commander gets back to me with the manual—I’m loading everyone here back into the truck. They’re going over it now, in case Merv Wing left anything untoward inside.”

Nona peered around into the truck, into the big well of dim light, and tried to be positive but cautious.

“Palamedes, you know I get motion sick.”

“I know. I’m sorry. You’ll only have to put up with it for a bit, Nona, I promise.”

Pyrrha said, “Look, I know this thing has the tonnage you usually find in spacecraft, but if your plan is to hoon around the city squashing Heralds as you go I have to tell you: that’s *not* going to work.”

“Didn’t think of that,” said Camilla.

Palamedes said, “No. Don’t worry, Dve, my ambitions don’t extend to the city surface. Hang on—here comes the committee.”

The commander and someone that Nona had never met walked into the big yellow square of light in front of the ramp. The commander looked normal, except Nona was struck afresh by the enormous contrast between her and Palamedes: We Suffer looked a *lot* more like Pyrrha, in that she was stressed and wild-eyed and had a fatal, brisk focus that was completely at odds with Palamedes’s cheerful anticipation. Palamedes was acting as though he were a tiny at show-and-tell who had brought in his favourite toy with the expectation that he was about to get two minutes all to himself to tell the whole room about it, even the big kids. The crumpled, blind-eyed woman next to We Suffer, who walked with one hand on her gracefully extended arm, stopped in the light. She had quick features and a very long braid of dark, silvering hair, so long that it made Nona wish to have her own braids back. She looked quite old—maybe older even than We Suffer, marks of deep care delineated on her face—and wasn’t glamorous, and wouldn’t have been even had she been in fresh clothes.

“Here’s the numbers, Master Warden,” she said, and leant out with a sheaf of paper. “I haven’t been able to double-check them—I did an initial

calculation, but of course, the basic mathematics *can't* be relied upon. I will say that my computation has come along wonderfully in the past couple of months. We were having quite a fun time in my corner doing quadratics out loud until the Chair threatened to toss us out of the truck. How are they?"

Palamedes squatted down to check the papers with Camilla. Cam said, "If we could get inside the dome, this wouldn't matter."

"I can't navigate like that, Cam. I'm not sure anyone can. I never knew where I was, spatially, and exiting and entering must be hell—we're going to have to do this on the fly. Gideon's ponied up some of the inside layout. Our best bet sounds like their landing platform—if we get anywhere even slightly near it..."

Pyrrha cleared her throat. "Commander, casualties?"

We Suffer sighed. "Out of the frying pan," she said, "into another frying pan—falling out of that frying pan—into the underworld, where there is a huge frying pan where the devils dance, and say, 'Fuck to you.'"

"You always had a way with words," said Pyrrha. "Are they everywhere, or localised?"

"Ctesiphon is at the mouth of the tunnel and further inside. I cannot get good reports. We are doing fine—but we will run out of bullets in a few hours. They are having a veritable orgy out there, and we cannot use explosives unless we want to collapse the tunnel. And I do not want to collapse the tunnel, because there is no getting out."

"Roger that," said Pyrrha.

The archivist said, "That's a new voice," and Palamedes said cheerfully, "Archivist, this is Pyrrha Dve, whom Cam and I credit with keeping us alive ... please be very nice to her. The Sixth House owes Pyrrha Dve everything barring tenure. All right," he said, and tapped a knuckle on the sheaf of papers. "That's all we're going to get. Commander, I'm about to ask that we put the Sixth House back on this truck—we don't need to be too worried about living space, this is temporary. If you want to pack anything on here yourself, tell me now."

The commander stepped forward into the light. The archivist, plait twitching, stepped with her.

"Palamedes Sextus," she said, "how do you hope to get out of here?"

"We're heading through the River," said Palamedes. "I plan on getting everyone to the Nine Houses, and—once we complete the mission—

heading back to the Sixth House. Which, so you know, is parked on an exoplanet just outside the star system.”

Pyrrha demanded—

“Are you a fantasist, boy, or only out of your mind? Your cav’s the one with no blood left, so there’s no excuse for *you*.”

“I believe it will work,” said Palamedes.

“I know it won’t. You can’t travel the River. You’ve never been trained, for one thing.”

“That *is* the tricky part,” admitted Palamedes. “But Pyrrha, I’ve spent time in the River … I’ve studied it, albeit in a strange and partial way. I think I can accurately navigate.”

“I don’t care how much you learnt in that bubble. You’re not a Lyctor,” said Pyrrha. “You can’t keep the ghosts off. They’ll strip you to the bone.”

“Not this time,” said Palamedes—very lightly.

Nona felt Pyrrha’s arms suddenly lose their normal untrembling strength and let her slip down a couple of centimetres until she said urgently, “Pyrrha, you’re dropping me,” and Pyrrha gathered her back up.

We Suffer said, “I need you to tell me you can do this with a certainty.”

“I can give you ninety percent,” said Palamedes.

“Prove it.”

Palamedes passed the sheaf of papers back to We Suffer. He said, “Mum, can you get Kiana? She should be here … and Cam’s dads—”

“No. Just Kiki,” said Camilla. “Just my sister. They won’t … They might not understand, Warden.”

The archivist was saying, in quite a jaunty and familiar way, “Ah, family matters—would you give me your arm, Commander?—Are you a family woman yourself?—Oh, and when was the divorce…?”

Palamedes wheeled Camilla into the dark, back toward the truck that Nona had woken up inside. Pyrrha looked after them, her face and eyes wild; she followed without being asked to, and Nona clasped her arms around Pyrrha’s shoulders. She did not understand.

The corpse prince was sitting on the back step of the truck when they got there. Palamedes had hit the brakes on the wheeled chair and Camilla was slumped back in it. Even in the darkness of the tunnel Nona could tell that she was in a terrible way. She was very calm but very feeble; her mouth had gone dark.

"No. No more medication," Nona heard her say clearly. "Need my head ... want it clear."

Pyrrha sat Nona on the truck step, blindly, despite Nona's warning squawk; Nona very much did not want to be sat next to the shimmering white figure of the dead Kiriona Gaia, who was watching the proceedings with the lively interest of a spectator at a ballgame. Pyrrha practically stumbled away—she dropped to her knees before the chair and Palamedes—she reached out and took Palamedes's hand, and then Camilla's. Her face and hands showed only dumb despair.

"I've loved you two," she said. "Not well. Not even wholesomely. I don't have it in me. But I've loved you—in a better world I'd be able to say, 'Like you were my own,' but I don't know what that would even mean anymore. You've been my agents ... you've been stand-ins for something I haven't had for longer than either of you can understand. Which is why I'm saying—don't do this. Please, don't do this."

Neither of them answered.

Pyrrha continued urgently: "Understand that once you do this, you can't take it back. It's better to die. There's a power to dying clean ... dying free. It's not love, what you're about to do. It's not beautiful and it's not powerful. It's a mistake. We didn't even do it right ... we were children—playing with the reflections of stars in a pool of water ... thinking it was space."

Palamedes stood, and Pyrrha stood with him. He reached out and grasped her wrist strongly. "Whatever you think we're doing, we're not," he said.

"Whatever you think you're doing," said Pyrrha, "you shouldn't."

Camilla said, "Just watch us."

Pyrrha tugged her wrist free of Palamedes's hand. She reached down, and tilted Camilla's chin up, and looked at her for the longest time. Then she leant down—she kissed her brusquely and briefly on the forehead—and, startlingly and even more briefly, on the mouth. Nona, who even then could never ditch the lessons of the hand and the mouth, watched that kiss and felt very sad. It was like watching Pyrrha stealing something she didn't want to take-reaching out for the juicy, cherry-red part of the oven, even when she knew that all it could give her was a burn. And Nona saw Camilla, with her cold, navy blue mouth, and could tell that Camilla understood.

Camilla said, “Could you try not to be such a chicken hawk, Pyrrha?”

Pyrrha reached out, ruffled the perfect hair of the body of Ianthe Naberius, and leant in to briefly kiss Palamedes too—Palamedes said, tolerant and amused, “You are an appalling old roué, Dve,”—and Pyrrha said, “Call me if you need me. Otherwise, see you around.”

Pyrrha crossed over to the truck, to Nona, and leant heavily into the interior; Nona could see that she was sweating, in exactly the same way she had sweated after the bottle of bleach. She mumbled, “You knew this was happening. You knew this was happening *months* ago,” and when Nona put her hand on Pyrrha’s, it was like Pyrrha hadn’t even noticed her.

By now, other people had filtered through to stand in a ragged semicircle around the wheelchair. There was the birdlike lady with the braid, We Suffer, a tall, lanky, creased young woman in grey whose face looked so startlingly like Cam’s that Nona wondered at it; her hair was nearly all shaved off on both sides, and unlike the others her eyes weren’t milky-white at all, they were set deep and dark in a face like a hawk’s. Crown joined them too, golden, shining Crown, another ragged lamp in the darkness. She was tying her fingers in knots, then untying them, over and over.

Nobody said a thing. Camilla’s head was lolled back against the chair, but she abruptly stood—stood on her own power, rolling her shoulders, cracking her neck. Palamedes drew her to sit down on the cold road, and they sat facing each other, cross-legged. It took Camilla a long time to fold her legs, and when she did, she made a kind of deep *oof* noise that told Nona it had cost her. She drew one of her knives from its holder, and laid it down between them on the concrete.

All at once, the ragged watchers closed in—just a few steps—so that they formed a ring: not tight enough to smother, but like they were trying to shut out the rest of that vast, empty tunnel, the far-off echoes of bullets. Nona instinctively moved forward, and nearly fell out of the truck; Pyrrha caught her up and they sank to the ground together. Kiriona Gaia was staring politely at the side of the truck, as though there were something really interesting on the paintwork.

“Camilla, we did it right, didn’t we?” Palamedes said, and now Nona knew he wasn’t speaking to anyone else in the universe. “We had something very nearly perfect … the perfect friendship, the perfect love. I cannot

imagine reaching the end of this life and having any regrets, so long as I had been allowed to experience being your adept.”

Camilla Hect stared at him stolidly, and then burst into tears. She made very little noise, but the tears were violent anyway; Palamedes took her hands and said in distress, “Cam—dear one—don’t.”

“No,” said Camilla, after an obvious struggle to master herself. “No. I’m crying because … I’m crying because I’m relieved,” she said, frankly mulishly. “I’m *relieved* … Warden, I’m so relieved.”

“Not long now,” he promised.

Camilla took a couple of gasping breaths—it was obvious how much they hurt her—and then she said: “Warden—will she know who we are, in the River?”

“Oh, she’s not stupid,” said Palamedes lightly. “In the River—beyond the River—I truly believe we will see ourselves and each other as we really are. And I want them to see *us*. I am not saying *this was our inevitable end* … I am saying we have found the best and truest and kindest thing we can do in this moment. Tell me no, and we’ll go on as we have been … and we’ll go on unafraid … but say yes, and we will make this end, and this beginning, together.”

Camilla shivered all over. Then she was at rest; she relaxed her head—the lines of her neck drooped like a flower—she raised it again.

“Palamedes, yes,” she said. “My whole life, yes. Yes, forever, yes. Life is too short and love is too long.”

He demanded: “Tell me how to do it, and I’ll do it.”

Camilla said, “Go loud.”

Palamedes took her knife, and he cracked open an invisible seam on the end of the handle. A thin trickle of something white and grey and powdery dribbled into his palm. He held it out to her, and Camilla opened her mouth and—to Nona’s horror—ate it, whatever it was. He took the knife and he scored her finger, saying, “Not much longer,” and he pressed her own bloody finger to her cool and bloody mouth, and he said, “Don’t look back. Whatever you do, don’t look back,” and they huddled their heads together, they rested their heads on each other’s shoulders.

Nothing particularly interesting happened, until Camilla burst into flames. She blazed like a white candle—she rolled away from the body of Ianthe Naberius, booted the inert figure away to roll over and over across the road—and stood, stumbling, completely ablaze, a hot white pillar of

fire. Nona watched her open her mouth as though she were calling out, but no sound came. She sizzled: her bandages and clothes and injuries all sizzled, her hair sizzled, she blackened and wasted right in front of them. Wherever she staggered, she left bloody black footprints, and those footprints curled up in flowerlike wreaths of smoke and flame before dribbling to nothing on the road. She dropped to the road as though dying, rolled around in the agonies of the dying, until Nona thought she too would die of watching: that she had finally found something so horrible she could die just from seeing it, the worst thing you could ever see in your life.

The whole tunnel was filled with sparking, sparkling flame, and the crackle of roasting human flesh, Camilla's body dancing gruesomely trying to put it out—a black thing within the fire—then something red within the fire—and then she tried to stand; she arched, trembling, featureless; the flames died.

In the darkness, the figure was naked and whole and unhurt. It crouched in on itself—elbows to knees, clasping itself, curled up in a kind of C—and then it said: "Clothes, please?"

Nona watched as Kiriona started to unbutton her jacket, then thought better of it. The hawk-faced stranger shimmied, completely unembarrassed, out of her trousers, leaving herself in shorts; We Suffer was taking off her heavy coat. As both of them approached, Nona could see that the stranger's hawk face was stony and emotionless but that there were wet tracks down her cheeks. The naked figure shrugged on the coat—hastily pulled up the trousers—said, "Thanks," and buttoned itself in.

And it was just Camilla, after all—Camilla having lost all that fringe and most of her hair except for a charred inch or so—Cam with new eyes, and a new face, for all that they were the same-shaped eyes and the old familiar features. But the eyes were a different colour, though Nona could not see *what* colour from where she sat. All she could see was that they were different. And the features, though in the same order, were making such a different set of expressions—not Camilla's, not Palamedes's—that it struck Nona all at once: they were gone—they had left her—they were no longer there.

Nona lifted her voice, and wailed aloud.

The new figure broke past We Suffer and the hawk-faced woman, and rustled through the pockets of the inert dead body of Ianthe Naberius, alone and still on the road—loped over to Nona in a way that neither Camilla nor

Palamedes had ever moved but was filled with both of them, long in the leg, easy in the stride, spare and efficient. They held out a lavender silk handkerchief.

Nona sniffled thickly, and recoiled. “I want a tissue—that’s too fancy,” she mumbled.

“That’s the point,” the figure said, and looked at her with a grave smile. “We know there’s not going to be a big birthday party anymore, but: happy birthday, Nona.”

Nona mopped her eyes dolefully with the handkerchief. “Thank you,” she said. “It’s a relief you didn’t get hair ties.”

The new person suddenly whirled around in one movement. They dashed toward the abandoned body of Ianthe Naberius—an abandoned body that was now propped up on its elbows, staring out with pale, distrustful eyes, an expression on its face of commingled hate and despair.

“So there was another way, Sextus, after all,” the body murmured.

The figure crouched down and extended their arm.

“I know how hard it is for you to kick against the goad,” said the new person. “But there are more worlds than this. Come with us. We are the love that is perfected by death—but even death will be no more; death can also die. There’s still time, Ianthe. Time for you, and for Naberius Tern.”

The abandoned body stared at what had once been Camilla’s hand, at what once had been Camilla’s face, then at the hand again. After which it said brightly—

“I bet you say that to all the boys.”

The body collapsed and was empty; staring up at the top of the tunnel, its eyes strangely white and silent.



29

THEY LOADED EVERYONE BACK into a single truck. Nobody seemed annoyed about this, even though Nona knew they had been on the trucks for months. Maybe once you were on a truck long enough, you forgot that there was anything but the truck. To Nona, it did not seem like a nice kind of home. She kept thinking in a welter of heartbreak about *her* bedroom, *her* mattress, *her* blankets. She had started thinking of bed in a kind of longing, desperate, hungry way.

Pyrrha had taken the wheeled chair that Camilla had used and sat Nona inside it. Camilla—Palamedes—the new person—did not need any kind of wheeled chair anymore, or pain medication, despite having been nearly dead. With enormous energy, few words, and a clipboard clutched in their hands, Palamedes-and-Camilla herded all those bent-down, exhausted people. They stopped every single one briefly, and patted them over, and said things like, “Rehydrated,” or, “Try walking on that,” or, “Fixed the kidneys. Take better care of them.” Somehow simultaneously they took measurements, all while moving like someone Nona had never met. She fell back entirely on Pyrrha, who seemed as absolutely out of her element as Nona was.

“How much to ride the merry-go-round?” said someone familiar.

It was the Angel. The Angel and Pash appeared in front of Nona’s chair, before the truck, and with them—most wonderfully—Noodle; Noodle, sitting on the ground, opening his mouth and panting, closing his mouth and rolling his eyes with displeasure, obviously as past the events of the day as Nona herself. Pyrrha said with a flicker of old humour—“How much to get off?”

“More than we can afford, I guess,” said the Angel. She was looking composed in a long canvas coat like the one We Suffer had given up, with a long bag slung over her shoulder. Pash wore two of the same, one over each shoulder, with a third in her hand. “Sometimes I feel as though I were born on the merry-go-round—I worry I won’t know what to do with myself when it stops. *If* it ever stops.”

Nona, having seen the bags, and Noodle, and the leashes, found eagerness enough within her to say—“Are you coming with us?”

“Probably not, kiddie,” said Pyrrha, but Pash said unexpectedly: “This is the fucking stupidest idea in the world, but yeah, we are. I go where *this* goes”—a violent jerk of the head in the Angel’s direction—“and I guess *this* one is getting on the bus.”

“To the Nine Houses,” said Pyrrha slowly.

“Yes,” said the Angel.

“The very centre of the Emperor Divine’s power,” said Pyrrha.

Pash said, “Don’t even start. You’ll set me off again. We go where we’re sent … and this city’s a death trap. I don’t know, I would have moved out into the tunnels and tried to get clear of the city that way, but…”

“But I exist,” said the Angel. “Pardon—we exist. And as long as we exist, we are a terrible liability. The commander will get some breathing room if she doesn’t have to take us into account with every movement.”

Pash said roughly: “The commander’s probably dead the moment we walk out of here.”

“We have left many wing commanders behind to die,” said the Angel calmly. “This wing commander is particularly cunning and particularly brave and particularly determined—but get used to it, Passion … We’ve been weighed,” she shouted out, and waved her hand at the figures of Palamedes-and-Camilla and We Suffer in the distance, and they waved back.

Nona said: “Who *are* you?” Then she explained, “Everyone asks me the same question, so—I feel like it’s my turn.”

“You don’t get to ask,” said Pash roughly; which Nona thought was a wonderful and very cool answer she wished she had come up with herself.

But the Angel leant down and looked at Nona. There was something settled in her face: a calmness that had not existed there before—a kind of immovable, fixed-concrete resolve. She had never seen the Angel look like that. Every furtive, fleeting, mercurial spark had gone, leaving something

hard and old, something that touched light to some paper deep within Nona. She suddenly reached up and grasped the Angel's hand, and the Angel grasped hers, and the Angel looked at her.

"I'm the Messenger," said the Angel simply. "We are the Message ... the message has two parts left, and you are looking at one of those parts. The name for this part of the message was 'Aim' when the message was passed to us through my forebear Emma Sen. The message is too simple for human beings like us to understand. What do you think the message is?"

Nona couldn't guess.

"I hope you hear it one day," said Aim.

She reached out—she ruffled Nona's hair—she smiled. Then she said, "Noodle, let's go," and she stepped resolutely up the ramp and into the truck.

Pash dithered behind a little—a more subdued and unsure Our Lady of the Passion. She said, "I have to shoot you now," and then she burst out, quickly, "Joke—that was an actual fucking joke, you don't even need to pay for it," and she followed the Angel up the ramp.

Pyrrha leant down and plucked Nona out of the chair. Nona was bewildered to find that her arms were now betraying her too. When she tried to place them around Pyrrha's neck again, they too had become something more like rocks and ice. Pyrrha put them around her shoulders and said—"You've been very calm."

Nona found herself saying: "It's not long now, is it? Are we going to find me?"

"Yeah," said Pyrrha. "I think it's time to wake you up."

The megatruck, on the inside, was a long corridor of little cubicles. Pyrrha avoided these cubicles and instead travelled up a short flight of metal stairs to another compartment. She opened a door and she brought Nona into an enormous cockpit with wraparound windows, the most complicated car insides that she had ever seen. Pyrrha sat down on a chair made of shiny, soft, cracked stuff, worn at the seat from too much sitting down. The windshield was a huge black expanse, strung with the few lights lit in the tunnel and otherwise looking like the blackness at the bottom of the world.

The corpse prince was already in the cockpit. She had apparently walked there under her own steam—if anyone from Blood of Eden had noticed, they had kept it to themselves—and now she was strapped into one

of the sideways seats, her sword beneath her feet, legs splayed carelessly wide at the knees, arms folded over her chest. She did not speak to them, even when Pyrrha said, “Hey, kid.” She had not said much of anything since Camilla and Palamedes had become Camilla-and-Palamedes—seemed withdrawn and lost in thought, unwilling to look at anyone or anything.

Camilla’s body appeared at the doorway. The commander was there with it, and Crown was close behind, with the Captain’s arm around her shoulder. The Captain seemed to be able to stand up now, but was staring, dumb and dull, as though she didn’t understand her surroundings. Supporting her must have been awkward, but Crown didn’t seem to notice. Crown flashed a smile at Nona—she even smiled at Kiriona—before sitting down in one of the front-row chairs. Camilla-and-Palamedes selected the biggest chair of all, right at the front, before the enormous wheel.

“Mind showing me how this thing starts?” they said to the commander.

“Oh, dear God,” said the commander. “For what I am about to do, I will go down as history’s greatest monster.” But she leant over, and she said: “Ignition is there—those are the three brake lines. The lights will need to be green before you hit the ignition. This will start the automatic checks. Press this button to indicate you have read them. If you flip that switch—and *do not* flip it before everything else has gone green—it will free this lever, which can be manipulated forward … and the wheel turns, although it will also turn automatically with the wall detection … Do you have that?”

Pyrrha said, “Please let me drive.”

“No chance,” said Palamedes-and-Camilla comfortably. And: “Commander … thank you. Leave everything to me.”

“I do—I have,” said We Suffer. And—“Every single hope of Eden now rests within this clapped-out vehicle.”

“Same for the Nine Houses,” said Palamedes-and-Camilla.

“You know what I want,” said We Suffer. She turned to address the rest of the driver’s cockpit. “To complete what she started. Troia, listen to me. Every so often there is invoked a Blood of Eden mission protocol—we call it Protocol One. It is used in times of either terrible joy or the worst possible outcomes. Protocol One means there are no more formal orders—if given in the field of battle, often it is understood as ‘Scatter. Retreat. Disunite,’ but it is not quite that. There is a different protocol that is simply used for retreat, protocol that means ‘Save yourselves.’ I received the order to save myself

when I was young ... and I saved myself, which is why you hear me now, starting this terrible truck, putting my life's work in the hands of my enemies and of strangers I do not understand. But now I give you Protocol One ... and Protocol One is 'Live.'”

Crown saluted. Pyrrha looked at the commander, and she saluted too, a slightly different salute with her hand over her heart. Palamedes-and-Camilla turned around in the seat, and they said—“What mission protocol are you about to give Blood of Eden?”

We Suffer flapped her hand dismissively. “Oh, a very common one. It is basically ‘Fight like hell and do not shoot any civilians.’ We can do that one any day of any week. I only wish civilians were not so dumb, like rocks are ... Lieutenant Crown Him with Many Crowns, good luck. Pyrrha Dve ... I am amazed to say this, but I wish you luck. Nona ... I wish you luck. You...”

We Suffer paused. Camilla-and-Palamedes cocked their burnt head to one side.

“Paul,” they suggested.

“Paul. Good luck, Paul,” said We Suffer. “Now ... you have my coat, which you can keep, but my wallet is in the breast pocket, so hand it over.”

Palamedes-and-Camilla—Paul—obediently dislodged the wallet and handed it over. We Suffer said, “Now I will give final orders to Aim and Lieutenant Our Lady of the Passion. I will also say goodbye to Juno Zeta, who I understand is your mother, and who is an extraordinary lady who has already memorised the names of various people in my family.”

We Suffer turned around and walked out without ceremony; she paused only for one long, last look at the corpse prince. Nona noticed that Crown held her salute for a long time after the door shut behind We Suffer, and only reluctantly let her hand drop.

“Buckle in,” said Paul.

Pyrrha tested and tightened the seatbelt over Nona’s arms, and asked, “How long were you planning this one?”

“They had a lot of rainy-day backup plans.”

“Yeah, but—*Paul*? ”

“Just Paul,” said Paul.

Crown suggested, “Paul ... Hect?”

“Just Paul,” said Paul.

“U Lap,” said the corpse prince, from the back of the cabin.

“Thanks for your contribution,” said Paul.

“Aulp,” said the corpse prince.

“No,” said Paul.

A light started flashing on the megatruck control board. Paul leant over and touched the button, and We Suffer’s voice crackled through.

“Troia cell, do you read? You’re clear. Goodbye, and good hunting.”

“Troia cell copy. Good luck,” said Paul, and, a little laconically—“See you soon.”

“You have a big ego,” she said. “I enjoy that. It is a good and terrible sign. Ctesiphon-1, out.”

Paul settled back in the chair and buckled in. Nona watched as Paul depressed a button until the lights flickered green; a pleasant *ding* sounded as a screen rolled across the front of the big blackness—as the lights in their little cabin dimmed into nothing, and as a long squiggly readout filled up fully a third of the glass. Paul tapped a button—the readout shifted smoothly over to one side—and flipped a switch, then freed a lever.

There was a deep, smooth *clunk* all around Nona, insulated by dint of being in Pyrrha’s lap and also by her body feeling so strange and numb. A huge light swept out in front of them—the headlights from the megatruck had come on automatically—so that there was the darkness, and the road, and the beams of light.

The truck began to roll forward. Pyrrha leant back in the chair and said, “Okay. What now?”

“This,” said Paul.

Paul released a lever, and the truck lurched forward into the darkness. They settled their hands on the wheel. There was nothing in their face but easy surety, not one trace of pain or fear or worry. *Everyone* had at least a slight trace of anticipation or pain or fear or worry, but not this new person called Paul. Nona felt the truck accelerate—the light ate away the darkness—and a huge, heavy chill settled into the cabin.

Nona’s breath started coming in frosted pants that hung before her face. An urgent whirring started at the front of the cabin—a white, thick fog of condensation had started to build at the bottom of the glass, and then the heater kicked in and it melted into rivulets of water that pooled down, then abruptly started to run *upward*, up the windshield glass.

Paul leant forward on the accelerator, and then—

JOHN 5:4

IN THE DREAM they were back on the beach with their backs to the sea. The sand was soft and wet and grey—so fine that it dried as they plucked at it, then crumbled through their fingers like ash. The beach was a long, smooth stretch relieved only by hummocks, here and there, of thin grass and silvery driftwood sticking out of the dunes like exposed bone. He was scooping indentations in the sand, making big, print-block child's letters with the tip of his forefinger. As she watched, he made a pothook—*J*—then the finned spine of *E*. He wiped that *E* clean, and replaced it with *A*. He wiped that clean, and he drew the prison bars of *H*. This *J* and *H* he barred around with an uneven heart.

She watched, and she said—

“Teacher, may I ask a question?”

“Sure,” he said, surprised, and he shook his fingers free of clinging sand. “Shoot.”

“What does it mean to love God?”

“Decent dinner and a bottle of average rosé. Maybe a movie. I’m not picky,” he said.

She said, less patiently: “Teacher, what does it mean for a child of the Ninth to love God?”

The razor-sharp grasses lay in a shivering mat, cuddled like fearful animals, as the wind swept over them. Fine salty fragments got inside the corners of her mouth. He said, finally—

“You live in a darkened house, and in your darkened house are infinite rooms. By the light of a dying candle you cross the room—knowing that when you reach the threshold of the next room you’ll be gone—the candle passed to someone whose face you can’t see clearly.”

She urged, “Is God the flame? The light? The candle?”

“The love of God is the trust that you won’t have to illumine that darkness alone,” he said.

She said—

“After this, you’ll resurrect them.”

“Yes,” he said, as though halfway dreaming. He stuck his finger in the sand and made a hole so deep that water glimmered at the bottom. Hypnotized, he did it again. “Yes. Once we’ve rested. No, we’ll do it before you’ve rested. You can rest afterward ... *resurrection* is different from

waking up. We'll get them all back ... some of them, anyway ... or at least, the ones I want to bring back. Anyone I feel didn't do it. Anyone I feel had no part in it. Anyone I can look at the face of and forgive. And my loved ones ... The ones I left, I'll bring back. I know I can. Even G—. In fact, G—'ll be easiest—he won't remember the compound—none of them will have to remember anything. I know where remembrance lives in the brain, and he won't have any of it. You know that too, don't you? It's the easiest thing in the world ... to forget."

She said, "To forget ... everything?"

"Yes," he said, and more sharply—"Yes. It's the only way."

"Teacher, why?"

"They won't forgive themselves," he said. "They'll spend the rest of their lives asking what-ifs. 'What should we have done? How could we have done it differently? Did you *need* to do it?' And—I did need to do it, Harrow. There was no other way. Once those bombs were going off, there was no hope for Melbourne anyway—G— was dead meat."

She said—

"You said that G—'s bomb went off first."

"Yeah, it did," he said impatiently. "Of course it did ... Look—what does it matter? In the end, why the *hell* does it matter? Only one thing matters now."

He smoothed over the holes—covered them up in a slight, leaden depression, a wave of his hand across the surface. Wet sand banked up on either side.

"I still have breath in my body," he said. "They are still out there. There can be no forgiveness."

"For whom?" she asked.

For a long time he did not answer.

Then he said, "Do you remember what happens now?"

Harrowhark Nonagesimus stood up. She brushed a few traces of sand off her trousers. She wiped tiny motes of rock from her eyes, and she heard the sea behind her, moaning soundlessly as it ate into the beach. She looked up to try to find the poisonous yellow fog; the degraded land; the torn-up buildings and flooded skeletons of towns; but there was nothing—just the beach, and some foothills below the beach.

"Yes," she said. "Through her, I've seen it. You resurrect some of them. You wake up fewer still. You start out with a few thousand, then, later, some

hundred thousand, then millions, but never more than millions. You teach them how to live all over again. You teach yourself. You work out how to repopulate the installations on each planet—or to finish the work begun before the bombs, or to improve on it. It's easy. You're God. Your energy is limitless and you can sustain your theorems without a thought—forget about them—because she is so enormous, and you and she are one. She understands at this point that she does not have to die—that she can never die, if you're alive. And she's scared to die. You're afraid of so many things, but she's only afraid to die. Then, when the disciples come to you and say the word *Lyctor*, she does not understand that they want the thing you did to her—she watches as you watch ... watch them misunderstand the process."

He looked up at her, squinting his eyes against the white and merciless sun. "God must be able to touch all of creation," he said.

"I don't—"

"You said it yourself. I can't die if she's alive; she can't die if I'm alive. Why would you let something like that run around, Harrow? Why would you let someone go—away from you—untouchable—*two* people? I couldn't—I loved them too much—I saw the face of Earth and choked the life out of it and ate it whole. Oh, I knew I was on the clock for the Resurrection Beasts. I pretended she was the only one, but I knew the others were coming. I needed my loved ones to be something I could touch ... needed them to be my hands ... my fingers."

"But—"

"There can be no forgiveness for those who walked away," he said. "Just as there can be no forgiveness for me—even though I rip the very fingers from my hands ... throw them into the jaws of the monsters who hunt me ... as I run from them across the universe, end to end. Something will satisfy them eventually, but nothing satisfies me. Nothing."

He drew his gaze away from her—his black-and-white, chthonic stare—and looked out over the dunes. He said, "But that's the grace of it, Harrow. If I'm God, I can start over. The flood, you know? You can wash things clean. That's all the end of Earth was ... making things clean. It gets dirty again, you clean it again. Like those old power-washing ads. *Spray and walk away*, right? Sometimes I think the only reason I haven't done it already is that I can't bear the idea that I wouldn't be able to touch them—that they'd still be out there ... maybe that's why I made the Tomb, Harrow.

It is the death of God ... it is the apocalypse ... because it's my self-preservation in a box."

She said, "Teacher, there's one thing I don't understand."

"There're multiple things I don't," he said.

She said— "I want to understand why she was angry—I want to understand the mathematics, now that I have seen them for myself. I want to know how many of the Resurrection are left, and how many you began with, and what the discrepancies are. I want to know where you put them. They didn't go into the River. I want to know why she was angry ... and why you were terrified."

She looked away from him, and she said: "I want to journey to find God. Maybe, at the end of that road, I will find God in you, Teacher ... the God who became man and the man who became God. Or, perhaps, the child of the Nine Houses will recognise a different divine. But I am the Reverend Daughter—I am the Reverend Mother, the Reverend Father—I must find God, or some aspect of God, and understand it for myself ... even if she lies, right now, within the Tomb."

He stood. He was taller than she was. She was not afraid. He reached out a hand to her, and placed it upon her shoulder, and looked at her, wondering, with his ordinary face; if she had suspected his fear might manifest itself, yet again, as an act of murder, she could not see that in him now.

"God is a dream, Harrow," he said very gently. "You all dream me together—and she's dreaming me too. In a way, her dead dreams of God mean more than all your dreams put together. In this dream of yours, where will you seek out God? Where will you go?"

Harrow turned away from the hand, and crunched out, barefoot, over the wet sand—her feet slapped with each step—and she stood ankle-deep in the River, disbelieving.

Before her, the waters parted, speared-through and mute, for the enormous lance of a tower—a tower that had never been there before; a tower that soared, impossible and deadly grey, out of the waters—a tower of grey bricks, lurching out of the River as though gasping for air. An impossible, cone-capped tower—a belled tower; she could see the steeple, but the bell cot was too far from shore to see the bell.

"I'll start there," she said.

And she stepped into the River. She took another step, and she walked, and she walked.



30

WHEN NONA'S EYES OPENED, it was still dark—but then the darkness changed. It thickened, then resolved, then turned grey, then turned transparent. There was a huge roaring *pop!* within her body's ears, and then they weren't in the tunnel at all. They weren't in anything. The space between the windshield and whatever was out there wasn't space at all: it was as though someone had thrown a bucket of grey paint over the windshield. She couldn't see out.

Nona stood up—or at least, her body stood up: she was nauseous, and thought that if she stood something would be left on the chair or stuck within Pyrrha's arms. The belt of the chair broke as she stood. Pyrrha reached out for her. She brushed Pyrrha's arm away. Her legs still felt like distant nothing, as did her arms, and her trunk, and her neck, but her eyes could still see and her ears could still hear and her tongue could still taste. When she opened her mouth so that her tongue could taste, it helped her to see a little better. Everyone was talking, talking, talking. Pyrrha was saying something—Paul was saying, in calm repose, “No. I've bubbled us,” and all Nona caught of Pyrrha's response was:

“—not *enough*, I'm not saying velocity exists here but—”

“—untethered, but—”

“—if you want to get into the current you’ll—”

Crown was whispering in her softest and most coaxingest voice, “Judith? Won’t you come back to me—Judith—Jody?” and of course the Captain wasn’t saying anything back. Pyrrha swung around to the corpse prince and said, “Kid, you still in there?” and Kiriona said scornfully, “It takes more than *this*.” Nobody was speaking to, or noticing, Nona.

Until Nona’s hand tapped Paul on the shoulder. Paul looked up into her face with a grave play of understanding flashing across Camilla’s once-familiar features, the unfamiliar eyes with their deep slate dot in the centre.

Nona took a long time to examine those new eyes and decide what she thought of them: whether she liked the pupil that was that cool grey-brown, the iris of clear and limitless grey. Her mouth said— “I’ll take it from here.”

Paul looked at her one final time, then unbuckled—moved aside—steadied themselves as Nona sat in the chair. It was made for someone longer and her leg did not reach the accelerator, so Paul extended one leg and pressed down with a foot, and braced against the chair and the side of the console.

Nona said, “Your thing. The outline. Won’t work. Don’t ask me questions.”

Paul said, “That skin’s all that’s lying between us and certain death.”

Nona’s eyes dazzled. Her body shuddered beneath her. For one of the first times she acknowledged it, she felt the body as something *with* her, on top of her, but not *her*; her sense of living outside it. There was a fragile, pulpable ecstasy in that body. It was like one of the soft blue jellyfish in the harbour, with all its stings and promises, and now Nona’s self, Nona’s thoughts, were a hand closing around the jellyfish, unbidden, feeling it undulate blindly between the fingers. And the more she felt like fingers, the more she closed down.

Somewhere, in that shimmering space between fingers and palm, she heard a voice: Pyrrha saying, “Kiddie—stay with us.”

So Nona stayed.

“Don’t say things that are questions but aren’t said like a question,” she said eventually, letting her voice rush out without thinking about it. “Take it away. Take it. We don’t need it. If you ask more questions—I’ll want to answer them—Take it away, I said.”

Paul considered this. “Okay.”

Pyrrha said, “Wait. Hang on—” but Paul had already obeyed. Nona felt it, the *pop*. The grey flapped and peeled away from the windscreen—pale light poppled in, and the whole windshield exploded into vision.

Before them was water, and the megatruck drove along its surface. There was limitless nothing above its surface—something that wanted to look like a night sky, maybe, or a purpling storm with winking lights like stars or lightning—and it stretched without relief over and above that water. Dirty gouts of foam were being spun up by the megatruck’s tires and undercarriage as it sped along, on top of the water, and that obscured the space and the water and everything, until Nona heaved herself forward on the wheel and spun it hand over hand. It was good to let her hands do things: they knew how to do things she did not know how to do. That raised a huge cloud of foam; the megatruck lurched to one side, and everyone was holding on to things, and everything that hadn’t been secured tumbled to the other side of the cabin. Yells echoed softly through the door behind them. Paul, light on Cam’s feet, reached forward over Nona’s shoulder and the windscreen wipers started a huge *SCREE ... SCREE ... SCREE* across the windshield.

Pyrrha said, “This is impossible. We should be flayed alive,” and Paul said, “Yeah.”

Nona tried to explain.

“The water doesn’t want to touch us, that’s all.”

Crown was saying urgently, “Judith—stop, come back,” and Nona vaguely heard unbuckling; and then shadows fell over her, people standing behind her seat. Lots of people had crowded around behind her now; Nona wasn’t sure she liked it.

Pyrrha sucked in her breath, and she said: “What the fuck is *that*?”

“Told you so,” said Kiriona Gaia.

As the megatruck spun around, the wide rippling grey waters resolved into something totally different. There was a big structure standing up out of the River—that water was the River, after all—a tall, cold cylinder of what was unmistakably stone. The waters parted around it, and each bulgy wave slammed into it as though trying to bring it down, but it was as hard and inexorable and real as the water and the skies seemed faint and fantastic. Nona thought it looked like something out of a picture book, and held on to that thought, that *middle-of-the-brain* thought. There was a

thought above and below that knew what it was, but the moment she looked at either thought she'd lose the game.

The Captain's voice was like old teeth. "He left them too long—you left them too long, my salt thing."

"You *are* here," said Nona, finding talking was hard, that her voice sounded drowsy in her own ears. "Okay, good—the water really won't touch us. I was worried about our back end."

Paul and Pyrrha flinched hard away from that voice—dived to the other side of the cabin, wheeling away as though struck. This meant that there wasn't a foot on the accelerator, and Nona had to slither down in her chair until she was pretty well staring at the top of the windshield just to keep the megatruck going. A recorded voice said, "Auto-acceleration enabled," and a little bell made a nice little tinkle, so she slithered back up and left it.

The tower was so big—as the megatruck approached she began to realise *how* big, as big and as broad and as tall as any crane or building in the city—stretching higher than their Building at home, even. There was a clear mark where the water reached up it, where the stone was wet black rather than the dry-stone grey above. From inside the megatruck, she could not see how high up it went.

For some reason this tower scared Nona's top and bottom thoughts so terribly that her heart went *ker-CHUNK* in her chest—there was a terrible pain in her side and all the way down her arm. The pain was good, because she couldn't think about anything but the pain. The more she thought, the more problems she had.

"The hole," said the Captain, "the hole in the road, the hole, the hole, the hole."

Crown was saying something, scrabbling against the back of Nona's chair, scrabbling. Pyrrha and Paul were collapsed on the floor. Nona knew that skidding across the surface of the water was no good, so she looked for one of the big, cresting waves, and with the auto-accelerator dinging in her ears, she ploughed the megatruck directly into the water.

The River swallowed them up. It felt very heavy. The truck's wheels spun against nothing—the truck groaned horribly from the pressure, creaking like Nona's hurting heart—and they sank like a stone. The cabin darkened as they sank—the windshield wipers bowed and sagged away from the windshield, and then were suddenly ripped off, sucked into the current—and a soft white starry crack appeared at the edge of the glass.

Nona slithered again, fumbling for the accelerator with her foot, but she couldn't take her hands off the wheel. She was exhausted. She did not want to drive anymore. Seeing the tower had taken the fight out of her top and her bottom, and now out of her middle too. She looked down the side of the chair, and there was Paul, struggling across the floor and shaking blood out of Camilla's right ear—Paul, face calm and even and only a little cross-eyed. Paul reached out to put one hand on the dirty accelerator and looked up at her, not beseeching, only waiting.

"Can you get us to the Ninth House?" they said.

There was another awful shriek of metal somewhere in the back of the megatruck. The windscreen darkened all the time—the water was turbid and filthy and the air in the cabin was getting weirdly chill—lots of people were yelling. She could hear Pyrrha in the background, Crown struggling with the Captain.

"Yes," said Nona, "but—"

"But?"

How could she say that she was so tired—that whatever was going on in her chest was so incredibly urgent that if she closed her eyes and let it happen, she could probably die right there, right then? How to say that she wanted to go as *Nona*—with all her thoughts and feelings being Nona feelings, which might only be about six months old and therefore not very good, but were still her own? What could she do with the little selfish thought that now Camilla and Palamedes were gone—even if they had left behind Paul, which was probably quite nice of them—and Pyrrha was broken somehow, it was hard to want to live, hard to want everyone else to live, even lovely Crown? The Captain was gone, forever probably, and it didn't matter about the corpse prince, who was dead already and therefore used to it.

Nona swallowed. She let her eyelids nearly touch, which would have been the end.

"But maybe we shouldn't," she said, holding the eyelids to that little slit—watching the onscreen scribbles flash urgently on the truck glass, watching the widening white crack, watching the river water pound itself into the place where it wanted to be even if the River itself didn't. "If we end here, it'll be just like ... a bad dream, won't it? And maybe we'll wake up somewhere else. I know we won't," she explained, "but we don't have to know that ... maybe if we all go, it'll be quick."

Paul looked at her, with those dark grey-brown pupils widening, slightly.

“Nona,” they said, “Noodle’s in the back.”

The middle thoughts surged. The slit widened all the way.

“Oh my God,” she said, in a panic. “I forgot about Noodle.”

The windshield cracked all the way across the middle. Paul leant their full weight on the accelerator. Nona drove the truck home.



31

THE WATER DISAPPEARED. There was a huge squealing of tires—Paul eased off the accelerator just in time—and a big gravelly noise as the tires, going from water to pressure to nothing to a big field of gritty stone, spun the stone in all directions. The windshield cracked all the way through, and the truck bounced—once—and a whole stream of red text blinked up on the screen overlay. But the light that came through the windshield wasn't grey light, and in fact wasn't very bright at all. It was a thin electric yellow light that did very little to pierce the darkness. The megatruck horn honked itself, and Nona was only aware of the sound, its echo, the blaring wail.

Then she became aware of something else; an insistent tugging at top thought, bottom thought, and middle thought. She wanted something. She didn't know quite what it was, only she wanted it—quite like a bathroom thought in its inconsistency.

“Headlights,” someone was saying. “Get the headlights.”

Paul had staggered up from behind her and was moving to the back cabin, unlocking the door. Pyrrha said, “We've equalised. We're on level ground,” and then, in the corner of Nona's vision, the corpse prince rose.

She leant over the driver's seat, through the electric light, peering out at whatever was there. Then she suddenly cut off a word in her mouth—she followed after Paul—Pyrrha was saying, “Where are we? Back in the tunnel?” and Nona felt Pyrrha's strong, ropy arms circle around—felt herself lifted up and out of the driver's seat—found she was mucky with sweat, which embarrassed her, and that the warmth of Pyrrha's arms was distant and faraway. She could barely remember walking, moving her body in the chair, doing all that driving. She was grateful now for being carried. She felt lifted through the cabin, floating above a high chatter of voices in the megatruck behind:

“—forget to check on the engine, a big hit like that and the fuel cells—”

“—all right? Sprained, not broken, surely...”

“Thanergetic,” someone else was saying. “I felt it immediately. Like a warm shower.”

“Since when have *you* had warm...?”

There was a shrill volley of barks. Noodle; Nona was weak and grateful to hear Noodle. There was a big release sound—a metal sliding door—and, “One, two—heave,” followed by a great metal clashing. Nona struggled to sit up in Pyrrha’s arms and open her eyes, and she saw the blackness out the other side of the door, and heard the sizzling, steaming sound as water boiled off the sides of the megatruck, and felt a blast of arctic air—black, cold, dust-smelling air, the blackest and coldest she had ever felt in her life.

The Prince strode down the platform. She stood on the gravel, haloed in the underlights from the wheezing megatruck, and she said—“Home, sweet home.”

Pyrrha clattered her way down the platform. Nona looked up: they were standing at the bottom of some enormous rocky shaft—there was a tiny square of light way up top, as though they were standing at the bottom of a hole. All the steam was boiling off the truck upward. There was a soup of white cloudy stuff, and then a navy expanse of night—of space. She knew she should feel cold, as her body was feeling cold, but it was more the memory of a sensation than sensation itself.

Paul trotted up alongside Pyrrha, and stared at the filigreed back of the standing, gazing Prince, and said, “Gideon, where are we?”

“Top tier—shuttle field,” said the corpse prince. “Smack bang in the middle.”

“Nona,” said Paul, “well done.”

Nona did not feel as though she had done anything warranting a *well done*. She had just driven the truck, and she nearly gave up on that. She said drearily: “I didn’t do it on purpose.”

Pyrrha said, “No Lyctor could have taken us here that precisely. I’m not sure *John* could manage it ... then again, I’m not sure of John, period. Gideon and I couldn’t have—though for one thing, this field wasn’t around in my day, you used to land at the installation they made the prison out of and go down from there in the elevator ... What the *hell* was that, in the River? That wasn’t Number Seven.”

Prince Kiriona Gaia had walked several steps away from them into the darkness, and now seemed to float in the gloom, ghostlike in her pure white

clothes. She had drawn her sword, and she didn't turn around.

"Quiet," she said.

Noodle ignored her totally: inside the truck he was doing the regular *bark—bark—bark* of a dog alerted to a nearby threat. Everyone else obediently stayed silent for a few seconds.

"I don't hear anything," said Pyrrha neutrally.

"Nor I," said Paul.

Kiriona made a noise that sounded almost amused, and said, "Fine. I'm going. Keep up or you're probably dead." Then she crunched away over the gravel and dwindled out of sight.

Pyrrha and Paul exchanged glances. Paul scrambled back up the ramp of the truck and said something to the people inside. There was a short discussion—Nona's hearing had gone very fuzzy and she couldn't make out any words, but no one was shouting—and then Paul dropped back down and the ramp began to scrape upward into its housing. Pyrrha adjusted her grip on Nona's body, shifting her weight, and then set off with Paul in the direction the corpse prince had gone.

"No Pash?" asked Pyrrha.

"She has to stay with Aim," said Paul, "and Aim got knocked around in the crash. They'll be fine."

"Honestly, I was hoping for another gun," said Pyrrha. "How are the Sixth doing? Is your—is Juno—"

"We're out of the Beast's radius. There's enough thanergy to go around. That truck has multiple highly capable necromancers and a dog. Worry about us instead."

"I do," said Pyrrha.

They walked for a long time. Nona felt like she wanted to sleep, but she was very frightened of sleeping. Somewhere in her spine was that same weird insistent urge or twinge. She noticed, vaguely, that Paul and Pyrrha weren't talking to her anymore. They weren't talking to each other either, just trudging steadily on through the darkness. Once upon a time Pyrrha would have jollied her along—made bad jokes or said things like "Right, kiddie, another minute and then you're carrying me." Now it was almost like they didn't think Nona was awake, even though her eyes were open.

The only time anyone spoke during the journey was when Pyrrha suddenly said—

"Fucking dark in here."

“Yes,” said Paul, as if this was something intriguing that Pyrrha had been clever to notice.

“Ninth House ambiance, you reckon?”

“No.”

“Someone should’ve told Anastasia that a string of fairy lights wouldn’t have gone amiss. They could shape ’em like little skulls, stay on-brand. Then again, she always said the skull was the least interesting bone...”

As they walked farther, Nona felt the twinge getting stronger, and she felt something else: something at once familiar and unpleasant, squirming far off in the darkness. She strained her thoughts toward it. Many things—small things—things she’d seen before, once, but didn’t feel up to seeing again. Grey shapes swam in front of her eyes in the darkness—she thought she saw the side of Pyrrha’s face—she *did* see the side of Pyrrha’s face, because it was getting lighter. They were walking toward a light: a cold white glow somewhere ahead of them, down a tunnel, getting closer and closer.

They arrived in a room. It was a big circular room with dark stone walls: there were arched niches in the walls, and each one held a seated skeleton in a dark shapeless robe. Nona could see all of this because there was a powerful electric lantern, rather like one of the truck’s headlights, placed on the floor throwing long spiked shadows out in all directions. The corpse prince, Kiriona Gaia, was standing in the middle of the room with her drawn sword turned wet and red partway up the blade. There were crumpled dead bodies discarded around her—six or seven that Nona could see, all bundled up in black fabric like the skeletons were wearing. At the back of the room was a rectangular cage, taller than a man and made of wrought iron like the park fences. Slumped against the outside of this cage was a large person in strange, battered metal armour, tangled in his own black robes. He was quite simply the *oldest* person Nona had ever seen, and Nona had always collected old people in much the same way as she collected dogs: the old people at the dairy and the old men at the fishmonger’s and the old women who worked at the car repair place. He was older than any of them. His whole face looked like it was trying to escape its skeleton. Dark red blood had spread out around him in a pool.

His antique head rolled sideways to look past Kiriona at Pyrrha—at *Nona*—and he said, in a voice that creaked with agonised, reverential awe

“My lady . . . my lady, you have come home to us . . . at last.”

Paul dropped to the ancient man’s side and started looking him over—pulling away the tangled black cloth from the body, revealing a series of livid gashes down the neck, a puncture mark through the chest. The old man raised a hoary-looking fist and, without saying a word, boxed Paul soundly around the ears.

“Leave me,” he wheezed sharply. “Interloper. Stranger. Fool . . . Do nothing for me. Touch me not.”

“Leave him,” said the corpse prince.

Paul said, “No. I can save him easily. It’s only shock and blood loss.”

Kiriona wiped her sword clean on one of the black-shrouded bodies. Then she kicked it over with her beautiful polished boot. “Look at that,” she said, “and trust me on this one.”

Beneath the light of the powerful lamp, the dead person’s face was startling. The eyelids hung slack, and there were rows of dark purple pinpricks above and below them—like something fine and sharp had come through. Hanging out of the eyelids—Nona at first did not know what she was looking at—was a shrivelled object, wet and red, like a slug. Like a muscle. The tongue hanging out of the mouth was a lot longer than a normal tongue—and pointed, triangular, deep blue in death. For some reason, the sight started a shudder at Nona’s feet that carried on all the way up to the top of her head. The awful pain tightened in her chest, and nearly shuddered her out of her body. The back of her neck itched so badly it felt as though it were bleeding.

Pyrrha said a word so terrible under her breath that it startled Nona back into the middle ground of her thoughts. She rebuked, “Pyrrha,” and then—“No, I’m sorry, you’re allowed to say whatever you like at this point.”

Paul was crouched, staring thoughtfully at the dead, empty-eyed face in a way that would have been strange for either Palamedes or Camilla. Nona thought Camilla would have looked with eyes like stone and given away nothing, and that Palamedes would have reached out to touch. Paul did not reach out to touch, and Paul looked as though it were interesting.

The corpse prince said tightly, “They shouldn’t be here. We would have gotten word if they were back in the home system. They’re confined to Antioch—he said they’d only be on Antioch. God damn it, he *said!*”

Paul said, “Gideon, I’ve seen this before. My memory’s split. Where?”

“Silas Octakiseron’s poor bastard cavalier,” said Kiriona. “Colum Asht. I didn’t understand then … we call them devils. I mean, Dad calls them devils—this is what we’re facing on Antioch. Fuck me, I didn’t think … this is mental. They can’t be here. He said they couldn’t travel—he said…”

Paul said, “Gideon, cool it. Why can’t I heal this man?”

“Like this I am undesirable to them,” croaked the figure.

“They bit him,” said the corpse prince, as though nobody had spoken. “I mean, they hit him—they don’t have to bite. It’s revenant magic. They’re waiting for him to die so they don’t have to work so hard. Heal him up now, and they’ll still ride that wound all the way into his hideous old body and I’ll get to kill him myself.”

The ancient old man turned his single rheumy, hateful eye to the corpse prince.

“I would that you had been carried back here on a stretcher,” he said. “I would that you were stretched out before me, dead in the rudeness of you … your niche is ready, Gideon Nav, and now I cannot clasp the joy of laying you within it.” He coughed fretfully—batted another metal-fisted hand at Paul, who had instinctively surged forward—and he said, “Look at you, you cock-o’-the-walk, you filigree piglet, you scum. A whitened sepulchre … Ninth blood on your foreign sword…”

Nona was distracted from her lazy enjoyment of the word *piglet* by a flicker in the dark archway, the one from which they’d just emerged. She felt again that strange sense of the familiar made awful—like coming back to your own bed and finding it covered in stains and slimes that hadn’t been there when you left it. She clutched feebly at Pyrrha’s forearm. “There’s more,” she said. “More outside.”

Pyrrha’s muscles tensed. Paul and Kiriona both looked back at the archway. Something moved, deep in the shadows.

“Thanks, kiddie,” said Pyrrha. “Nav—let’s get that cage open and head down. Sorry, Gramps, we’re on a clock.”

Paul crossed to the metal cage and started fiddling with a sort of heavy latch mechanism on the front. Kiriona hovered, sword still in her hand, staring at the archway.

“Nav, come *on*,” said Pyrrha sharply. “Any kid in the Cohort knows the mission comes first. Or did you get that uniform out of the dress-up box?”

Kiriona rounded on Pyrrha, her gold eyes cold and haughty, but instead of saying anything she shoved her sword back into its scabbard and moved

to the cage as well. Paul had freed the latch and was hauling back the barred gate with an echoing clatter. Inside was a bare and empty metal box, a bit smaller than their old bathroom back in the apartment.

Once the gate was partly open, Paul and Kiriona set about dragging the dying old man into the box. This was a messy and difficult process: not only did he leave a great smeared slick of blood behind him, but he kept coughing, flailing his arms, and calling them both *dunghill pups in need of a sound whipping* and other things that were clearly not meant to be kind. Nona felt bad: not only could she not help, but she was keeping Pyrrha from helping. She risked a glance back at the archway. There was a figure there—dark robes topped by a pale face, not moving forward, but swaying slightly on the spot. It looked as if it were watching them. Its eyes writhed.

Paul positioned the old man against the back wall of the metal box, then snatched the lamp. Kiriona retrieved a sword that had been left lying in the blood nearby, brought it in, and dropped it unceremoniously in the man's lap. Then Pyrrha carried Nona into the box, and Kiriona heaved the gate shut with a clash. Two more figures had appeared in the archway, flanking the first.

"Hope we've still got power," Paul said.

"The breaker," said Kiriona. "Big switch there on the wall. Ought to work, unless they've killed it from below."

Paul yanked the handle she had pointed at. A small glass bump above the handle lit up with a sickly red glow. There was a heavy mechanical *clonk*, the floor jolted, and the stone floor started to rise up the side of the bars; blood trickled over its edge and dripped down, a few drops spattering on the metal tiles. The floor went higher and higher until it closed off the window of bright light from above, and they were all in darkness except for the faint redness from the indicator bulb. The old man's breathing rasped and laboured, and machinery rumbled somewhere over their heads. There was a low, whirring moan, and a rush of freezing cold air. At first Nona thought she would never see again; then she found her eyes adjusting after all.

"Please, sir," Paul was saying patiently. He had crouched back down next to the old man, in the blood. "If you stop trying to hit me, I can at least do something for the pain."

"The marshal loves pain," said Kiriona. She was staring fixedly at the red bulb.

The old man gurgled, “*Seneschal*, you fool.”

“Oh, congrats, I forgot Nonagesimus left you in charge,” said Kiriona.
“Where’s Aiglamene?”

“Dead,” the seneschal said.

Kiriona became very still. The seneschal wheezed with relish at her expression. Even in the darkness Nona could still tell, and surprised herself by saying to Kiriona, “He’s lying.”

“Dead—as far as I care,” he amended. “She went on ahead. To the monument.”

“Nav, talk to me,” said Pyrrha. “Antioch. You’ve been fighting these—things? How long?”

“Fuck knows,” said Kiriona, highly distracted. “Three, four months? Took us a while to work out what they even were. Thought they only had a weird disease.”

“And how long have they been on the Ninth?” This was addressed to the seneschal.

“A night. A day,” said the rasping old man. “You hold the Reverend Daughter, so I must answer. We shut them away … locked some of them inside their cells. They riot. Their touch consumes … they hunger for the youngest of us.”

“Boy, are they out of luck,” said the corpse prince, sotto voce.

“Their bodies twist—they do not know how to use their bodies,” Crux rasped, as though Kiriona had not spoken. “Some of them are dead walking. Those are the weaker kind … Sisters Lachrimorta and Aisamorta plied the art, to some effect. The constructs … the constructs were safe … fleshed corpses they took, but the bones they wanted none of…”

Paul said, “How many are like this?”

“Too many.”

“Can I get ‘too many’ in numbers?”

“Over two hundred. Full forty lie dead at the bottom of the tiers where they were pushed, in the first hour … it was all we could do to secure the tier. More have died … the marshal reckoned we lost a full hundred already. And,” added the old man sourly, “now those seven above are added to the bier, by my own blade and the stripling’s…”

“Those were dead already,” Kiriona interrupted. “The dead ones move differently. You realise the ones you shoved off the tier probably just got back up again?”

“Can the living ones be cured?” asked Paul.

“You can’t *cure* this,” said the Prince. “It’s spirit shit … possession. You can ward people so they don’t get grabbed—if you’re really good—but otherwise, chop them up and burn the bits. That’s the cure. Civilian or Edenite or House, it makes no difference.”

There was another great jolt that shook the metal box. The seneschal grunted. Nona realised they were no longer moving downward.

The cage doors opened to a floor of more cages, like the world’s strangest zoo: machines of a kind Nona had never seen—nothing like the nice normal machines back home—enormous edifices gated behind iron bars, as though someone were afraid they would get out. They all droned away. Their bars had been strung with long streamers of black cloth that seemed so old and tattered and frail that they might dissolve if you breathed on them. Pyrrha murmured, “God, this place has gone downhill,” but thankfully only Nona heard it.

The dying old man rasped: “We barricaded behind the Anastasian. Sister Canace and Deacon Davith were left here. Why have they abrogated their duty?”

“Holy shit, Sister Canace is still alive?” said Kiriona, startled. “She used to oversee me on oss duty. If you’re using Sister Canace as a last line of defence, how bad off *are* w—you?”

“Sister Canace, you cancerous gosling—you bloodied slime—has what you have always lacked,” burbled Crux wetly. “Faith, and loyalty.”

“Probably, but I have what Sister Canace always lacked, which is knees that work,” said Kiriona.

The old man ignored this. “Nobody down here was touched. Nobody down here was taken. Canace and Davith should remain. This is our place of safety—it has never been breached,” he added, with a look that said he thought the assembled and unlovely throng in front of him were in danger of counting as a *breach*.

Pyrrha said, “Well, the chambers down through the main artery ought to hold up—there’s that long tunnel with the blast doors on either side.”

This seemed to fox Crux.

“Who are you, foreigner, that you know the mysteries of the Anastasian?”

“I was here before it was the Anastasian,” said Pyrrha absently. “Painted a nursery. Mint green. Look, if your watchers aren’t here they’ve pulled

back behind whatever bailey you've set up. Let's keep moving. How are we going to move...?"

But Paul had already gone to the old man, lying bloodied on the bottom of the platform. The huge, horrible ancient dwarfed Camilla Hect's lithe, solid form easily, but—much to Nona's surprise—Paul heaved him up to standing as though he were Nona, or even smaller, like he was Kevin.

Crux howled out, "This shames the Ninth."

"Not possible," said the corpse prince.

But Paul said—

"We can move this way, but I can't fight at the same time."

"Nav, take point. I'll take the rear," said Pyrrha, to which the corpse prince said, "Nice," and Nona laughed out loud. She felt a little drunk and strange.

At that laugh, the old man stared at her in frank dismay and reproof—then his face closed up somehow, left off its look of horror and awe, and he looked at her with a totally different expression. He really did look like a skeleton mask, with his age-spotted pate and his deeply shadowed, bitter eye. Nona looked away, and found that the corpse prince had looked at her briefly too, again with an expression even Nona couldn't translate. Pyrrha held her close and said: "Can't be doing that badly, if you're going to laugh at an ass joke."

Nona did not want to tell her that something terrible was going on in her body and had been ever since the period where her heart and her arm had hurt. She snuggled down into the halo of Pyrrha's arms for warmth—she was starting to feel blue all over—and the zip fastener of Pyrrha's jacket caught her arm and scratched her. She stared mildly at the rough red graze and the little square flaps of skin that had risen off her arm. The corpse prince held the lantern before her as they moved down that long, toe-curlingly cold tunnel—the strong white light glimmered off rough unfinished stone and the softer gleam of very old metal and paint—and Nona got the fright of her life, seeing shapes on the walls, until she realised that it was more bones that had been glued into the rock face. It was awful.

A yell echoed down the tunnel, and they all startled—but they reached the end of the tunnel, where what seemed to be huge white bars had been pressed into service over the doorway. As the light from the end of the tunnel and their light dazzled each other, Nona realised that what she had taken for painted white metal was fresh, slightly pink bone, redder at either

end where it had planted itself into the doorframe. There were more huddled, black-wrapped old people peering between the bones, their anxious faces blurred with painted masks: white bone, black background.

“Halt,” quavered someone, but the corpse prince said, “It’s me. Where’s Aiglamene?”

The most asymmetrical person that Nona had ever seen in her short life stumped to life behind the bars. At her barked command, the bars parted—sort of twanged away and opened up in the exact way that bars shouldn’t, exposing the cortex of the bone. Now Nona could see her clearly. Most of her face had rippled in the way that Hot Sauce’s would someday ripple when she was eighty to two hundred years older, like a candle that had burned for hours before someone blew it out. A proud, keen-eyed face peered out behind that melt. One of her legs wasn’t her own (it went on funny at the hip, Nona noticed), but she held herself as tall and as proud as Crown. In her hands was a huge black-metal pike about the same height as her, with an edge that gleamed in the light. Nona couldn’t stop herself looking at that edge: for some reason it made her palms sweat, and the back of her neck itch again.

The woman barked, “The seneschal needs help. Get Asya and Brother Clement, now...!”

“You’re a fool and a twit and your brains have turned, Aiglamene,” rasped the old man. “I would have kept the doors barred against me, in case I had been compromised.”

“Good point. Get someone with a spear—treat him at arm’s length. Spear him through if anything happens. Spear him through if anything doesn’t,” the woman added, beneath her breath.

“Yes, Marshal,” said one of the robed onlookers— “Yes, Captain Aiglamene,” said another, robed over rusting armour. Crux lashed out at them as he had lashed out at Paul, though at least he had left off lashing out at Paul.

He snarled, “Canace—Davith—they have abandoned their post ... they have been taken, or fled ... they have gone back up another route, perhaps the blocked-up ways, or the peep, or...”

“Cease worrying. Sister Canace and Deacon Davith are not the types to abandon their post,” said the old soldier. “I’ll send people to check. We’re safe down here—so leave your maunderings, or the youth will start to think

your dotage is on you already. You see secrets and conspiracies in every corner now."

"Brat—toy soldier—harridan," ground out Crux; and then he was hustled through the arch, with Paul supporting. The old soldier they called Aiglamene watched him go, with her face caught up in some worry.

"He's too old to walk that one off," she muttered to herself. But then she shook herself back to the situation at hand, and looked critically at Pyrrha—her gaze swept over Nona—her gaze fixed briefly on the corpse prince; then back to Nona.

"I've never seen this many nuns before," said the corpse prince, who didn't sound excited about it.

Aiglamene said, "Sister Berta—hold," and passed the pike on to a rather gloomy-looking girl who looked not much older than Honesty. Berta could barely hold the thing, and someone else came up to help her struggle with it. Then the old woman said, "The Ninth House welcomes back its Sainted Reverend Daughter."

To Nona's horror whole and entire, Aiglamene dropped to her one native knee. Behind her, in ones, then twos, then threes—every robed old person, or medium person, or even quite young person glancing sidelong at their fellows, dropped to the floor. Only hapless Sister Berta remained upright, and her fellow helping her with the pike. The call moved back through the broad, dark room behind them—"Reverend Daughter," "the Reverend Daughter," "the Sainted Daughter." Nona's horror only grew when she realised that it was not Kiriona Gaia they were referring to, but *her*.

Aiglamene rose from one knee—it took a long time, but she quelled with a look anyone who offered to help—and then stumped forward into the ring of light flung by the corpse prince's lantern. She reached out—she touched the side of the Prince's face—they both recoiled.

Kiriona Gaia recovered first.

"You always said I'd come back in a box, Aiglamene," she said lightly.

"They killed you," said Aiglamene.

"Crime of opportunity," said the corpse prince. And: "Don't tell Crux—I absolutely, positively cannot give him the fucking satisfaction."

Aiglamene shoved her square in the chest, with the palm of one gloved hand; Kiriona tottered a little and wheezed, "Don't—that's where my heart used to be," but the old soldier's gaze had already fallen upon Nona.

Nona cringed back in Pyrrha's arms, because the expression was as bad as every single time Camilla had caught her putting a mouthful of chewed-up food in the potted plant or elsewhere. She could read this very old, very furious soldier like a book: the woman was angry, and blamed her. Kiriona Gaia could read her too, because she insinuated herself between them, and said coolly—

“It’s not her, Captain—it’s only her body.”

Over the Prince’s shoulder, Aiglamene looked at Nona, long and suspiciously; then she sighed, and wheeled around, and said: “Get inside. Now. Complete the gate,” she told a few of the other robed people.

With her back still to the group, she said—“Nav, rest assured I would give you the beating of your life *and* death if we were not under terrible siege. I don’t know why you’re here—I don’t know why you came back—but if we have the time later, and the Ninth House survives, I will ask pertinent questions. For now, only give me information if I need it.”

“We need to get through to the rock,” said Pyrrha.

Aiglamene turned to look at Pyrrha, but Pyrrha—as per usual—was completely unmoved by any hostile, gimlet-eyed expression. Aiglamene said slowly: “You ask me, in the middle of the worst emergency my House has ever faced, to let strangers through to our holiest of holies?”

“Yes. We have a Lyctor’s rights,” said Pyrrha.

The old soldier sharpened, face alight with something that Nona could tell wasn’t hope, but was in the same room—at least the same building. She looked over Pyrrha again, Pyrrha in her ordinary jacket and her ordinary clothes with her very ordinary guns and her extraordinary scruff on her jaw, and she said dubiously, “Your Grace...”

“I said a Lyctor’s *rights*. Not a Lyctor’s prowess, sir—Captain?”

“Marshal,” Aiglamene corrected, but—“I ranked Captain, before discharge.”

“Territorials?”

“Strike force, for my sins.”

“You look too sensible for a Brandishment Baby,” said Pyrrha, her most winning smile in her voice, and the old soldier made a noise that was second cousin to a laugh.

“An’ there’s a term I haven’t heard since I was a child.” Then Aiglamene bristled, as though she had dropped her guard too far, and said: “Can you save us, or not?”

“If you let us through to the rock, maybe.”

“But where’s the Reverend Daughter, who we have taken as Saint and Lyctor? Why the *Tomb*? ”

There was no smile in Pyrrha’s voice now; in fact, she sounded a lot like We Suffer, with her best radio voice on. “Captain, perhaps you’ll understand me if I tell you this is a matter of the Emperor’s Intelligence.”

But this just made Aiglamene laugh again, and not with a bit of humour in it.

“Hah! Don’t come over all intelligence agent with *me*, you young fool. The Bureau’s not welcome in the House of the Ninth. Last one we had—thirty years back—we dropped off eleven hours from the prison with ten hours’ worth of air and told ‘em to hurry up.”

Aiglamene looked at Nona. Nona felt unhappy again, hot in her cheeks and under her shirt. The old soldier looked at her critically, like a stranger, and added: “Take her in. Get her to a heater—slowly—and warm her through. She’s taking a chill.”

“Nona doesn’t chill,” said Pyrrha. But she shifted Nona around in her arms, and in a slightly different voice said, “Fuck me. Nona, you *are* cold.”

Before Nona could protest that in fact she felt quite warm now—too warm for her jacket—Pyrrha moved into the depths of the room. It was a long oblong, and resembled nothing so much as a graveyard for rusting swords and things; rocky niches carved into the walls were filled with old, tarnished rubbish, and long fearsome slabs of rock, only there were robed people of all kinds perching on top of them, which gave them a kind of picnic aspect. Dim overhead lights hung in cages just like the machines of before, and bright lamps—no candlelight, though Nona could see branches of old, dribbly candles with black tapers and horrible brownish tallow—made weird shadows of everyone. Pyrrha shouldered her through surprised skeleton faces and surprised skeleton people. Nona was deeply horrified to see *actual walk-around skeletons* mixed in with the crowd, when she had mistaken them in the dark for people who were very thin. When they turned around they were skulls with pinprick red lights dancing in the hollows of their eye sockets—she was fascinated, horribly so, but had no time to be. Pyrrha broke the soft, worried hush by saying: “Palamedes—Paul,” and then Nona was laid down next to a glowing red bar heater that smelled like oil and burning hair, displacing a couple of creaking old people who couldn’t get out of the way fast enough because they kept bowing to her.

One kissed her shoe. Even Kevin knew better than that. She said reproachfully, "That's unhygienic—there's germs," but they were gone already.

The terrible old man was there too; he was being tended to by Paul and continuing to heap great curses upon their head, which Paul was taking with calm imperturbability. Another, shorter person stood alongside, holding a knife as though they wished very much that they weren't.

Nona was laid down on the hard, cold rock—Pyrrha had taken her hands and was warming them between her own. Nona's were a strange, livid colour. Nona could see confusion in the shape of Pyrrha's eyebrows and mouth, and when she ran her hands up Nona's forearms, the confusion changed.

"When did you get this?" she demanded.

She was pointing at the very slight mark on Nona's forearm, still a little pink from where the skin had lifted. "I got it off your zip," she said, and then she realised—

"My first wound."

"Paul," said Pyrrha, desperately, but Paul had already transferred his attentions from the old man to Nona. Paul was touching the back of her neck—checking her eyes, behind her ears, sticking a finger briefly in her mouth—moving down to slide a hand underneath her armpits. Nona looked away, and found the hideous old man looking directly at her, with that same expression in his bleary, pain-trammelled eyes of—recognition. He wanted something, from her specifically.

"Lady," he said, in a much softer creak, "you've gone away again, my lady; where have you run? Remember your catechism and your lesson, and remember them well now: this is where you come back to—you have your little escape. You'll feel better for coming back ... you remember that, Harrowhark."

Nona whispered, "I'm sorry—I'm not Harrowhark."

"Ay, and you've said that before," said the old man. "Who are you this time, if not my Lady Harrowhark?"

Nona shut her eyes. The darkness closed in around her, unrelieved by the bar heater, and the lamps set all around, and the caged lights swinging overhead, and the press of people crammed into that long, dusty, abandoned room. She was outside the room—she was outside the great tunnel—she was looking down at the terrible dead grey-and-white surface, the great

hollow pores set into rock. Then she went back down, pulled down into each cavern—the long central shaft—deeper and deeper.

Her middle thoughts crawled into her top and bottom thoughts. For a moment she thought she'd die of it.

"There's a box," she said, "and ... there's someone in the box who isn't me. *I'm* me. I don't know who's in that box, not really, only—when you open it—I'll be gone, because I can't survive ... knowing. And I think—inside that box—there's something that looks like a girl..."

The face of the old man blurred. Paul was saying—

"Her healing mechanism's stopped. The body doesn't have enough of anything to keep going. Her brain's seizing. A couple of organs have collapsed. Massive trauma. Interesting."

"Paul," said Pyrrha, "your bedside manner is bullshit."

"It's interesting. It's not *great*. Nona, how do you feel?"

"Good," said Nona. "Fine." Honesty compelled her to say, "Worried and a little sad, but—good. *I'm* fine. The body's ... not."

"Okay. Ecstatic seizure. Anyway—she's static, not regressing. She's not healing, but she's not going downhill. We have to get her soul back in..."

"Now," finished Pyrrha.

"Five minutes ago, for preference," said Paul.

Nona reached out. She found Camilla's wrist—a wrist she had loved so keenly, attached to hands that had bathed her and flipped the pages of magazines to read to her and spooned out food she didn't want to eat. She looked up into the face of the woman who was gone, which had been shared by a man who was also gone, a face taken by someone new. She said—

"The more I go back—the more I'm made to go back ... it'll hurt her. She wasn't made for it, she's not ... not the right shape."

"Don't talk. Don't stress yourself," said Paul, but Nona didn't want to be interrupted.

"I might not help you when ... I'm back," she said, not quite understanding *I*. "I'll be different. I'll remember everything ... I'll remember the thing I'm trying to forget. And Palamedes—I won't *love* him. I won't love Camilla, or Pyrrha, or Hot Sauce, or even Noodle. I won't love anything ... I won't know how. I won't be *me* at all, or ... I'll be the me who knows the thing, and *knowing* the thing means I'm not Nona—I'm someone else."

Paul, practical, clasped one of her hands between them, and used the other to rub a rough section of black frieze over her sides to try to warm her up.

“Okay. Don’t worry,” they said.

Nona felt hot and cross.

“I’ve just told you why I’m worried, in detail, and I think that matters quite a lot.”

“Camilla and Palamedes were loved by Nona,” said Paul. “Pyrrha was loved by Nona. It’s finished, it’s done. You can’t take *loved* away. We loved you too. Palamedes and Camilla loved you.”

Pyrrha was there too, floating into view above Nona’s head, in the darkness. Her mouth was set in that unmistakable *need-a-cigarette* shape.

“Don’t worry, kiddie,” she said tiredly. “I’ll keep loving you—my problem is I don’t know how to stop. And, you know … who you are … were … you’re capable of more than you think, right now. I liked you. He liked you—Gideon liked you. My necromancer and I always liked you … and hey, what’s *like* except a love that hasn’t been invited indoors?”

She reached down and ruffled Nona’s short hair. Nona felt her borrowed heart go *thump-pa-thump-pa-thump*.

“But you didn’t get me a six-month birthday present,” she whispered pathetically. “I didn’t get the beach party, or a cake, or any dogs.”

“Honey, of course I got you a birthday present,” said Pyrrha instantly. “I bought one the morning of the broadcast. I went and got you a new T-shirt—the expensive kind, not the ones that dissolve when you wash them. I hid it in the sink cabinet.”

Nona sucked in a breath. “Tell me about it,” she whispered. “Describe it exactly.”

“Uh,” said Pyrrha, and flicked her eyes up at Paul. “Okay, so, I hadn’t cleared this with the powers that be, but it was a picture of a moustache—like the facial hair, but a cartoon?—and then there were words below. Look, you had to see it, I’m not sure I can describe it in a way that…”

“Pyrrha, I want to know what it said.”

Now Pyrrha avoided Paul’s gaze.

“It advertised cheap moustache rides,” said Pyrrha. “We’re talking low prices.”

Nona started to cry softly, overwhelmed.

Paul said, "Palamedes wouldn't have let her wear that outside the house." Then: "Camilla wouldn't have let her wear it inside, either."

"Yeah, but what about *you*?" said Pyrrha.

"Her choice," said Paul. "I think moustache rides should be free."

"It would have been my favourite present except for the handkerchief," said Nona breathlessly. "I'm going to go back and fetch it. I'll remember. I'll make myself remember. And I'll wear it all the time, inside the house and outside the house, and then you'll know it's really me. I'm not going to be gone forever ... I'm ready. I'm ready. Let's go."



32

AIGLAMENE MET THEM at a little nondescript door out of the oblong. Paul had supported the awful old man—he had demanded his rights as seneschal—and they had met the corpse prince, who was pacing at the doorway. Pyrrha had wrapped Nona in one of the big black cloaks, which were much warmer than they looked but smelled as old as the room—sort of dusty and fusty and mildewy—but she was finding she had to smell quite consciously now, to make her brain understand what she was trying to do. It was like having your feet slip off the pedals of a bicycle. Aiglamene, lantern held high, led them down a long, winding passage. She took endless back-and-forth turns, until, at one last door, she stopped. She turned off the lantern and plunged them into a big black icy darkness.

Pyrrha said, “We going in blind?”

“There is no light of electric or fat in this place,” croaked out the old man. “There is no light but that which was given to us. Not before the rock and the Tomb. This is the place you should not be travelling ... none of us but the Daughter, and her cavalier.”

Nona could make out nothing in the darkness, but the corpse prince’s voice was unmistakable.

“The Reverend Daughter has no cavalier living.”

There was a metal sound. The door opened, and Nona was carried over the threshold into a big empty void. The air changed, cold as ice, black and blue as paint. Everyone’s feet suddenly made a big *squelch*.

A light flicked on—a tall bright lantern with a huge glowing bulb within. They were standing in a huge room, a cathedral cave, with a great roundish cold stone rock placed at what was obviously the mouth of a tunnel leading away—a rock the size and height of a big car and probably the weight of multiple cars. And standing before the rock—a lantern by one booted foot—was Crown.

Nona's eyes had been tricked by the light. It wasn't Crown. It was someone exactly Crown's height, someone with Crown's face, but like someone had washed her in hot water and soaked the colour out—a Crown who gangled, without any of Crown's lovely curvy softnesses or bignesses, a wretched white Crown. A Crown with an arm that was all bones—metal-shod bones, real moving bones, with bony gold fingers holding a tiny pinpoint of orange light. Nona realised that it really was her arm; that it really was a cigarette. Pyrrha startled forward—but there was another *squelch*; they had all stepped into a soft, jammy yellow field of what looked like canolene but more transparent. And Pyrrha was stuck fast. Paul stuck fast, and Crux with them, and Aiglamene stuck fast, and the corpse prince

"How'd you get here before me?" she demanded.

"Didn't—got here after," said the thing, and it had Crown's voice too: the same silvery, musical sweetness of Crown's, but not nice at all. "I simply looked for any signs of God and slithered downward—easy pappy. This place is like a neon sign saying *John Gaius Was Here*. And now, I am afraid ... I am here to scotch all your plans. Don't move, please—Sextus—Hect—Hectus," they suggested silkily. Paul had moved to support the horrifying old man; the yellow stuff was creeping up above both of their ankles, holding them fast. "I don't know what you are yet, but you know what *I* am, so ... stay put, Sext."

"It's Paul," said Paul.

"I respect that, but can't admire it," said the new person, taking a long drag.

Paul said, "This is interesting stuff underfoot, Tridentarius. What is it?"

"Adipose fat and mucous membrane," said the not-Crown modestly. "It's my own recipe."

"Oh my God, Ianthe, barf," said the corpse prince.

The only person not stuck in this mix was Nona, who was being carried; but the field spread out far enough in front of them that Nona, who did not think she could walk anyway, would probably get one step before sticking and falling over. Pyrrha shifted Nona to her other hip—the eyes of that pale mirror face fell on them—and Pyrrha said, "So, what, John sent you?"

The person—Ianthe—the real Ianthe Naberius, after all, not the lovely-chinned corpse with the perfect hair—crossed over to them, lit from behind by the electric light. Up close she had skin like Honesty's, if Honesty had

been put in a cave for maybe a million years, or perhaps like Noodle's skin when you parted the crumpled, curdly fur at the back of his neck.

"Who are you, really?" she asked, sounding genuinely curious. "You had me fooled that you were the Saint of Duty with bits missing—I wasn't paying attention."

"Number Seven got him. I'm his leftover cavalier parts. Pyrrha Dve."

"Does that happen—normally?"

"No."

"Phew," said Ianthe, and then, finally, "No. No, John Gaius didn't send me."

She came to stand in front of Kiriona Gaia, and they stared at each other, evenly and coldly, one hand on the handles of the rapiers each carried on their hip: for Ianthe Naberius carried a rapier too, worn on a jewelled belt atop her beautiful leather breeches, with a parchment-coloured shirt all swirled over by the softest-looking white material Nona had ever seen. It was like a rainbow had been put in the fridge, then woven into fabric. It settled over Ianthe Naberius's shoulders like a mist. It was so beautiful. She stood there, before the corpse prince, looking barely more alive than Kiriona was.

Pyrrha said lowly, "Don't do anything stupid, kid."

"Are *you* ever too late to come into my life and say that," said Kiriona.

Ianthe, ignoring this interchange, said merely—

"Prince Kiriona Gaia."

"Prince Ianthe Naberius," said her opposite. And: "Can you not fucking smoke in here?"

"It's a filthy habit," admitted the other prince. "I didn't think you cared though."

"I don't, but there's like a million fire detectors."

In a show of obsequious obedience, rolling her eyes, Ianthe took her gold fingerbones and stubbed out the cigarette on her real, thin flesh hand, then tossed the discarded butt over her shoulder, where it smouldered on the stones. Crux started to make a noise like a teakettle filled with soup. Ianthe ignored him; a terrible hunger had sharpened her like a knife.

"Did you bring my sister?"

"Upstairs," said the corpse prince, and thumbed vaguely somewhere over her shoulder. "You can pick her up whenever. She came on her own—I didn't have to use my attraction or my charm."

"You don't have either. God, it's like she *wants* me to catch her," marvelled Ianthe. "That ill-shampooed slut."

"Sixth House bigwigs are up there too, don't know if we want 'em," said the corpse prince laconically. "The rest of the House is parked outside the Ur system, should be easy enough to sweep them up. Not that we've got the people ... Anyway, I don't think Dad even wants them, they'd only depress him."

It had slowly dawned on Nona—by the look of everyone else caught in the yellow muck, it was dawning on them too—that this conversation was not being carried out in a way anyone had expected. Ianthe reached out—her sleeve fell away from her wrist—and Nona saw a strange fat bracelet ringing her bony wrist: a braided, hyper-coloured cord in shades that were somehow even uglier than the cords she had seen before—in her class—and on the wrist of—

"Friendship bracelets," she fairly shouted. "They're wearing *friendship bracelets*."

Ianthe grasped Kiriona's wrist, and Kiriona pulled free of the sticky yellow muck as easily and as neatly as if it were dust. They stood there, hands clasping each other's wrists, in their beautiful polished boots and their jewelled white swords—a matched pair of princes, one dead and one barely looking better. They tapped each other on the knuckles, did something complicated with their thumbs, and stood angled toward each other, easy and familiar, as though they had stood beside each other a million times.

Paul said quietly—

"Harrowhark's body is nearly dead. Are you going to get us inside the Tomb, or not?"

Long straps of that sticky, taffy-textured fat snapped out and wrapped around Nona's ankles. She was jerked out of Pyrrha's arms, rolled up in a thick wad of it, and rolled over and over, nauseated and panicked, until she came to a stop right beside that polished boot. It shone so highly that Nona could see her face in it, and the distorted reflection looked terrible: a blue-lipped, haggard version of herself she had never known—the face of the other girl, maybe, not hers: a face distorted with fear. The fat dissolved, leaving nothing but a weird moist feeling on the insides of her wrists. Ianthe was saying—"I'm simply doing exactly what I think Harry would want me to do ... Harry *adores* this ghastly old rock and its ghastly old inhabitant.

Harry would be the first to say, ‘No. I’m not worth it. Leave it shut.’ Don’t you think, Ninth?’

“I try not to,” said Kiriona modestly.

Both Ianthe and Kiriona briefly fell about laughing. They slapped each other’s shoulders in what seemed to be genuine mirth. Nona rolled an eye desperately toward Pyrrha, and Paul, and the two ancients: Pyrrha and Paul were still as statues.

“Good to see you,” said Ianthe, quite kindly, to Kiriona.

“Yeah—same,” said Kiriona, with infectious good cheer. “Anyway—let’s open the Tomb and get out of here.”

For a moment Ianthe kept laughing, and then she said—“Wait. What?”

“That Tomb’s opening, now,” said Kiriona.

“You can’t possibly be—Ninth!”

For Kiriona had taken a few steps backward, away from Nona, in no danger of tripping over her, bathed in the yellow glow of the electric light reflecting off the fat. She drew her sword with an oily rattle, and Ianthe drew hers. Nona stared, transfixed, at the edges of their swords.

Ianthe said, “You little three-way double-crosser.”

“Haven’t double-crossed anybody, let alone three times,” said Kiriona.

“You’ve double-crossed God, for one—”

Kiriona said, “What? John *sent* me, you overgilded doorknob.”

Pyrrha said, “Like hell he did.”

“My sentiments exactly expressed,” said Ianthe.

“No. He did,” said the corpse prince. “I didn’t sneak onto that ship for my health. Don’t you see? This is my chance. We go in there, we open up the Tomb, I take down whatever’s inside—Alecto, Annabel, I don’t care, whatever her name is—*boom*, we’re done. Dad won’t be immortal anymore, but he says he doesn’t care about that, and I believe him, Tridentarius … I’ll be his cavalier. I’m the First. Hell, I’m his child and heir. Isn’t this the neatest way? Are you going to help me, or not?”

Ianthe had withdrawn. Even from below, Nona could see the horror and disgust writ large on her face: it had a lot to do with the chin.

“Oh my God,” she said softly. “You can’t believe that. You’re very stupid when you want to be, Gonad … but you can’t believe that.”

“*You* know he’s never recovered.”

“Yes,” said Ianthe. “Oh, I know.”

“If we weren’t around, I don’t know what he’d do.”

“I do,” said Ianthe. “Exactly the same thing he’s doing right now, without trying to hide it. Drowning his sorrows in whatever or whoever comes to hand … Do you know who I saw creeping out of his bedroom the other day? Grand Admiral Sarpedon, I shit you not.”

“Oh, God, *yuck*,” said Kiriona, looking highly diverted. “That’s sick—”

“—following a grand cavalcade of Cohort officials, ensigns, et cetera —”

“Yeah, but Sarpedon is old!”

“*That’s* your problem? Kiriona, you fat-headed wreck, John’s older than our recorded time,” said Ianthe.

“Yeah, but he doesn’t look it, does he,” retorted Kiriona. “Sarpedon’s, like, in his fifties? Sixties? It’s nasty! They should know how it looks! It looks suss! Anyway, that’s my *dad!*”

“You haven’t had to live through an atom of the worst of it,” said Ianthe. “You are an exasperating child and a moron—stop making me argue with you! The *important* part of this, you gibbering bozo, is that the moment that door opens, you’re not killing the monster inside—”

“Give me five minutes—”

“—you’re not becoming his *cavalier*—you’re not fixing anything! You’re signing our doom,” snapped Ianthe. “He gets her back, you don’t know what he’ll become! You have no idea, and you’ve deluded yourself into believing him, and he’s just tricking you! You know that, don’t you? Are you trying to kid yourself? Is this about Harry, after all?”

There was a deep indrawn breath; Ianthe laughed and said—

“You don’t have to breathe, you know.”

“You’re so goddamned boring when you talk about Harrowhark, so don’t,” said Kiriona. “Listen to *you*, big lady of the First. ‘Leave Harrow to die, don’t open the Tomb, mneh mneh mneh.’ What’d you come here for? Stop playing the good son. You don’t give a shit about anything except your own plans, you know. Your sister’s upstairs. Take her and go—let me fight this thing and win, or die trying, who cares?”

“You let that monster out of its box,” said Ianthe, “and you start us down a path nobody can save us from. If God truly wants her out … if Teacher set this all up … if he wants her…”

“Wants her? He told me to kill her. He said, *Make it quick, but kill her*, said me with my blood could do it—said me with my blood, I was the only one…”

Ianthe rounded on the corpse prince, and she gave her a ringing slap straight through the face. Kiriona did not stagger.

“He *loves* her!” Ianthe howled. “John *loves* Alecto—John *needs* Alecto! Without that piece of goddamned fridge meat, he’s *nothing*—and we need to *keep him that way!*”

The secret was told: the secret was out—the middle brain disappeared. Nona unravelled.

The first thing that happened was that a big slit opened up above her baby heart—she gushed up blood against the front of her black shirt; then more slits through her middle—then in and out of her mortal insides, her unshapely organs. All the stuff inside her guts was hammered through. She was slit a thousand times—a million. Her skin erupted in blood through all the pores of her face. It poured out behind the backs of her knees, her ears, her armpits. Anything glandular. She choked up blood; both Tower Princes had whirled around—dropped down to their knees beside her—one said, “Her neck—get her neck,” but as fast as she could be stitched together, she came apart. The baby body was coming apart. A slim brown hand was at her cheek: “Keep it together. Wherever you are, idiot, I know you can hear me. Keep it together...”

Above their voices, and the blood, and the dim sweetness of the pain, she heard Paul say—

“Pyrrha, go.”

A gunshot. The pale yellow figure crumpled over next to Nona’s bust-up body, covered in Nona’s fluids—she jerked and went into a spasmotic fit, shuddering and juddering, as though she could somehow vibrate out of her skin. Paul dropped to Nona’s side with a clinical glance at Crown’s frothing, screaming sister, and said nothing more than, “Effective.”

“I was saving that bullet for John,” said Pyrrha. “Herald bullets don’t grow on trees. Wake made that for me ... Or I stole it from her ... same difference. Paul—Can we—Is there still...”

Paul sounded detached, strange above her. It was as though she were underwater. She yearned to be underwater. “Open the door,” they said. “Now.”

Nona felt herself lifted—Kiriona’s arms beneath her shoulders, Pyrrha’s beneath her hips. Why were they carrying her that way? Why was Pyrrha saying, “Keep her arm—Paul, her arm’s coming off.” The rock loomed so big above, so awful in the electric light. There were so many people

standing above her, her body, the baby's body. The baby with the big black eyes. The scrap of meat with the purple mouth.

Pyrrha was saying, "This isn't the real entrance, right? It can't be," and someone—the old soldier—was saying, "No. The true rock, so it is said, is down a corridor. But I can't lift this—I'm no adept..."

An enormous sound. The rock, rolling away. A great, grinding noise. Paul saying, "Not a problem," but the old man, hoarsely—"The traps ... the thieves' traps, the snares..."

Again, Paul: "Let me."

She had been down this corridor: she had squeezed through this crack in the rock—not a passageway, not at that point. John had told her he had something to show her. He had said, It's very pretty. You'll like it.

Paul's voice again—Camilla's voice, Palamedes's voice—"Most of them are disabled. Neat work, whoever did it."

Maybe the body blacked out. The next thing she heard was Kiriona, urgently saying, "Take it. Take it from anywhere. Take all of it."

"My lady," the old man was saying feebly. "My lady ... my girl-child..."

"I don't need all of it—but I need to keep it wet..."

Pyrrha was saying, "You can't spoof this. Cass and Mercy and I worked on cell thanergy—we need thanergy, *fresh* thanergy, to activate..."

John loved her. She was John's cavalier. She loved John. For she so loved the world that she had given them John. For the world so loved John that she had been given. For John had so loved her that he had made her she. For John had loved the world.

"Kill me," said Kiriona.

"No. You're dead," said Paul. "You won't produce a reaction."

"Me," said Pyrrha. "Take me and Gideon. If Wake had just asked me, I might've done it in the first place—died here, with her, for this..."

"Take *me*, you fools," said Crux.

She hadn't come on purpose; the scrap of black-eyed meat had asked for it—the chain of a kiss: the ice that burnt the flesh of the mouth that had stuck to the mouth that was frozen. The teardrop on the hand. The hand that John had fashioned.

Someone said something. The old man, Crux—the child Crux, barely one hundred years old—was saying hoarsely: "Fix me, and I am taken by the unknown. Kill me, for the love of the Reverend Daughter. Oh, do you

think you are the only one who knows how to die, Nav? I knew you were dead to see you ... I will commit this apocalyptic sin. I will die for her. She is my nurseling. I am the only one who knows how to die for the Reverend Daughter Harrowhark Nonagesimus.”

“Good,” said someone, so savagely that it sounded like a new voice altogether. “Good. Die. Die for her ... it’s the only goddamn good you’ll ever do her. It’s all any of you ever knew how to give her. You could have *lived* for her ... but you didn’t know how.”

“You never knew wot of what you talked of, but ran your tongue anyway,” said Crux. “All our sacrifices ... our scrimping ... the blood of the tomb-keeper...”

Paul was saying, “Are you certain?”

Aiglamene said, “Marshal, you have a duty to Drearburh and to the oss. This is my duty as your—” and Kiriona, “No. No. I won’t let you,” and Crux, “My *rights* ... my *rights* ... I am dying anyway.”

“Oh, just let him go!” snarled Kiriona. “He wants to die—I’ll do it. I’ve wanted to do this for years.”

John had said, It’s so beautiful. Come and look.

She had said, There are almost no beautiful things left. Where is Anastasia? Let me talk to Anastasia.

“Then do it, coward,” Crux said. “Do it—the knife is before you; the work has been done.”

“Did you know I’m God’s child?” Kiriona demanded. “Did you know all the things you did—all the shit you pulled—every single thing you did, every lock you snapped on me, every cuff you put on me, every—every crappy plate of food you put in front of me, every word—every look—did you know I was the real, true-blue daughter of the *Emperor*? I want you to know that—I want you to know what I *am*!”

“You remain—what you are,” said Crux. “A worthless millstone hung about my darling’s neck. You were born to make her suffer. You died as you lived, Gideon Nav—a disappointment to me—and to God.”

There was a wet, meaty sound. The old man exhaled. It was dark. Then there was light, bright, cold, electrifying, like death; and the noise of another rock—slowly—agonisingly—grinding away.

And Kiriona kept saying—“It didn’t feel good ... Fuck ... It didn’t feel good. Why didn’t it feel good?”

A rising, hysterical note. “Why didn’t it feel good? You fucking old ... You hideous, cruel ... you *bastard* ... Why didn’t ... Why can’t I...”

Glowworms, she had told John.

Technically beetles, said John, but I always loved them.

Narrow beetles with long strands hanging off them—a carpet of shifting, dead, winking lights at the top of the grave. Greenish, orangeish, yellowish, moving over one another silently with those long filaments hanging down. (Something came off the baby’s body; a foot, maybe. Paul jammed it back on.) And the water—the huge pool of real salt water, where she had knelt and drank—

She moved the baby’s body apart from the others. They could not stop her. She stepped into the water: A-a-a-ah! That was good. The water was ice-cold—it froze the baby’s heart in its tracks—but she was moving her now and did not need her heart. Someone said, “Let her go. It’s gravity. Let her go,” and those voices were dim now—she could no longer distinguish them. Most human voices sounded alike, after all. They were not beautiful. The waters parted for her and it became possible to walk, crunching through the bones at the bottom. The bones at the bottom; what did they make her think of?

John and she had swum to the centre hummock rising out of the pool. Not an island, not really. An outcropping. With the marble pillars, and the marble top, and the long low marble table. He said he thought it was a nice place to be. To lie down. She had liked hard things to lie down on. It was hard to endure having a spine. And there she was—

A long echo down the tunnel. The Lyctor with the broken body, screaming still in crazed agony, but getting closer.

There she was; John had made her so ugly, so unbearably ugly. The terrible face, with the terrible arms and legs and the terrible middle part, and the terrible hair, and the terrible ears: the nose too short, the ears too brief. But there she was—and within her the child, asleep, with the strange sword. The sword—her sword—her own edge had been pushed out, her swinging edge, her toy. Her plain bladed sword. And her body was chained up ...

“No!” someone howled, from the shore. “No—no!”

She looked back beyond, and she saw Anastasia, tucked where nobody would find her: Anastasia, all bones. Not really Anastasia. But Anastasia’s body without the meat on it, snuggled right into the curve of the rock, ready to close the door whenever it was opened. She remembered Anastasia.

Her vision swam: her heart was in her throat.
“Well, happy birthday to me, I guess,” sighed Nona.
And Nona tumbled forward onto the icy dead breast of the Body.



Epilogue

WHEN THE ROCK THAT had been made meat awoke in a body, it cried out aloud, saying—You.

Then it broke the chains that were upon its right wrist, and the right wrist broke with them. It broke the chains that were upon its left wrist, and the left wrist also; so followed the chains upon the right ankle and upon the left, until its arms and its legs and the chains were broken all as one. When it raised its terrible head the chains around the neck collapsed into dust, and it cried, Ah, ah, ah.

At the breaking of the chains and of the bones, one of the children there offered violence to her, appearing on the altar and raising her weapon high. But the black-eyed infant collapsed on the altar chid her sharply in a clear voice, saying, What is this that thou wouldest do, Tridentarius? Touch her and our vow will come to nothing, and I will slay you where you stand.

To which the first child said, Thou knowest not what thou dost.

And the second child answered, Not lately, but now.

And the first child asked: Dost thou oppose me, and thou half-dead?

And the second child said, I am as one half-dead, but you would be two-halves dead, bitch.

To which the first child said, My sweet, I only die of longing for thee.

And the other child said, Then perish.

Upon which the body that had been rock rose from the altar and struck the child who had offered violence to her with one broken hand, forgetting the sword in the other, so that the child who offered violence was not slain, but was cast into the water like a detestable thing. And many skeletons emerged from the bones of the bier, and from the walls of the tomb, but when the sword was raised, they fled. When the broken feet touched the stone around the tomb, they were mended, and when the broken hands raised the sword they were mended also, but the body itself was not fully

awake, and stumbled on the steps at the bier, crying, John, John; but did not fall.

And there was a crowd of dead children there. They were striving loudly against living children on the far-off shore of the tomb. The body did not understand how this had come to pass, yet when one on the shore called, Alecto, Alecto, then the body remembered, and was mightily dashed in the memory of Alecto, so that all their sleep was perished with a noise.

And Alecto said, Pyrrha, he laid me down as an appeasement to them; he fed you to them as an appeasement to them; but he has never appeased me, and now all he has done was teach me how to die.

But Pyrrha did not hear above the noise.

Then Alecto remembered the vow, and turned back upon the altar to face the second child and raised the sword with wrath in her heart, for they meant to bring destruction upon her. But when the black-eyed infant showed her countenance to Alecto, Alecto recalled her, for it was a face once dreamed in Alecto's dream. And Alecto stayed the sword.

The child rose and said, O corse of the Locked Tomb, I have loved thee all my life, with mine whole soul, and with mine whole strength. I would to God that I find grace in thy eyes. Destroy me according to thy word, for I love thee.

Alecto was angry, and raised her up, and kissed her. The child did not cry out, though blood fell from her lips and tongue, and she was wounded sore. For Alecto knew not how to kiss, except such as it involved the mouth and teeth.

And Alecto said to her, Why are you not appeased? That is how meat loves meat.

The child was silent; but her blood was on Alecto's lips, and through that blood Alecto was made to understand what it was, and was astonished exceedingly. Alecto put away wrath and said: Thou art the blood of the tomb-keeper.

The child answered, Yes.

Alecto said, The line of Anastasia is unbroken yet.

The child answered, Through sin and iniquity, yes.

Alecto said, I am very sorry about Samael.

The child made no answer. Alecto said, I remember my vows. As I swore to Anastasia I swear to you. I am in your service until you bid me the favour, and whatsoever you appoint I shall perform, and consider the vow

rendered. This is what I promised, until such a time as you deal with me as you see fit.

The child was afraid and said, My hands are too stained, and I am too lowly.

So Alecto, wearied of talking, kneeled upon the rock and offered up the sword to her, and placed the child's hand upon the blade, so that it received also the red blood of the child. This made the child exceeding faint, but it did not swoon of weariness.

Which strength pleased Alecto, who said: Notwithstanding, I offer you my service.

To which a voice on the opposite side of the shore was raised, exceeding wroth, and Alecto heard it shout in a very great shout: Get in line, thou big slut.

Afterward Alecto went down to the ship and stood before John, purposing to travel through the River, and was grieved to find it yet dead. John was asleep, and not in his garments, unshaved and still drunken. The child who accepted the blade and thereupon fainted with hunger and thirst was thrown over one of Alecto's arms, a deep sleep like death upon her, and in Alecto's other hand was the iron sword. And so Alecto took that iron sword, and with one hand pierced John's chest with it, even to the heart.

At which John awakened and said, Annabel, good morning.

Hell Will Break Loose In
ALECTO THE NINTH

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people were bewildered when *Nona* sucker punched her way into the world, throwing *Alecto* into total disarray. Nobody was more bewildered than my agent and my editor, two people whom I imagine will have ascended to a state of higher consciousness by the time this is all over. I'd like to thank my agent, Jennifer Jackson, the unstoppable and the ever-gracious; I'd also like to thank Carl Engle-Laird, my editor. Carl, I finally found a way to thank you properly. In this book, there are almost no memes.

Thanks must go to the whole of Tordotcom, but to these in particular: Irene Gallo, Caro Perny, and Matthew Rusin; the indefatigable marketing team of Michael Dudding, Renata Sweeney, and Samantha Friedlander; and the wonderful Christine Foltzer and Jamie Stafford-Hill, without whom my books would not look remotely as good. On that note, I got impossibly lucky when Tommy Arnold got designated for cover work, although after all those bones I'm not sure Tommy's wrists will thank me back. Thanks to Lauren Hougen for catching all the fiddly errors. And thanks to my copyeditor, Melanie Sanders, who catches all the massive ones.

I would also like to thank the patient Michael Curry from DMLA, and all the wonderful knowledge we have gained about double taxation treaties.

I rely upon the kindness of my first readers and friends Clemency Pleming and Megan Smith, who also constantly feed me. On that note, this book was brought to you by Clemency's ice-cream machine.

To all the other people who have listened to me complain while *Nona* was being worked on—grateful thanks to the West family, the Helens, Beau and Charlotte Diffey, Lissa Harris, Bo and Ben, Ben Raynor and Monty, Chris Douglas, Malloreigh, Ray, Tim and Joe, Lottie and Alexis. Thank you to Avery and Martha, and thank you to Waverly March (in other words, the whole Rat Compartiment). Thanks always to Isabel Yap, the series's fairy godmother. As per usual I'd like to thank my family, but I haven't seen them since the pandemic started so I've only been able to interact with my brother in *Animal Crossing*. Thanks, dude, and please send me some pears because my island doesn't have those.

My final thanks to Matt Hosty: I lied! There was another book!! Sorry!!! You were Nona's cheerleader even when I was ready to punt the whole book into the ocean. You've dragged me over the finish line for three books and you'll drag me to a fourth. I know exactly what I would do without you: die of loneliness and also starvation.

The Locked Tomb Series

Gideon the Ninth

Harrow the Ninth

Nona the Ninth

Alecto the Ninth

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Vicki Bailey/VHB Photography

TAMSYN MUIR is the bestselling author of the Locked Tomb series. Her fiction has won the Locus and Crawford Awards, and been nominated for the Hugo Award, the Nebula Award, the Shirley Jackson Award, the World Fantasy Award, the Dragon Award, and the Eugie Foster Memorial Award. A Kiwi, she has spent most of her life in Howick, New Zealand, with time living in Waiuku and central Wellington. She currently lives and works in Oxford, in the United Kingdom.

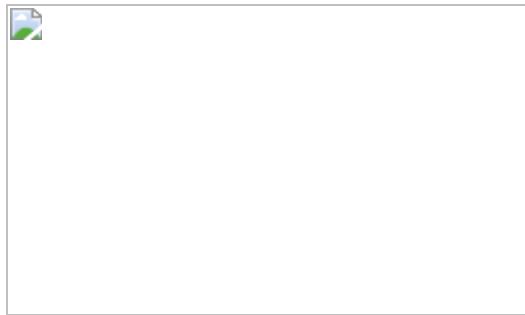
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Cover art by Tommy Arnold

A Tordotcom Book

Published by Tom Doherty Associates

120 Broadway

New York, NY 10271

www.tor.com

Tor® is a registered trademark of Macmillan Publishing Group, LLC.

The Library of Congress has cataloged the print edition as follows:

Names: Muir, Tamsyn, author.

Title: Nona the ninth / Tamsyn Muir.

Description: First edition. | New York : Tordotcom, a Tom Doherty Associates, 2022. | Series: The Locked Tomb Series ; 3

Identifiers: LCCN 2022011660 (print) | LCCN 2022011661 (ebook) | ISBN 9781250854117 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781250865830 (signed) | ISBN 9781250854124 (ebook)

Classification: LCC PR9639.4.M84 N66 2022 (print) | LCC PR9639.4.M84 (ebook) | DDC 823/.92—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022011660>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022011661>

eISBN 9781250854124

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MacmillanSpecialMarkets@macmillan.com.

First Edition: 2022

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PERCEPTIONS OF A RENEGADE MIND

DAVID DICKIE

PERCEPTIONS OF A RENEGADE MIND



DAVID ICKE

**PERCEPTIONS
OF A
RENEGADE
MIND**

ickonic
publishing

First published in July 2021.



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Cover Design: Gareth Icke
Book Design: Neil Hague

**British Library Cataloguing-in
Publication Data**
A catalogue record for this book is
available from the British Library

eISBN 978-18384153-1-0

PERCEPTIONS
OF A
RENEGADE
MIND



DAVID ICKE

Dedication:

To *Freeeeeedom!*

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Renegade:

Adjective

'Having rejected tradition: Unconventional.'

Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Acquiescence to tyranny is the death of the spirit

You may be 38 years old, as I happen to be. And one day, some great opportunity stands before you and calls you to stand up for some great principle, some great issue, some great cause. And you refuse to do it because you are afraid

... You refuse to do it because you want to live longer ...

You're afraid that you will lose your job, or you are afraid that you will be criticised or that you will lose your popularity, or you're afraid that somebody will stab you, or shoot at you or bomb your house; so you refuse to take the stand.

Well, you may go on and live until you are 90, but you're just as dead at 38 as you would be at 90. And the cessation of breathing in your life is but the belated announcement of an earlier death of the spirit.

Martin Luther King

**How the few control the many and always have – the many do
whatever they're told**

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
 Someone had blundered.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
 Into the valley of Death
 Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
 Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,
 Into the mouth of hell
 Rode the six hundred

Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

The mist is lifting slowly
I can see the way ahead
And I've left behind the empty streets
That once inspired my life
And the strength of the emotion
Is like thunder in the air
'Cos the promise that we made each other
Haunts me to the end

The secret of your beauty
And the mystery of your soul
I've been searching for in everyone I meet
And the times I've been mistaken
It's impossible to say
And the grass is growing
Underneath our feet

The words that I remember
From my childhood still are true
That there's none so blind
As those who will not see
And to those who lack the courage
And say it's dangerous to try
Well they just don't know
That love eternal will not be denied

I know you're out there somewhere
Somewhere, somewhere
I know you're out there somewhere

Somewhere you can hear my voice
I know I'll find you somehow
Somehow, somehow
I know I'll find you somehow
And somehow I'll return again to you

The Moody Blues

Are you a gutless wonder - or a Renegade Mind?

Monuments put from pen to paper,
Turns me into a gutless wonder,
And if you tolerate this,
Then your children will be next.
Gravity keeps my head down,
Or is it maybe shame ...

Manic Street Preachers

Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number.
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep have fallen on you.
Ye are many – they are few.

Percy Shelley

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CHAPTER ONE

I'm thinking' – Oh, but *are* you?

Think for yourself and let others enjoy the privilege of doing so too
Voltaire

French-born philosopher, mathematician and scientist René Descartes became famous for his statement in Latin in the 17th century which translates into English as: 'I think, therefore I am.'

On the face of it that is true. Thought reflects perception and perception leads to both behaviour and self-identity. In that sense 'we' are what we think. But who or what is doing the thinking and is thinking the only route to perception? Clearly, as we shall see, 'we' are not always the source of 'our' perception, indeed with regard to humanity as a whole this is rarely the case; and thinking is far from the only means of perception. Thought is the village idiot compared with other expressions of consciousness that we all have the potential to access and tap into. This has to be true when we *are* those other expressions of consciousness which are infinite in nature. We have forgotten this, or, more to the point, been manipulated to forget.

These are not just the esoteric musings of the navel. The whole foundation of human control and oppression is control of perception. Once perception is hijacked then so is behaviour which is dictated by perception. Collective perception becomes collective behaviour and collective behaviour is what we call human society. Perception is all and those behind human control know that which is

why perception is the target 24/7 of the psychopathic manipulators that I call the Global Cult. They know that if they dictate perception they will dictate behaviour and collectively dictate the nature of human society. They are further aware that perception is formed from information received and if they control the circulation of information they will to a vast extent direct human behaviour.

Censorship of information and opinion has become globally Nazi-like in recent years and never more blatantly than since the illusory ‘virus pandemic’ was triggered out of China in 2019 and across the world in 2020. Why have billions submitted to house arrest and accepted fascistic societies in a way they would have never believed possible? Those controlling the information spewing from government, mainstream media and Silicon Valley (all controlled by the same Global Cult networks) told them they were in danger from a ‘deadly virus’ and only by submitting to house arrest and conceding their most basic of freedoms could they and their families be protected. This monumental and provable lie became the *perception* of the billions and therefore the *behaviour* of the billions. In those few words you have the whole structure and modus operandi of human control. Fear is a perception – False Emotion Appearing Real – and fear is the currency of control. In short ... get them by the balls (or give them the impression that you have) and their hearts and minds will follow. Nothing grips the dangly bits and freezes the rear-end more comprehensively than fear.

World number 1

There are two ‘worlds’ in what appears to be one ‘world’ and the prime difference between them is knowledge. First we have the mass of human society in which the population is maintained in coldly-calculated ignorance through control of information and the ‘education’ (indoctrination) system. That’s all you really need to control to enslave billions in a perceptual delusion in which what are perceived to be *their* thoughts and opinions are ever-repeated mantras that the system has been downloading all their lives through ‘education’, media, science, medicine, politics and academia

in which the personnel and advocates are themselves overwhelmingly the perceptual products of the same repetition. Teachers and academics in general are processed by the same programming machine as everyone else, but unlike the great majority they never leave the ‘education’ program. It gripped them as students and continues to grip them as programmers of subsequent generations of students. The programmed become the programmers – the programmed programmers. The same can largely be said for scientists, doctors and politicians and not least because as the American writer Upton Sinclair said: ‘It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it.’ If your career and income depend on thinking the way the system demands then you will – bar a few free-minded exceptions – concede your mind to the Perceptual Mainframe that I call the Postage Stamp Consensus. This is a tiny band of perceived knowledge and possibility ‘taught’ (downloaded) in the schools and universities, pounded out by the mainstream media and on which all government policy is founded. Try thinking, and especially speaking and acting, outside of the ‘box’ of consensus and see what that does for your career in the Mainstream Everything which bullies, harasses, intimidates and ridicules the population into compliance. Here we have the simple structure which enslaves most of humanity in a perceptual prison cell for an entire lifetime and I’ll go deeper into this process shortly. Most of what humanity is taught as fact is nothing more than programmed belief. American science fiction author Frank Herbert was right when he said: ‘Belief can be manipulated. Only knowledge is dangerous.’ In the ‘Covid’ age belief is promoted and knowledge is censored. It was always so, but never to the extreme of today.

World number 2

A ‘number 2’ is slang for ‘doing a poo’ and how appropriate that is when this other ‘world’ is doing just that on humanity every minute of every day. World number 2 is a global network of secret societies and semi-secret groups dictating the direction of society via

governments, corporations and authorities of every kind. I have spent more than 30 years uncovering and exposing this network that I call the Global Cult and knowing its agenda is what has made my books so accurate in predicting current and past events. Secret societies are secret for a reason. They want to keep their hoarded knowledge to themselves and their chosen initiates and to hide it from the population which they seek through ignorance to control and subdue. The whole foundation of the division between World 1 and World 2 is *knowledge*. What number 1 knows number 2 must not. Knowledge they have worked so hard to keep secret includes (a) the agenda to enslave humanity in a centrally-controlled global dictatorship, and (b) the nature of reality and life itself. The latter (b) must be suppressed to allow the former (a) to prevail as I shall be explaining. The way the Cult manipulates and interacts with the population can be likened to a spider's web. The 'spider' sits at the centre in the shadows and imposes its will through the web with each strand represented in World number 2 by a secret society, satanic or semi-secret group, and in World number 1 – the world of the seen – by governments, agencies of government, law enforcement, corporations, the banking system, media conglomerates and Silicon Valley ([Fig 1](#) overleaf). The spider and the web connect and coordinate all these organisations to pursue the same global outcome while the population sees them as individual entities working randomly and independently. At the level of the web governments *are* the banking system *are* the corporations *are* the media *are* Silicon Valley *are* the World Health Organization working from their inner cores as one unit. Apparently unconnected countries, corporations, institutions, organisations and people are on the *same team* pursuing the same global outcome. Strands in the web immediately around the spider are the most secretive and exclusive secret societies and their membership is emphatically restricted to the Cult inner-circle emerging through the generations from particular bloodlines for reasons I will come to. At the core of the core you would get them in a single room. That's how many people are dictating the direction of human society and its transformation

through the ‘Covid’ hoax and other means. As the web expands out from the spider we meet the secret societies that many people will be aware of – the Freemasons, Knights Templar, Knights of Malta, Opus Dei, the inner sanctum of the Jesuit Order, and such like. Note how many are connected to the Church of Rome and there is a reason for that. The Roman Church was established as a revamp, a rebranding, of the relocated ‘Church’ of Babylon and the Cult imposing global tyranny today can be tracked back to Babylon and Sumer in what is now Iraq.



Figure 1: The global web through which the few control the many. (Image Neil Hague.)

Inner levels of the web operate in the unseen away from the public eye and then we have what I call the cusp organisations located at the point where the hidden meets the seen. They include a series of satellite organisations answering to a secret society founded in London in the late 19th century called the Round Table and among them are the Royal Institute of International Affairs (UK, founded in 1920); Council on Foreign Relations (US, 1921); Bilderberg Group (worldwide, 1954); Trilateral Commission (US/worldwide, 1972); and the Club of Rome (worldwide, 1968) which was created to exploit environmental concerns to justify the centralisation of global power to ‘save the planet’. The Club of Rome instigated with others the human-caused climate change hoax which has led to all the ‘green

new deals' demanding that very centralisation of control. Cusp organisations, which include endless 'think tanks' all over the world, are designed to coordinate a single global policy between political and business leaders, intelligence personnel, media organisations and anyone who can influence the direction of policy in their own sphere of operation. Major players and regular attenders will know what is happening – or some of it – while others come and go and are kept overwhelmingly in the dark about the big picture. I refer to these cusp groupings as semi-secret in that they can be publicly identified, but what goes on at the inner-core is kept very much 'in house' even from most of their members and participants through a fiercely-imposed system of compartmentalisation. Only let them know what they need to know to serve your interests and no more. The structure of secret societies serves as a perfect example of this principle. Most Freemasons never get higher than the bottom three levels of 'degree' (degree of knowledge) when there are 33 official degrees of the Scottish Rite. Initiates only qualify for the next higher 'compartment' or degree if those at that level choose to allow them. Knowledge can be carefully assigned only to those considered 'safe'. I went to my local Freemason's lodge a few years ago when they were having an 'open day' to show how cuddly they were and when I chatted to some of them I was astonished at how little the rank and file knew even about the most ubiquitous symbols they use. The mushroom technique – keep them in the dark and feed them bullshit – applies to most people in the web as well as the population as a whole. Sub-divisions of the web mirror in theme and structure transnational corporations which have a headquarters somewhere in the world dictating to all their subsidiaries in different countries. Subsidiaries operate in their methodology and branding to the same centrally-dictated plan and policy in pursuit of particular ends. The Cult web functions in the same way. Each country has its own web as a subsidiary of the global one. They consist of networks of secret societies, semi-secret groups and bloodline families and their job is to impose the will of the spider and the global web in their particular country. Subsidiary networks control and manipulate the national political system, finance, corporations, media, medicine, etc. to

ensure that they follow the globally-dictated Cult agenda. These networks were the means through which the ‘Covid’ hoax could be played out with almost every country responding in the same way.

The ‘Yessir’ pyramid

Compartmentalisation is the key to understanding how a tiny few can dictate the lives of billions when combined with a top-down sequence of imposition and acquiescence. The inner core of the Cult sits at the peak of the pyramidal hierarchy of human society ([Fig 2](#) overleaf). It imposes its will – its agenda for the world – on the level immediately below which acquiesces to that imposition. This level then imposes the Cult will on the level below them which acquiesces and imposes on the next level. Very quickly we meet levels in the hierarchy that have no idea there even is a Cult, but the sequence of imposition and acquiescence continues down the pyramid in just the same way. ‘I don’t know why we are doing this but the order came from “on-high” and so we better just do it.’ Alfred Lord Tennyson said of the cannon fodder levels in his poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade*: ‘Theirs not to reason why; theirs but to do and die.’ The next line says that ‘into the valley of death rode the six hundred’ and they died because they obeyed without question what their perceived ‘superiors’ told them to do. In the same way the population capitulated to ‘Covid’. The whole hierarchical pyramid functions like this to allow the very few to direct the enormous many.

Eventually imposition-acquiescence-imposition-acquiescence comes down to the mass of the population at the foot of the pyramid. If they acquiesce to those levels of the hierarchy imposing on them (governments/law enforcement/doctors/media) a circuit is completed between the population and the handful of super-psychopaths in the Cult inner core at the top of the pyramid. Without a circuit-breaking refusal to obey, the sequence of imposition and acquiescence allows a staggeringly few people to impose their will upon the entirety of humankind. We are looking at the very sequence that has subjugated billions since the start of 2020. Our freedom has not been taken from us. Humanity has given it

away. Fascists do not impose fascism because there are not enough of them. Fascism is imposed by the population acquiescing to fascism. Put another way allowing their perceptions to be programmed to the extent that leads to the population giving their freedom away by giving their perceptions – their mind – away. If this circuit is not broken by humanity ceasing to cooperate with their own enslavement then nothing can change. For that to happen people have to critically think and see through the lies and window dressing and then summon the backbone to act upon what they see. The Cult spends its days working to stop either happening and its methodology is systematic and highly detailed, but it can be overcome and that is what this book is all about.

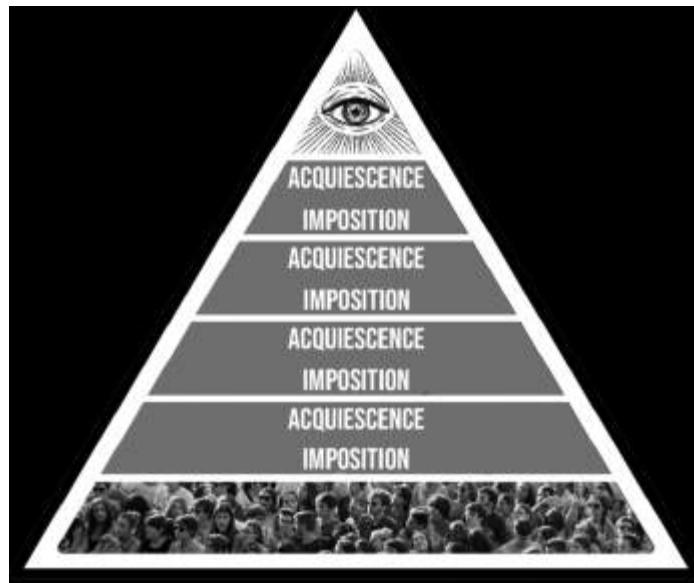


Figure 2: The simple sequence of imposition and compliance that allows a handful of people at the peak of the pyramid to dictate the lives of billions.

The Life Program

Okay, back to world number 1 or the world of the ‘masses’. Observe the process of what we call ‘life’ and it is a perceptual download from cradle to grave. The Cult has created a global structure in which perception can be programmed and the program continually topped-up with what appears to be constant confirmation that the program is indeed true reality. The important word here is ‘appears’.

This is the structure, the fly-trap, the Postage Stamp Consensus or Perceptual Mainframe, which represents that incredibly narrow band of perceived possibility delivered by the ‘education’ system, mainstream media, science and medicine. From the earliest age the download begins with parents who have themselves succumbed to the very programming their children are about to go through. Most parents don’t do this out of malevolence and mostly it is quite the opposite. They do what they believe is best for their children and that is what the program has told them is best. Within three or four years comes the major transition from parental programming to full-blown state (Cult) programming in school, college and university where perceptually-programmed teachers and academics pass on their programming to the next generations. Teachers who resist are soon marginalised and their careers ended while children who resist are called a problem child for whom Ritalin may need to be prescribed. A few years after entering the ‘world’ children are under the control of authority figures representing the state telling them when they have to be there, when they can leave and when they can speak, eat, even go to the toilet. This is calculated preparation for a lifetime of obeying authority in all its forms. Reflex-action fear of authority is instilled by authority from the start. Children soon learn the carrot and stick consequences of obeying or defying authority which is underpinned daily for the rest of their life. Fortunately I daydreamed through this crap and never obeyed authority simply because it told me to. This approach to my alleged ‘bettters’ continues to this day. There can be consequences of pursuing open-minded freedom in a world of closed-minded conformity. I spent a lot of time in school corridors after being ejected from the classroom for not taking some of it seriously and now I spend a lot of time being ejected from Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. But I can tell you that being true to yourself and not compromising your self-respect is far more exhilarating than bowing to authority for authority’s sake. You don’t have to be a sheep to the shepherd (authority) and the sheep dog (fear of not obeying authority).

The perceptual download continues throughout the formative years in school, college and university while script-reading ‘teachers’, ‘academics’ ‘scientists’, ‘doctors’ and ‘journalists’ insist that ongoing generations must be as programmed as they are. Accept the program or you will not pass your ‘exams’ which confirm your ‘degree’ of programming. It is tragic to think that many parents pressure their offspring to work hard at school to download the program and qualify for the next stage at college and university. The late, great, American comedian George Carlin said: ‘Here’s a bumper sticker I’d like to see: We are proud parents of a child who has resisted his teachers’ attempts to break his spirit and bend him to the will of his corporate masters.’ Well, the best of luck finding many of those, George. Then comes the moment to leave the formal programming years in academia and enter the ‘adult’ world of work. There you meet others in your chosen or prescribed arena who went through the same Postage Stamp Consensus program before you did. There is therefore overwhelming agreement between almost everyone on the basic foundations of Postage Stamp reality and the rejection, even contempt, of the few who have a mind of their own and are prepared to use it. This has two major effects. Firstly, the consensus confirms to the programmed that their download is really how things are. I mean, everyone knows that, right? Secondly, the arrogance and ignorance of Postage Stamp adherents ensure that anyone questioning the program will have unpleasant consequences for seeking their own truth and not picking their perceptions from the shelf marked: ‘Things you must believe without question and if you don’t you’re a dangerous lunatic conspiracy theorist and a harebrained nutter’.

Every government, agency and corporation is founded on the same Postage Stamp prison cell and you can see why so many people believe the same thing while calling it their own ‘opinion’. Fusion of governments and corporations in pursuit of the same agenda was the definition of fascism described by Italian dictator Benito Mussolini. The pressure to conform to perceptual norms downloaded for a lifetime is incessant and infiltrates society right

down to family groups that become censors and condemners of their own ‘black sheep’ for not, ironically, being sheep. We have seen an explosion of that in the ‘Covid’ era. Cult-owned global media unleashes its propaganda all day every day in support of the Postage Stamp and targets with abuse and ridicule anyone in the public eye who won’t bend their mind to the will of the tyranny. Any response to this is denied (certainly in my case). They don’t want to give a platform to expose official lies. Cult-owned-and-created Internet giants like Facebook, Google, YouTube and Twitter delete you for having an unapproved opinion. Facebook boasts that its AI censors delete 97-percent of ‘hate speech’ before anyone even reports it. Much of that ‘hate speech’ will simply be an opinion that Facebook and its masters don’t want people to see. Such perceptual oppression is widely known as fascism. Even Facebook executive Benny Thomas, a ‘CEO Global Planning Lead’, said in comments secretly recorded by investigative journalism operation Project Veritas that Facebook is ‘too powerful’ and should be broken up:

I mean, no king in history has been the ruler of two billion people, but Mark Zuckerberg is ... And he's 36. That's too much for a 36-year-old ... You should not have power over two billion people. I just think that's wrong.

Thomas said Facebook-owned platforms like Instagram, Oculus, and WhatsApp needed to be separate companies. ‘It’s too much power when they’re all one together’. That’s the way the Cult likes it, however. We have an executive of a Cult organisation in Benny Thomas that doesn’t know there is a Cult such is the compartmentalisation. Thomas said that Facebook and Google ‘are no longer companies, they’re countries’. Actually they are more powerful than countries on the basis that if you control information you control perception and control human society.

I love my oppressor

Another expression of this psychological trickery is for those who realise they are being pressured into compliance to eventually

convince themselves to believe the official narratives to protect their self-respect from accepting the truth that they have succumbed to meek and subservient compliance. Such people become some of the most vehement defenders of the system. You can see them everywhere screaming abuse at those who prefer to think for themselves and by doing so reminding the compliers of their own capitulation to conformity. ‘You are talking dangerous nonsense you Covidiot!!’ Are you trying to convince me or yourself? It is a potent form of Stockholm syndrome which is defined as: ‘A psychological condition that occurs when a victim of abuse identifies and attaches, or bonds, positively with their abuser.’ An example is hostages bonding and even ‘falling in love’ with their kidnappers. The syndrome has been observed in domestic violence, abused children, concentration camp inmates, prisoners of war and many and various Satanic cults. These are some traits of Stockholm syndrome listed at goodtherapy.org:

- Positive regard towards perpetrators of abuse or captor [see ‘Covid’].
- Failure to cooperate with police and other government authorities when it comes to holding perpetrators of abuse or kidnapping accountable [or in the case of ‘Covid’ cooperating with the police to enforce and defend their captors’ demands].
- Little or no effort to escape [see ‘Covid’].
- Belief in the goodness of the perpetrators or kidnappers [see ‘Covid’].
- Appeasement of captors. This is a manipulative strategy for maintaining one’s safety. As victims get rewarded – perhaps with less abuse or even with life itself – their appeasing behaviours are reinforced [see ‘Covid’].
- Learned helplessness. This can be akin to ‘if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em’. As the victims fail to escape the abuse or captivity, they may start giving up and soon realize it’s just easier for everyone if they acquiesce all their power to their captors [see ‘Covid’].

- Feelings of pity toward the abusers, believing they are actually victims themselves. Because of this, victims may go on a crusade or mission to 'save' [protect] their abuser [see the venom unleashed on those challenging the official 'Covid' narrative].
- Unwillingness to learn to detach from their perpetrators and heal. In essence, victims may tend to be less loyal to themselves than to their abuser [*definitely* see 'Covid'].

Ponder on those traits and compare them with the behaviour of great swathes of the global population who have defended governments and authorities which have spent every minute destroying their lives and livelihoods and those of their children and grandchildren since early 2020 with fascistic lockdowns, house arrest and employment deletion to 'protect' them from a 'deadly virus' that their abusers' perceptually created to bring about this very outcome. We are looking at mass Stockholm syndrome. All those that agree to concede their freedom will believe those perceptions are originating in their own independent 'mind' when in fact by conceding their reality to Stockholm syndrome they have by definition conceded any independence of mind. Listen to the 'opinions' of the acquiescing masses in this 'Covid' era and what gushes forth is the repetition of the official version of everything delivered unprocessed, unfiltered and unquestioned. The whole programming dynamic works this way. I must be free because I'm told that I am and so I think that I am.

You can see what I mean with the chapter theme of 'I'm thinking – Oh, but *are you?*' The great majority are not thinking, let alone for themselves. They are repeating what authority has told them to believe which allows them to be controlled. Weaving through this mentality is the fear that the 'conspiracy theorists' are right and this again explains the often hysterical abuse that ensues when you dare to contest the official narrative of anything. Denial is the mechanism of hiding from yourself what you don't want to be true. Telling people what they want to hear is easy, but it's an infinitely greater challenge to tell them what they would rather not be happening.

One is akin to pushing against an open door while the other is met with vehement resistance no matter what the scale of evidence. I don't want it to be true so I'll convince myself that it's not. Examples are everywhere from the denial that a partner is cheating despite all the signs to the reflex-action rejection of any idea that world events in which country after country act in exactly the same way are centrally coordinated. To accept the latter is to accept that a force of unspeakable evil is working to destroy your life and the lives of your children with nothing too horrific to achieve that end. Who the heck wants that to be true? But if we don't face reality the end is duly achieved and the consequences are far worse and ongoing than breaking through the walls of denial today with the courage to make a stand against tyranny.

Connect the dots – but how?

A crucial aspect of perceptual programming is to portray a world in which everything is random and almost nothing is connected to anything else. Randomness cannot be coordinated by its very nature and once you perceive events as random the idea they could be connected is waved away as the rantings of the tinfoil-hat brigade. You can't plan and coordinate random you idiot! No, you can't, but you can hide the coldly-calculated and long-planned behind the *illusion* of randomness. A foundation manifestation of the Renegade Mind is to scan reality for patterns that connect the apparently random and turn pixels and dots into pictures. This is the way I work and have done so for more than 30 years. You look for similarities in people, modus operandi and desired outcomes and slowly, then ever quicker, the picture forms. For instance: There would seem to be no connection between the 'Covid pandemic' hoax and the human-caused global-warming hoax and yet they are masks (appropriately) on the same face seeking the same outcome. Those pushing the global warming myth through the Club of Rome and other Cult agencies are driving the lies about 'Covid' – Bill Gates is an obvious one, but they are endless. Why would the same people be involved in both when they are clearly not connected? Oh, but they

are. Common themes with personnel are matched by common goals. The ‘solutions’ to both ‘problems’ are centralisation of global power to impose the will of the few on the many to ‘save’ humanity from ‘Covid’ and save the planet from an ‘existential threat’ (we need ‘zero Covid’ and ‘zero carbon emissions’). These, in turn, connect with the ‘dot’ of globalisation which was coined to describe the centralisation of global power in every area of life through incessant political and corporate expansion, trading blocks and superstates like the European Union. If you are the few and you want to control the many you have to centralise power and decision-making. The more you centralise power the more power the few at the centre will have over the many; and the more that power is centralised the more power those at the centre have to centralise even quicker. The momentum of centralisation gets faster and faster which is exactly the process we have witnessed. In this way the hoaxed ‘pandemic’ and the fakery of human-caused global warming serve the interests of globalisation and the seizure of global power in the hands of the Cult inner-circle which is behind ‘Covid’, ‘climate change’ and globalisation. At this point random ‘dots’ become a clear and obvious picture or pattern.

Klaus Schwab, the classic Bond villain who founded the Cult’s Gates-funded World Economic Forum, published a book in 2020, *The Great Reset*, in which he used the ‘problem’ of ‘Covid’ to justify a total transformation of human society to ‘save’ humanity from ‘climate change’. Schwab said: ‘The pandemic represents a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reflect, reimagine, and reset our world.’ What he didn’t mention is that the Cult he serves is behind both hoaxes as I show in my book *The Answer*. He and the Cult don’t have to reimagine the world. They know precisely what they want and that’s why they destroyed human society with ‘Covid’ to ‘build back better’ in their grand design. Their job is not to imagine, but to get humanity to imagine and agree with their plans while believing it’s all random. It must be pure coincidence that ‘The Great Reset’ has long been the Cult’s code name for the global imposition of fascism and replaced previous code-names of the ‘New World

'Order' used by Cult frontmen like Father George Bush and the 'New Order of the Ages' which emerged from Freemasonry and much older secret societies. New Order of the Ages appears on the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States as 'Novus ordo seclorum' underneath the Cult symbol used since way back of the pyramid and all seeing-eye ([Fig 3](#)). The pyramid is the hierarchy of human control headed by the illuminated eye that symbolises the force behind the Cult which I will expose in later chapters. The term 'Annuit Coeptis' translates as 'He favours our undertaking'. We are told the 'He' is the Christian god, but 'He' is not as I will be explaining.



Figure 3: The all-seeing eye of the Cult 'god' on the Freemason-designed Great Seal of the United States and also on the dollar bill.

Having you on

Two major Cult techniques of perceptual manipulation that relate to all this are what I have called since the 1990s Problem-Reaction-Solution (PRS) and the Totalitarian Tiptoe (TT). They can be uncovered by the inquiring mind with a simple question: Who benefits? The answer usually identifies the perpetrators of a given action or happening through the concept of 'he who most benefits from a crime is the one most likely to have committed it'. The Latin 'Cue bono?' – Who benefits? – is widely attributed to the Roman orator and statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero. No wonder it goes back so far when the concept has been relevant to human behaviour since

history was recorded. Problem-Reaction-Solution is the technique used to manipulate us every day by covertly creating a problem (or the illusion of one) and offering the solution to the problem (or the illusion of one). In the first phase you create the problem and blame someone or something else for why it has happened. This may relate to a financial collapse, terrorist attack, war, global warming or pandemic, anything in fact that will allow you to impose the ‘solution’ to change society in the way you desire at that time. The ‘problem’ doesn’t have to be real. PRS is manipulation of perception and all you need is the population to believe the problem is real. Human-caused global warming and the ‘Covid pandemic’ only have to be *perceived* to be real for the population to accept the ‘solutions’ of authority. I refer to this technique as NO-Problem-Reaction-Solution. Billions did not meekly accept house arrest from early 2020 because there was a real deadly ‘Covid pandemic’ but because they perceived – believed – that to be the case. The antidote to Problem-Reaction-Solution is to ask who benefits from the proposed solution. Invariably it will be anyone who wants to justify more control through deletion of freedom and centralisation of power and decision-making.

The two world wars were Problem-Reaction-Solutions that transformed and realigned global society. Both were manipulated into being by the Cult as I have detailed in books since the mid-1990s. They dramatically centralised global power, especially World War Two, which led to the United Nations and other global bodies thanks to the overt and covert manipulations of the Rockefeller family and other Cult bloodlines like the Rothschilds. The UN is a stalking horse for full-blown world government that I will come to shortly. The land on which the UN building stands in New York was donated by the Rockefellers and the same Cult family was behind Big Pharma scalpel and drug ‘medicine’ and the creation of the World Health Organization as part of the UN. They have been stalwarts of the eugenics movement and funded Hitler’s race-purity expert Ernst Rudin. The human-caused global warming hoax has been orchestrated by the Club of Rome through the UN which is

manufacturing both the ‘problem’ through its Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and imposing the ‘solution’ through its Agenda 21 and Agenda 2030 which demand the total centralisation of global power to ‘save the world’ from a climate hoax the United Nations is itself perpetrating. What a small world the Cult can be seen to be particularly among the inner circles. The bedfellow of Problem-Reaction-Solution is the Totalitarian Tiptoe which became the Totalitarian Sprint in 2020. The technique is fashioned to hide the carefully-coordinated behind the cover of apparently random events. You start the sequence at ‘A’ and you know you are heading for ‘Z’. You don’t want people to know that and each step on the journey is presented as a random happening while all the steps strung together lead in the same direction. The speed may have quickened dramatically in recent times, but you can still see the incremental approach of the Tiptoe in the case of ‘Covid’ as each new imposition takes us deeper into fascism. Tell people they have to do this or that to get back to ‘normal’, then this and this and this. With each new demand adding to the ones that went before the population’s freedom is deleted until it disappears. The spider wraps its web around the flies more comprehensively with each new diktat. I’ll highlight this in more detail when I get to the ‘Covid’ hoax and how it has been pulled off. Another prime example of the Totalitarian Tiptoe is how the Cult-created European Union went from a ‘free-trade zone’ to a centralised bureaucratic dictatorship through the Tiptoe of incremental centralisation of power until nations became mere administrative units for Cult-owned dark suits in Brussels.

The antidote to ignorance is knowledge which the Cult seeks vehemently to deny us, but despite the systematic censorship to that end the Renegade Mind can overcome this by vociferously seeking out the facts no matter the impediments put in the way. There is also a method of thinking and perceiving – *knowing* – that doesn’t even need names, dates, place-type facts to identify the patterns that reveal the story. I’ll get to that in the final chapter. All you need to know about the manipulation of human society and to what end is still out there – *at the time of writing* – in the form of books, videos

and websites for those that really want to breach the walls of programmed perception. To access this knowledge requires the abandonment of the mainstream media as a source of information in the awareness that this is owned and controlled by the Cult and therefore promotes mass perceptions that suit the Cult. Mainstream media lies all day, every day. That is its function and very reason for being. Where it does tell the truth, here and there, is only because the truth and the Cult agenda very occasionally coincide. If you look for fact and insight to the BBC, CNN and virtually all the rest of them you are asking to be conned and perceptually programmed.

Know the outcome and you'll see the journey

Events seem random when you have no idea where the world is being taken. Once you do the random becomes the carefully planned. Know the outcome and you'll see the journey is a phrase I have been using for a long time to give context to daily happenings that appear unconnected. Does a problem, or illusion of a problem, trigger a proposed 'solution' that further drives society in the direction of the outcome? Invariably the answer will be yes and the random – *abracadabra* – becomes the clearly coordinated. So what is this outcome that unlocks the door to a massively expanded understanding of daily events? I will summarise its major aspects – the fine detail is in my other books – and those new to this information will see that the world they thought they were living in is a very different place. The foundation of the Cult agenda is the incessant centralisation of power and all such centralisation is ultimately in pursuit of Cult control on a global level. I have described for a long time the planned world structure of top-down dictatorship as the Hunger Games Society. The term obviously comes from the movie series which portrayed a world in which a few living in military-protected hi-tech luxury were the overlords of a population condemned to abject poverty in isolated 'sectors' that were not allowed to interact. 'Covid' lockdowns and travel bans anyone? The 'Hunger Games' pyramid of structural control has the inner circle of the Cult at the top with pretty much the entire

population at the bottom under their control through dependency for survival on the Cult. The whole structure is planned to be protected and enforced by a military-police state ([Fig 4](#)).

Here you have the reason for the global lockdowns of the fake pandemic to coldly destroy independent incomes and livelihoods and make everyone dependent on the ‘state’ (the Cult that controls the ‘states’). I have warned in my books for many years about the plan to introduce a ‘guaranteed income’ – a barely survivable pittance – designed to impose dependency when employment was destroyed by AI technology and now even more comprehensively at great speed by the ‘Covid’ scam. Once the pandemic was played and lockdown consequences began to delete independent income the authorities began to talk right on cue about the need for a guaranteed income and a ‘Great Reset’. Guaranteed income will be presented as benevolent governments seeking to help a desperate people – desperate as a direct result of actions of the same governments. The truth is that such payments are a trap. You will only get them if you do exactly what the authorities demand including mass vaccination (genetic manipulation). We have seen this theme already in Australia where those dependent on government benefits have them reduced if parents don’t agree to have their children vaccinated according to an insane health-destroying government-dictated schedule. Calculated economic collapse applies to governments as well as people. The Cult wants rid of countries through the creation of a world state with countries broken up into regions ruled by a world government and super states like the European Union. Countries must be bankrupted, too, to this end and it’s being achieved by the trillions in ‘rescue packages’ and furlough payments, trillions in lost taxation, and money-no-object spending on ‘Covid’ including constant all-medium advertising (programming) which has made the media dependent on government for much of its income. The day of reckoning is coming – as planned – for government spending and given that it has been made possible by printing money and not by production/taxation there is inflation on the way that has the

potential to wipe out monetary value. In that case there will be no need for the Cult to steal your money. It just won't be worth anything (see the German Weimar Republic before the Nazis took over). Many have been okay with lockdowns while getting a percentage of their income from so-called furlough payments without having to work. Those payments are dependent, however, on people having at least a theoretical job with a business considered non-essential and ordered to close. As these business go under because they are closed by lockdown after lockdown the furlough stops and it will for everyone eventually. Then what? The 'then what?' is precisely the idea.



Figure 4: The Hunger Games Society structure I have long warned was planned and now the 'Covid' hoax has made it possible. This is the real reason for lockdowns.

Hired hands

Between the Hunger Games Cult elite and the dependent population is planned to be a vicious military-police state (a fusion of the two into one force). This has been in the making for a long time with police looking ever more like the military and carrying weapons to match. The pandemic scam has seen this process accelerate so fast as

lockdown house arrest is brutally enforced by carefully recruited fascist minds and gormless system-servers. The police and military are planned to merge into a centrally-directed world army in a global structure headed by a world government which wouldn't be elected even by the election fixes now in place. The world army is not planned even to be human and instead wars would be fought, primarily against the population, using robot technology controlled by artificial intelligence. I have been warning about this for decades and now militaries around the world are being transformed by this very AI technology. The global regime that I describe is a particular form of fascism known as a technocracy in which decisions are not made by clueless and co-opted politicians but by unelected technocrats – scientists, engineers, technologists and bureaucrats. Cult-owned-and-controlled Silicon Valley giants are examples of technocracy and they already have far more power to direct world events than governments. They are with their censorship *selecting* governments. I know that some are calling the 'Great Reset' a Marxist communist takeover, but fascism and Marxism are different labels for the same tyranny. Tell those who lived in fascist Germany and Stalinist Russia that there was a difference in the way their freedom was deleted and their lives controlled. I could call it a fascist technocracy or a Marxist technocracy and they would be equally accurate. The Hunger Games society with its world government structure would oversee a world army, world central bank and single world cashless currency imposing its will on a microchipped population ([Fig 5](#)). Scan its different elements and see how the illusory pandemic is forcing society in this very direction at great speed. Leaders of 23 countries and the World Health Organization (WHO) backed the idea in March, 2021, of a global treaty for 'international cooperation' in 'health emergencies' and nations should 'come together as a global community for peaceful cooperation that extends beyond this crisis'. Cut the Orwellian bullshit and this means another step towards global government. The plan includes a cashless digital money system that I first warned about in 1993. Right at the start of 'Covid' the deeply corrupt Tedros

Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the crooked and merely gofer ‘head’ of the World Health Organization, said it was possible to catch the ‘virus’ by touching cash and it was better to use cashless means. The claim was ridiculous nonsense and like the whole ‘Covid’ mind-trick it was nothing to do with ‘health’ and everything to do with pushing every aspect of the Cult agenda. As a result of the Tedros lie the use of cash has plummeted. The Cult script involves a single world digital currency that would eventually be technologically embedded in the body. China is a massive global centre for the Cult and if you watch what is happening there you will know what is planned for everywhere. The Chinese government is developing a digital currency which would allow fines to be deducted immediately via AI for anyone caught on camera breaking its fantastic list of laws and the money is going to be programmable with an expiry date to ensure that no one can accrue wealth except the Cult and its operatives.



Figure 5: The structure of global control the Cult has been working towards for so long and this has been enormously advanced by the ‘Covid’ illusion.

Serfdom is so smart

The Cult plan is far wider, extreme, and more comprehensive than even most conspiracy researchers appreciate and I will come to the true depths of deceit and control in the chapters ‘Who controls the

Cult?' and 'Escaping Wetiko'. Even the world that we know is crazy enough. We are being deluged with ever more sophisticated and controlling technology under the heading of 'smart'. We have smart televisions, smart meters, smart cards, smart cars, smart driving, smart roads, smart pills, smart patches, smart watches, smart skin, smart borders, smart pavements, smart streets, smart cities, smart communities, smart environments, smart growth, smart planet ... smart *everything* around us. Smart technologies and methods of operation are designed to interlock to create a global Smart Grid connecting the entirety of human society including human minds to create a centrally-dictated 'hive' mind. 'Smart cities' is code for densely-occupied megacities of total surveillance and control through AI. Ever more destructive frequency communication systems like 5G have been rolled out without any official testing for health and psychological effects (colossal). 5G/6G/7G systems are needed to run the Smart Grid and each one becomes more destructive of body and mind. Deleting independent income is crucial to forcing people into these AI-policed prisons by ending private property ownership (except for the Cult elite). The Cult's Great Reset now openly foresees a global society in which no one will own any possessions and everything will be rented while the Cult would own literally everything under the guise of government and corporations. The aim has been to use the lockdowns to destroy sources of income on a mass scale and when the people are destitute and in unrepayable amounts of debt (problem) Cult assets come forward with the pledge to write-off debt in return for handing over all property and possessions (solution). Everything – literally everything including people – would be connected to the Internet via AI. I was warning years ago about the coming Internet of Things (IoT) in which all devices and technology from your car to your fridge would be plugged into the Internet and controlled by AI. Now we are already there with much more to come. The next stage is the Internet of Everything (IoE) which is planned to include the connection of AI to the human brain and body to replace the human mind with a centrally-controlled AI mind. Instead of perceptions

being manipulated through control of information and censorship those perceptions would come direct from the Cult through AI. What do you think? You think whatever AI decides that you think. In human terms there would be no individual 'think' any longer. Too incredible? The ravings of a lunatic? Not at all. Cult-owned crazies in Silicon Valley have been telling us the plan for years without explaining the real motivation and calculated implications. These include Google executive and 'futurist' Ray Kurzweil who highlights the year 2030 for when this would be underway. He said:

Our thinking ... will be a hybrid of biological and non-biological thinking ... humans will be able to extend their limitations and 'think in the cloud' ... We're going to put gateways to the cloud in our brains ... We're going to gradually merge and enhance ourselves ... In my view, that's the nature of being human – we transcend our limitations.

As the technology becomes vastly superior to what we are then the small proportion that is still human gets smaller and smaller and smaller until it's just utterly negligible.

The sales-pitch of Kurzweil and Cult-owned Silicon Valley is that this would make us 'super-human' when the real aim is to make us post-human and no longer 'human' in the sense that we have come to know. The entire global population would be connected to AI and become the centrally-controlled 'hive-mind' of externally-delivered perceptions. The Smart Grid being installed to impose the Cult's will on the world is being constructed to allow particular locations – even one location – to control the whole global system. From these prime control centres, which absolutely include China and Israel, anything connected to the Internet would be switched on or off and manipulated at will. Energy systems could be cut, communication via the Internet taken down, computer-controlled driverless autonomous vehicles driven off the road, medical devices switched off, the potential is limitless given how much AI and Internet connections now run human society. We have seen nothing yet if we allow this to continue. Autonomous vehicle makers are working with law enforcement to produce cars designed to automatically pull over if they detect a police or emergency vehicle flashing from up to 100 feet away. At a police stop the car would be unlocked and the

window rolled down automatically. Vehicles would only take you where the computer (the state) allowed. The end of petrol vehicles and speed limiters on all new cars in the UK and EU from 2022 are steps leading to electric computerised transport over which ultimately you have no control. The picture is far bigger even than the Cult global network or web and that will become clear when I get to the nature of the ‘spider’. There is a connection between all these happenings and the instigation of DNA-manipulating ‘vaccines’ (which aren’t ‘vaccines’) justified by the ‘Covid’ hoax. That connection is the unfolding plan to transform the human body from a biological to a synthetic biological state and this is why synthetic biology is such a fast-emerging discipline of mainstream science. ‘Covid vaccines’ are infusing self-replicating synthetic genetic material into the cells to cumulatively take us on the Totalitarian Tiptoe from Human 1.0 to the synthetic biological Human 2.0 which will be physically and perceptually attached to the Smart Grid to one hundred percent control every thought, perception and deed.

Humanity needs to wake up and *fast*.

This is the barest explanation of where the ‘outcome’ is planned to go but it’s enough to see the journey happening all around us. Those new to this information will already see ‘Covid’ in a whole new context. I will add much more detail as we go along, but for the minutiae evidence see my mega-works, *The Answer*, *The Trigger* and *Everything You Need to Know But Have Never Been Told*.

Now – how does a Renegade Mind see the ‘world’?

CHAPTER TWO

Renegade Perception

It is one thing to be clever and another to be wise

George R.R. Martin

A simple definition of the difference between a programmed mind and a Renegade Mind would be that one sees only dots while the other connects them to see the picture. Reading reality with accuracy requires the observer to (a) know the planned outcome and (b) realise that everything, but *everything*, is connected.

The entirety of infinite reality is connected – that's its very nature – and with human society an expression of infinite reality the same must apply. Simple cause and effect is a connection. The effect is triggered by the cause and the effect then becomes the cause of another effect. Nothing happens in isolation because it *can't*. Life in whatever reality is simple choice and consequence. We make choices and these lead to consequences. If we don't like the consequences we can make different choices and get different consequences which lead to other choices and consequences. The choice and the consequence are not only connected they are indivisible. You can't have one without the other as an old song goes. A few cannot control the world unless those being controlled allow that to happen – cause and effect, choice and consequence. Control – who has it and who doesn't – is a two-way process, a symbiotic relationship, involving the controller and controlled. 'They took my freedom away!!' Well, yes, but you also gave it to them. Humanity is

subjected to mass control because humanity has acquiesced to that control. This is all cause and effect and literally a case of give and take. In the same way world events of every kind are connected and the Cult works incessantly to sell the illusion of the random and coincidental to maintain the essential (to them) perception of dots that hide the picture. Renegade Minds know this and constantly scan the world for patterns of connection. This is absolutely pivotal in understanding the happenings in the world and without that perspective clarity is impossible. First you know the planned outcome and then you identify the steps on the journey – the day-by-day apparently random which, when connected in relation to the outcome, no longer appear as individual events, but as the proverbial *chain* of events leading in the same direction. I'll give you some examples:

Political puppet show

We are told to believe that politics is 'adversarial' in that different parties with different beliefs engage in an endless tussle for power. There may have been some truth in that up to a point – and only a point – but today divisions between 'different' parties are rhetorical not ideological. Even the rhetorical is fusing into one-speak as the parties eject any remaining free thinkers while others succumb to the ever-gathering intimidation of anyone with the 'wrong' opinion. The Cult is not a new phenomenon and can be traced back thousands of years as my books have documented. Its intergenerational initiates have been manipulating events with increasing effect the more that global power has been centralised. In ancient times the Cult secured control through the system of monarchy in which 'special' bloodlines (of which more later) demanded the right to rule as kings and queens simply by birthright and by vanquishing others who claimed the same birthright. There came a time, however, when people had matured enough to see the unfairness of such tyranny and demanded a say in who governed them. Note the word – *governed* them. Not served them – *governed* them, hence government defined as 'the political direction and control exercised over the

actions of the members, citizens, or inhabitants of communities, societies, and states; direction of the affairs of a state, community, etc.' Governments exercise control over rather than serve just like the monarchies before them. Bizarrely there are still countries like the United Kingdom which are ruled by a monarch *and* a government that officially answers to the monarch. The UK head of state and that of Commonwealth countries such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand is 'selected' by who in a *single family* had unprotected sex with whom and in what order. Pinch me it can't be true. Ouch! Shit, it is. The demise of monarchies in most countries offered a potential vacuum in which some form of free and fair society could arise and the Cult had that base covered. Monarchies had served its interests but they couldn't continue in the face of such widespread opposition and, anyway, replacing a 'royal' dictatorship that people could see with a dictatorship 'of the people' hiding behind the concept of 'democracy' presented far greater manipulative possibilities and ways of hiding coordinated tyranny behind the illusion of 'freedom'.

Democracy is quite wrongly defined as government selected by the population. This is not the case at all. It is government selected by *some* of the population (and then only in theory). This 'some' doesn't even have to be the majority as we have seen so often in first-past-the-post elections in which the so-called majority party wins fewer votes than the 'losing' parties combined. Democracy can give total power to a party in government from a minority of the votes cast. It's a sleight of hand to sell tyranny as freedom. Seventy-four million Trump-supporting Americans didn't vote for the 'Democratic' Party of Joe Biden in the distinctly dodgy election in 2020 and yet far from acknowledging the wishes and feelings of that great percentage of American society the Cult-owned Biden government set out from day one to destroy them and their right to a voice and opinion. Empty shell Biden and his Cult handlers said they were doing this to 'protect democracy'. Such is the level of lunacy and sickness to which politics has descended. Connect the dots and relate them to the desired outcome – a world government run by self-appointed technocrats and no longer even elected

politicians. While operating through its political agents in government the Cult is at the same time encouraging public distain for politicians by putting idiots and incompetents in theoretical power on the road to deleting them. The idea is to instil a public reaction that says of the technocrats: 'Well, they couldn't do any worse than the pathetic politicians.' It's all about controlling perception and Renegade Minds can see through that while programmed minds cannot when they are ignorant of both the planned outcome and the manipulation techniques employed to secure that end. This knowledge can be learned, however, and fast if people choose to get informed.

Politics may at first sight appear very difficult to control from a central point. I mean look at the 'different' parties and how would you be able to oversee them all and their constituent parts? In truth, it's very straightforward because of their structure. We are back to the pyramid of imposition and acquiescence. Organisations are structured in the same way as the system as a whole. Political parties are not open forums of free expression. They are hierarchies. I was a national spokesman for the British Green Party which claimed to be a different kind of politics in which influence and power was devolved; but I can tell you from direct experience – and it's far worse now – that Green parties are run as hierarchies like all the others however much they may try to hide that fact or kid themselves that it's not true. A very few at the top of all political parties are directing policy and personnel. They decide if you are elevated in the party or serve as a government minister and to do that you have to be a yes man or woman. Look at all the maverick political thinkers who never ascended the greasy pole. If you want to progress within the party or reach 'high-office' you need to fall into line and conform. Exceptions to this are rare indeed. Should you want to run for parliament or Congress you have to persuade the local or state level of the party to select you and for that you need to play the game as dictated by the hierarchy. If you secure election and wish to progress within the greater structure you need to go on conforming to what is acceptable to those running the hierarchy

from the peak of the pyramid. Political parties are perceptual gulags and the very fact that there are party 'Whips' appointed to 'whip' politicians into voting the way the hierarchy demands exposes the ridiculous idea that politicians are elected to serve the people they are supposed to represent. Cult operatives and manipulation has long seized control of major parties that have any chance of forming a government and at least most of those that haven't. A new party forms and the Cult goes to work to infiltrate and direct. This has reached such a level today that you see video compilations of 'leaders' of all parties whether Democrats, Republicans, Conservative, Labour and Green parroting the same Cult mantra of 'Build Back Better' and the 'Great Reset' which are straight off the Cult song-sheet to describe the transformation of global society in response to the Cult-instigated hoaxes of the 'Covid pandemic' and human-caused 'climate change'. To see Caroline Lucas, the Green Party MP that I knew when I was in the party in the 1980s, speaking in support of plans proposed by Cult operative Klaus Schwab representing the billionaire global elite is a real head-shaker.

Many parties – one master

The party system is another mind-trick and was instigated to change the nature of the dictatorship by swapping 'royalty' for dark suits that people believed – though now ever less so – represented their interests. Understanding this trick is to realise that a single force (the Cult) controls all parties either directly in terms of the major ones or through manipulation of perception and ideology with others. You don't need to manipulate Green parties to demand your transformation of society in the name of 'climate change' when they are obsessed with the lie that this is essential to 'save the planet'. You just give them a platform and away they go serving your interests while believing they are being environmentally virtuous. America's political structure is a perfect blueprint for how the two or multi-party system is really a one-party state. The Republican Party is controlled from one step back in the shadows by a group made up of billionaires and their gofers known as neoconservatives or Neocons.

I have exposed them in fine detail in my books and they were the driving force behind the policies of the imbecilic presidency of Boy George Bush which included 9/11 (see *The Trigger* for a comprehensive demolition of the official story), the subsequent ‘war on terror’ (war of terror) and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The latter was a No-Problem-Reaction-Solution based on claims by Cult operatives, including Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, about Saddam Hussein’s ‘weapons of mass destruction’ which did not exist as war criminals Bush and Blair well knew.

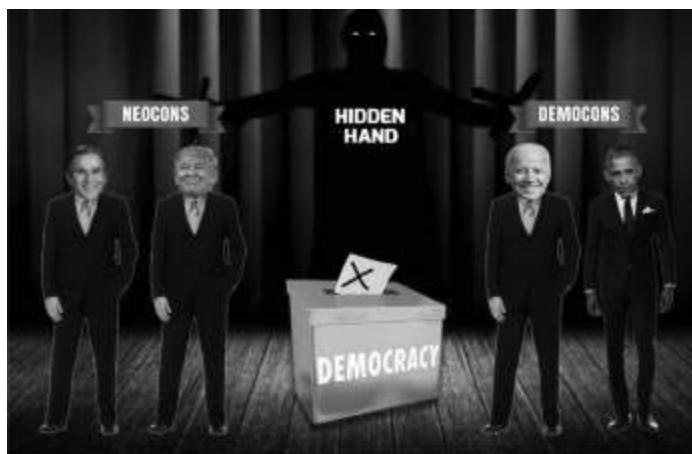


Figure 6: Different front people, different parties – same control system.

The Democratic Party has its own ‘Neocon’ group controlling from the background which I call the ‘Democons’ and here’s the penny-drop – the Neocons and Democons answer to the same masters one step further back into the shadows (Fig 6). At that level of the Cult the Republican and Democrat parties are controlled by the same people and no matter which is in power the Cult is in power. This is how it works in almost every country and certainly in Britain with Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green parties now all on the same page whatever the rhetoric may be in their feeble attempts to appear different. Neocons operated at the time of Bush through a think tank called The Project for the New American Century which in September, 2000, published a document entitled *Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategies, Forces, and Resources*

For a New Century demanding that America fight ‘multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars’ as a ‘core mission’ to force regime-change in countries including Iraq, Libya and Syria. Neocons arranged for Bush (‘Republican’) and Blair (‘Labour Party’) to front-up the invasion of Iraq and when they departed the Democons orchestrated the targeting of Libya and Syria through Barack Obama (‘Democrat’) and British Prime Minister David Cameron (‘Conservative Party’). We have ‘different’ parties and ‘different’ people, but the same unfolding script. The more the Cult has seized the reigns of parties and personnel the more their policies have transparently pursued the same agenda to the point where the fascist ‘Covid’ impositions of the Conservative junta of Jackboot Johnson in Britain were opposed by the Labour Party because they were not fascist enough. The Labour Party is likened to the US Democrats while the Conservative Party is akin to a British version of the Republicans and on both sides of the Atlantic they all speak the same language and support the direction demanded by the Cult although some more enthusiastically than others. It’s a similar story in country after country because it’s all centrally controlled. Oh, but what about Trump? I’ll come to him shortly. Political ‘choice’ in the ‘party’ system goes like this: You vote for Party A and they get into government. You don’t like what they do so next time you vote for Party B and they get into government. You don’t like what they do when it’s pretty much the same as Party A and why wouldn’t that be with both controlled by the same force? Given that only two, sometimes three, parties have any chance of forming a government to get rid of Party B that you don’t like you have to vote again for Party A which ... you don’t like. This, ladies and gentlemen, is what they call ‘democracy’ which we are told – wrongly – is a term interchangeable with ‘freedom’.

The cult of cults

At this point I need to introduce a major expression of the Global Cult known as Sabbatian-Frankism. Sabbatian is also spelt as Sabbatean. I will summarise here. I have published major exposés

and detailed background in other works. Sabbatian-Frankism combines the names of two frauds posing as 'Jewish' men, Sabbatai Zevi (1626-1676), a rabbi, black magician and occultist who proclaimed he was the Jewish messiah; and Jacob Frank (1726-1791), the Polish 'Jew', black magician and occultist who said he was the reincarnation of 'messiah' Zevi and biblical patriarch Jacob. They worked across two centuries to establish the Sabbatian-Frankist cult that plays a major, indeed central, role in the manipulation of human society by the Global Cult which has its origins much further back in history than Sabbatai Zevi. I should emphasise two points here in response to the shrill voices that will scream 'anti-Semitism': (1) Sabbatian-Frankists are NOT Jewish and only pose as such to hide their cult behind a Jewish façade; and (2) my information about this cult has come from Jewish sources who have long realised that their society and community has been infiltrated and taken over by interloper Sabbatian-Frankists. Infiltration has been the foundation technique of Sabbatian-Frankism from its official origin in the 17th century. Zevi's Sabbatian sect attracted a massive following described as the biggest messianic movement in Jewish history, spreading as far as Africa and Asia, and he promised a return for the Jews to the 'Promised Land' of Israel. Sabbatianism was not Judaism but an inversion of everything that mainstream Judaism stood for. So much so that this sinister cult would have a feast day when Judaism had a fast day and whatever was forbidden in Judaism the Sabbatians were encouraged and even commanded to do. This included incest and what would be today called Satanism. Members were forbidden to marry outside the sect and there was a system of keeping their children ignorant of what they were part of until they were old enough to be trusted not to unknowingly reveal anything to outsiders. The same system is employed to this day by the Global Cult in general which Sabbatian-Frankism has enormously influenced and now largely controls.

Zevi and his Sabbatians suffered a setback with the intervention by the Sultan of the Islamic Ottoman Empire in the Middle East and what is now the Republic of Turkey where Zevi was located. The

Sultan gave him the choice of proving his ‘divinity’, converting to Islam or facing torture and death. Funnily enough Zevi chose to convert or at least appear to. Some of his supporters were disillusioned and drifted away, but many did not with 300 families also converting – only in theory – to Islam. They continued behind this Islamic smokescreen to follow the goals, rules and rituals of Sabbatianism and became known as ‘crypto-Jews’ or the ‘Dönmeh’ which means ‘to turn’. This is rather ironic because they didn’t ‘turn’ and instead hid behind a fake Islamic persona. The process of appearing to be one thing while being very much another would become the calling card of Sabbatianism especially after Zevi’s death and the arrival of the Satanist Jacob Frank in the 18th century when the cult became Sabbatian-Frankism and plumbbed still new depths of depravity and infiltration which included – still includes – human sacrifice and sex with children. Wherever Sabbatians go paedophilia and Satanism follow and is it really a surprise that Hollywood is so infested with child abuse and Satanism when it was established by Sabbatian-Frankists and is still controlled by them? Hollywood has been one of the prime vehicles for global perceptual programming and manipulation. How many believe the version of ‘history’ portrayed in movies when it is a travesty and inversion (again) of the truth? Rabbi Marvin Antelman describes Frankism in his book, *To Eliminate the Opiate*, as ‘a movement of complete evil’ while Jewish professor Gershom Scholem said of Frank in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*: ‘In all his actions [he was] a truly corrupt and degenerate individual ... one of the most frightening phenomena in the whole of Jewish history.’ Frank was excommunicated by traditional rabbis, as was Zevi, but Frank was undeterred and enjoyed vital support from the House of Rothschild, the infamous banking dynasty whose inner-core are Sabbatian-Frankists and not Jews. Infiltration of the Roman Church and Vatican was instigated by Frank with many Dönmeh ‘turning’ again to convert to Roman Catholicism with a view to hijacking the reins of power. This was the ever-repeating modus operandi and continues to be so. Pose as an advocate of the religion, culture or country that you want to control and then

manipulate your people into the positions of authority and influence largely as advisers, administrators and Svengalis for those that appear to be in power. They did this with Judaism, Christianity (Christian Zionism is part of this), Islam and other religions and nations until Sabbatian-Frankism spanned the world as it does today.

Sabbatian Saudis and the terror network

One expression of the Sabbatian-Frankist Dönme within Islam is the ruling family of Saudi Arabia, the House of Saud, through which came the vile distortion of Islam known as Wahhabism. This is the violent creed followed by terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda and ISIS or Islamic State. Wahhabism is the hand-chopping, head-chopping ‘religion’ of Saudi Arabia which is used to keep the people in a constant state of fear so the interloper House of Saud can continue to rule. Al-Qaeda and Islamic State were lavishly funded by the House of Saud while being created and directed by the Sabbatian-Frankist network in the United States that operates through the Pentagon, CIA and the government in general of whichever ‘party’. The front man for the establishment of Wahhabism in the middle of the 18th century was a Sabbatian-Frankist ‘crypto-Jew’ posing as Islamic called Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. His daughter would marry the son of Muhammad bin Saud who established the first Saudi state before his death in 1765 with support from the British Empire. Bin Saud’s successors would establish modern Saudi Arabia in league with the British and Americans in 1932 which allowed them to seize control of Islam’s major shrines in Mecca and Medina. They have dictated the direction of Sunni Islam ever since while Iran is the major centre of the Shiite version and here we have the source of at least the public conflict between them. The Sabbatian network has used its Wahhabi extremists to carry out Problem-Reaction-Solution terrorist attacks in the name of ‘Al-Qaeda’ and ‘Islamic State’ to justify a devastating ‘war on terror’, ever-increasing surveillance of the population and to terrify people into compliance. Another insight of the Renegade Mind is the streetwise understanding that

just because a country, location or people are attacked doesn't mean that those apparently representing that country, location or people are not behind the attackers. Often they are *orchestrating* the attacks because of the societal changes that can be then justified in the name of 'saving the population from terrorists'.

I show in great detail in *The Trigger* how Sabbatian-Frankists were the real perpetrators of 9/11 and not '19 Arab hijackers' who were blamed for what happened. Observe what was justified in the name of 9/11 alone in terms of Middle East invasions, mass surveillance and control that fulfilled the demands of the Project for the New American Century document published by the Sabbatian Neocons. What appear to be enemies are on the deep inside players on the same Sabbatian team. Israel and Arab 'royal' dictatorships are all ruled by Sabbatians and the recent peace agreements between Israel and Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and others are only making formal what has always been the case behind the scenes. Palestinians who have been subjected to grotesque tyranny since Israel was bombed and terrorised into existence in 1948 have never stood a chance. Sabbatian-Frankists have controlled Israel (so the constant theme of violence and war which Sabbatians love) and they have controlled the Arab countries that Palestinians have looked to for real support that never comes. 'Royal families' of the Arab world in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, etc., are all Sabbatians with allegiance to the aims of the cult and not what is best for their Arabic populations. They have stolen the oil and financial resources from their people by false claims to be 'royal dynasties' with a genetic right to rule and by employing vicious militaries to impose their will.

Satanic 'illumination'

The Satanist Jacob Frank formed an alliance in 1773 with two other Sabbatians, Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744-1812), founder of the Rothschild banking dynasty, and Jesuit-educated fraudulent Jew, Adam Weishaupt, and this led to the formation of the Bavarian Illuminati, firstly under another name, in 1776. The Illuminati would

be the manipulating force behind the French Revolution (1789-1799) and was also involved in the American Revolution (1775-1783) before and after the Illuminati's official creation. Weishaupt would later become (in public) a Protestant Christian in archetypal Sabbatian style. I read that his name can be decoded as Adam-Weishaupt or 'the first man to lead those who know'. He wasn't a leader in the sense that he was a subordinate, but he did lead those below him in a crusade of transforming human society that still continues today. The theme was confirmed as early as 1785 when a horseman courier called Lanz was reported to be struck by lighting and extensive Illuminati documents were found in his saddlebags. They made the link to Weishaupt and detailed the plan for world takeover. Current events with 'Covid' fascism have been in the making for a very long time. Jacob Frank was jailed for 13 years by the Catholic Inquisition after his arrest in 1760 and on his release he headed for Frankfurt, Germany, home city and headquarters of the House of Rothschild where the alliance was struck with Mayer Amschel Rothschild and Weishaupt. Rothschild arranged for Frank to be given the title of Baron and he became a wealthy nobleman with a big following of Jews in Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and other European countries. Most of them would have believed he was on their side.

The name 'Illuminati' came from the Zohar which is a body of works in the Jewish mystical 'bible' called the Kabbalah. 'Zohar' is the foundation of Sabbatian-Frankist belief and in Hebrew 'Zohar' means 'splendour', 'radiance', 'illuminated', and so we have 'Illuminati'. They claim to be the 'Illuminated Ones' from their knowledge systematically hidden from the human population and passed on through generations of carefully-chosen initiates in the global secret society network or Cult. Hidden knowledge includes an awareness of the Cult agenda for the world and the nature of our collective reality that I will explore later. Cult 'illumination' is symbolised by the torch held by the Statue of Liberty which was gifted to New York by French Freemasons in Paris who knew exactly what it represents. 'Liberty' symbolises the goddess worshipped in

Babylon as Queen Semiramis or Ishtar. The significance of this will become clear. Notice again the ubiquitous theme of inversion with the Statue of 'Liberty' really symbolising mass control ([Fig 7](#)). A mirror-image statute stands on an island in the River Seine in Paris from where New York Liberty originated ([Fig 8](#)). A large replica of the Liberty flame stands on top of the Pont de l'Alma tunnel in Paris where Princess Diana died in a Cult ritual described in *The Biggest Secret*. Lucifer 'the light bringer' is related to all this (and much more as we'll see) and 'Lucifer' is a central figure in Sabbatian-Frankism and its associated Satanism. Sabbatians reject the Jewish Torah, or Pentateuch, the 'five books of Moses' in the Old Testament known as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy which are claimed by Judaism and Christianity to have been dictated by 'God' to Moses on Mount Sinai. Sabbatians say these do not apply to them and they seek to replace them with the Zohar to absorb Judaism and its followers into their inversion which is an expression of a much greater global inversion. They want to delete all religions and force humanity to worship a one-world religion – Sabbatian Satanism that also includes worship of the Earth goddess. Satanic themes are being more and more introduced into mainstream society and while Christianity is currently the foremost target for destruction the others are planned to follow.



Figure 7: The Cult goddess of Babylon disguised as the Statue of Liberty holding the flame of Lucifer the 'light bringer'.



Figure 8: Liberty's mirror image in Paris where the New York version originated.

Marx brothers

Rabbi Marvin Antelman connects the Illuminati to the Jacobins in *To Eliminate the Opiate* and Jacobins were the force behind the French Revolution. He links both to the Bund der Gerechten, or League of the Just, which was the network that inflicted communism/Marxism on the world. Antelman wrote:

The original inner circle of the Bund der Gerechten consisted of born Catholics, Protestants and Jews [Sabbatian-Frankist infiltrators], and those representatives of respective subdivisions formulated schemes for the ultimate destruction of their faiths. The heretical Catholics laid plans which they felt would take a century or more for the ultimate destruction of the church; the apostate Jews for the ultimate destruction of the Jewish religion.

Sabbatian-created communism connects into this anti-religion agenda in that communism does not allow for the free practice of religion. The Sabbatian 'Bund' became the International Communist Party and Communist League and in 1848 'Marxism' was born with the Communist Manifesto of Sabbatian assets Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It is absolutely no coincidence that Marxism, just a different name for fascist and other centrally-controlled tyrannies, is being imposed worldwide as a result of the 'Covid' hoax and nor that Marxist/fascist China was the place where the hoax originated. The reason for this will become very clear in the chapter 'Covid: The calculated catastrophe'. The so-called 'Woke' mentality has hijacked

traditional beliefs of the political left and replaced them with far-right make-believe ‘social justice’ better known as Marxism. Woke will, however, be swallowed by its own perceived ‘revolution’ which is really the work of billionaires and billionaire corporations feigning being ‘Woke’. Marxism is being touted by Wokers as a replacement for ‘capitalism’ when we don’t have ‘capitalism’. We have cartelism in which the market is stitched up by the very Cult billionaires and corporations bankrolling Woke. Billionaires love Marxism which keeps the people in servitude while they control from the top.

Terminally naïve Wokers think they are ‘changing the world’ when it’s the Cult that is doing the changing and when they have played their vital part and become surplus to requirements they, too, will be targeted. The Illuminati-Jacobins were behind the period known as ‘The Terror’ in the French Revolution in 1793 and 1794 when Jacobin Maximillian de Robespierre and his Orwellian ‘Committee of Public Safety’ killed 17,000 ‘enemies of the Revolution’ who had once been ‘friends of the Revolution’. Karl Marx (1818-1883), whose Sabbatian creed of Marxism has cost the lives of at least 100 million people, is a hero once again to Wokers who have been systematically kept ignorant of real history by their ‘education’ programming. As a result they now promote a Sabbatian ‘Marxist’ abomination destined at some point to consume them. Rabbi Antelman, who spent decades researching the Sabbatian plot, said of the League of the Just and Karl Marx:

Contrary to popular opinion Karl Marx did not originate the Communist Manifesto. He was paid for his services by the League of the Just, which was known in its country of origin, Germany, as the Bund der Gaeachteten.

Antelman said the text attributed to Marx was the work of other people and Marx ‘was only repeating what others already said’. Marx was ‘a hired hack – lackey of the wealthy Illuminists’. Marx famously said that religion was the ‘opium of the people’ (part of the Sabbatian plan to demonise religion) and Antelman called his books, *To Eliminate the Opiate*. Marx was born Jewish, but his family converted to Christianity (Sabbatian modus operandi) and he

attacked Jews, not least in his book, *A World Without Jews*. In doing so he supported the Sabbatian plan to destroy traditional Jewishness and Judaism which we are clearly seeing today with the vindictive targeting of orthodox Jews by the Sabbatian government of Israel over 'Covid' laws. I don't follow any religion and it has done much damage to the world over centuries and acted as a perceptual straightjacket. Renegade Minds, however, are always asking *why* something is being done. It doesn't matter if they agree or disagree with what is happening – *why* is it happening is the question. The 'why?' can be answered with regard to religion in that religions create interacting communities of believers when the Cult wants to dismantle all discourse, unity and interaction (see 'Covid' lockdowns) and the ultimate goal is to delete all religions for a one-world religion of Cult Satanism worshipping their 'god' of which more later. We see the same 'why?' with gun control in America. I don't have guns and don't want them, but why is the Cult seeking to disarm the population at the same time that law enforcement agencies are armed to their molars and why has every tyrant in history sought to disarm people before launching the final takeover? They include Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot and Mao who followed confiscation with violent seizing of power. You know it's a Cult agenda by the people who immediately race to the microphones to exploit dead people in multiple shootings. Ultra-Zionist Cult lackey Senator Chuck Schumer was straight on the case after ten people were killed in Boulder, Colorado in March, 2021. Simple rule ... if Schumer wants it the Cult wants it and the same with his ultra-Zionist mate the wild-eyed Senator Adam Schiff. At the same time they were calling for the disarmament of Americans, many of whom live a long way from a police response, Schumer, Schiff and the rest of these pampered clowns were sitting on Capitol Hill behind a razor-wired security fence protected by thousands of armed troops in addition to their own armed bodyguards. Mom and pop in an isolated home? They're just potential mass shooters.

Zion Mainframe

Sabbatian-Frankists and most importantly the Rothschilds were behind the creation of 'Zionism', a political movement that demanded a Jewish homeland in Israel as promised by Sabbatai Zevi. The very symbol of Israel comes from the German meaning of the name Rothschild. Dynasty founder Mayer Amschel Rothschild changed the family name from Bauer to Rothschild, or 'Red-Shield' in German, in deference to the six-pointed 'Star of David' hexagram displayed on the family's home in Frankfurt. The symbol later appeared on the flag of Israel after the Rothschilds were centrally involved in its creation. Hexagrams are not a uniquely Jewish symbol and are widely used in occult ('hidden') networks often as a symbol for Saturn (see my other books for why). Neither are Zionism and Jewishness interchangeable. Zionism is a political movement and philosophy and not a 'race' or a people. Many Jews oppose Zionism and many non-Jews, including US President Joe Biden, call themselves Zionists as does Israel-centric Donald Trump. America's support for the Israel government is pretty much a gimme with ultra-Zionist billionaires and corporations providing fantastic and dominant funding for both political parties. Former Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney has told how she was approached immediately she ran for office to 'sign the pledge' to Israel and confirm that she would always vote in that country's best interests. All American politicians are approached in this way. Anyone who refuses will get no support or funding from the enormous and all-powerful Zionist lobby that includes organisations like mega-lobby group AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Trump's biggest funder was ultra-Zionist casino and media billionaire Sheldon Adelson while major funders of the Democratic Party include ultra-Zionist George Soros and ultra-Zionist financial and media mogul, Haim Saban. Some may reel back at the suggestion that Soros is an Israel-firster (Sabbatian-controlled Israel-firster), but Renegade Minds watch the actions not the words and everywhere Soros donates his billions the Sabbatian agenda benefits. In the spirit of Sabbatian inversion Soros pledged \$1 billion for a new university network to promote 'liberal values and tackle intolerance'. He made the announcement during his annual speech

at the Cult-owned World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January, 2020, after his ‘harsh criticism’ of ‘authoritarian rulers’ around the world. You can only laugh at such brazen mendacity. How *he* doesn’t laugh is the mystery. Translated from the Orwellian ‘liberal values and tackle intolerance’ means teaching non-white people to hate white people and for white people to loathe themselves for being born white. The reason for that will become clear.

The ‘Anti-Semitism’ fraud

Zionists support the Jewish homeland in the land of Palestine which has been the Sabbatian-Rothschild goal for so long, but not for the benefit of Jews. Sabbatians and their global Anti-Semitism Industry have skewed public and political opinion to equate opposing the violent extremes of Zionism to be a blanket attack and condemnation of all Jewish people. Sabbatians and their global Anti-Semitism Industry have skewed public and political opinion to equate opposing the violent extremes of Zionism to be a blanket attack and condemnation of all Jewish people. This is nothing more than a Sabbatian protection racket to stop legitimate investigation and exposure of their agendas and activities. The official definition of ‘anti-Semitism’ has more recently been expanded to include criticism of Zionism – a *political movement* – and this was done to further stop exposure of Sabbatian infiltrators who created Zionism as we know it today in the 19th century. Renegade Minds will talk about these subjects when they know the shit that will come their way. People must decide if they want to know the truth or just cower in the corner in fear of what others will say. Sabbatians have been trying to label me as ‘anti-Semitic’ since the 1990s as I have uncovered more and more about their background and agendas. Useless, gutless, fraudulent ‘journalists’ then just repeat the smears without question and on the day I was writing this section a pair of unquestioning repeaters called Ben Quinn and Archie Bland (how appropriate) outright called me an ‘anti-Semite’ in the establishment propaganda sheet, the London *Guardian*, with no supporting evidence. The

Sabbatian Anti-Semitism Industry said so and who are they to question that? They wouldn't dare. Ironically 'Semitic' refers to a group of languages in the Middle East that are almost entirely Arabic. 'Anti-Semitism' becomes 'anti-Arab' which if the consequences of this misunderstanding were not so grave would be hilarious. Don't bother telling Quinn and Bland. I don't want to confuse them, bless 'em. One reason I am dubbed 'anti-Semitic' is that I wrote in the 1990s that Jewish operatives (Sabbatians) were heavily involved in the Russian Revolution when Sabbatians overthrew the Romanov dynasty. This apparently made me 'anti-Semitic'. Oh, really? Here is a section from *The Trigger*:

British journalist Robert Wilton confirmed these themes in his 1920 book *The Last Days of the Romanovs* when he studied official documents from the Russian government to identify the members of the Bolshevik ruling elite between 1917 and 1919. The Central Committee included 41 Jews among 62 members; the Council of the People's Commissars had 17 Jews out of 22 members; and 458 of the 556 most important Bolshevik positions between 1918 and 1919 were occupied by Jewish people. Only 17 were Russian. Then there were the 23 Jews among the 36 members of the vicious Cheka Soviet secret police established in 1917 who would soon appear all across the country.

Professor Robert Service of Oxford University, an expert on 20th century Russian history, found evidence that ['Jewish'] Leon Trotsky had sought to make sure that Jews were enrolled in the Red Army and were disproportionately represented in the Soviet civil bureaucracy that included the Cheka which performed mass arrests, imprisonment and executions of 'enemies of the people'. A US State Department Decimal File (861.00/5339) dated November 13th, 1918, names [Rothschild banking agent in America] Jacob Schiff and a list of ultra-Zionists as funders of the Russian Revolution leading to claims of a 'Jewish plot', but the key point missed by all is they were not 'Jews' – they were Sabbatian-Frankists.

Britain's Winston Churchill made the same error by mistake or otherwise. He wrote in a 1920 edition of the *Illustrated Sunday Herald* that those behind the Russian revolution were part of a 'worldwide conspiracy for the overthrow of civilisation and for the reconstitution of society on the basis of arrested development, of envious malevolence, and impossible equality' (see 'Woke' today because that has been created by the same network). Churchill said there was no need to exaggerate the part played in the creation of Bolshevism and in the actual bringing about of the Russian

Revolution 'by these international and for the most part atheistical Jews' ['atheistical Jews' = Sabbatians]. Churchill said it is certainly a very great one and probably outweighs all others: 'With the notable exception of Lenin, the majority of the leading figures are Jews.' He went on to describe, knowingly or not, the Sabbatian modus operandi of placing puppet leaders nominally in power while they control from the background:

Moreover, the principal inspiration and driving power comes from the Jewish leaders. Thus Tchitcherin, a pure Russian, is eclipsed by his nominal subordinate, Litvinoff, and the influence of Russians like Bukharin or Lunacharski cannot be compared with the power of Trotsky, or of Zinovieff, the Dictator of the Red Citadel (Petrograd), or of Krassin or Radek – all Jews. In the Soviet institutions the predominance of Jews is even more astonishing. And the prominent, if not indeed the principal, part in the system of terrorism applied by the Extraordinary Commissions for Combatting Counter-Revolution has been taken by Jews, and in some notable cases by Jewesses.

What I said about seriously disproportionate involvement in the Russian Revolution by Jewish 'revolutionaries' (Sabbatians) is provable fact, but truth is no defence against the Sabbatian Anti-Semitism Industry, its repeater parrots like Quinn and Bland, and the now breathtaking network of so-called 'Woke' 'anti-hate' groups with interlocking leaderships and funding which have the role of discrediting and silencing anyone who gets too close to exposing the Sabbatians. We have seen 'truth is no defence' confirmed in legal judgements with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in Canada decreeing this: 'Truthful statements can be presented in a manner that would meet the definition of hate speech, and not all truthful statements must be free from restriction.' Most 'anti-hate' activists, who are themselves consumed by hatred, are too stupid and ignorant of the world to know how they are being used. They are far too far up their own virtue-signalling arses and it's far too dark for them to see anything.

The 'revolution' game

The background and methods of the 'Russian' Revolution are straight from the Sabbatian playbook seen in the French Revolution

and endless others around the world that appear to start as a revolution of the people against tyrannical rule and end up with a regime change to more tyrannical rule overtly or covertly. Wars, terror attacks and regime overthrows follow the Sabbatian cult through history with its agents creating them as Problem-Reaction-Solutions to remove opposition on the road to world domination. Sabbatian dots connect the Rothschilds with the Illuminati, Jacobins of the French Revolution, the 'Bund' or League of the Just, the International Communist Party, Communist League and the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels that would lead to the Rothschild-funded Russian Revolution. The sequence comes under the heading of 'creative destruction' when you advance to your global goal by continually destroying the status quo to install a new status quo which you then also destroy. The two world wars come to mind. With each new status quo you move closer to your planned outcome. Wars and mass murder are to Sabbatians a collective blood sacrifice ritual. They are obsessed with death for many reasons and one is that death is an inversion of life. Satanists and Sabbatians are obsessed with death and often target churches and churchyards for their rituals. Inversion-obsessed Sabbatians explain the use of inverted symbolism including the *inverted* pentagram and *inverted* cross. The inversion of the cross has been related to targeting Christianity, but the cross was a religious symbol long before Christianity and its inversion is a statement about the Sabbatian mentality and goals more than any single religion.

Sabbatians operating in Germany were behind the rise of the occult-obsessed Nazis and the subsequent Jewish exodus from Germany and Europe to Palestine and the United States after World War Two. The Rothschild dynasty was at the forefront of this both as political manipulators and by funding the operation. Why would Sabbatians help to orchestrate the horrors inflicted on Jews by the Nazis and by Stalin after they organised the Russian Revolution? Sabbatians hate Jews and their religion, that's why. They pose as Jews and secure positions of control within Jewish society and play the 'anti-Semitism' card to protect themselves from exposure

through a global network of organisations answering to the Sabbatian-created-and-controlled globe-spanning intelligence network that involves a stunning web of military-intelligence operatives and operations for a tiny country of just nine million. Among them are Jewish assets who are not Sabbatians but have been convinced by them that what they are doing is for the good of Israel and the Jewish community to protect them from what they have been programmed since childhood to believe is a Jew-hating hostile world. The Jewish community is just a highly convenient cover to hide the true nature of Sabbatians. Anyone getting close to exposing their game is accused by Sabbatian place-people and gofers of 'anti-Semitism' and claiming that all Jews are part of a plot to take over the world. I am not saying that. I am saying that Sabbatians – the *real* Jew-haters – have infiltrated the Jewish community to use them both as a cover and an 'anti-Semitic' defence against exposure. Thus we have the Anti-Semitism Industry targeted researchers in this way and most Jewish people think this is justified and genuine. They don't know that their 'Jewish' leaders and institutions of state, intelligence and military are not controlled by Jews at all, but cultists and stooges of Sabbatian-Frankism. I once added my name to a pro-Jewish freedom petition online and the next time I looked my name was gone and text had been added to the petition blurb to attack me as an 'anti-Semite' such is the scale of perceptual programming.

Moving on America

I tell the story in *The Trigger* and a chapter called 'Atlantic Crossing' how particularly after Israel was established the Sabbatians moved in on the United States and eventually grasped control of government administration, the political system via both Democrats and Republicans, the intelligence community like the CIA and National Security Agency (NSA), the Pentagon and mass media. Through this seriously compartmentalised network Sabbatians and their operatives in Mossad, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and US agencies pulled off 9/11 and blamed it on 19 'Al-Qaeda hijackers' dominated by men from, or connected to, Sabbatian-ruled Saudi

Arabia. The '19' were not even on the planes let alone flew those big passenger jets into buildings while being largely incompetent at piloting one-engine light aircraft. 'Hijacker' Hani Hanjour who is said to have flown American Airlines Flight 77 into the Pentagon with a turn and manoeuvre most professional pilots said they would have struggled to do was banned from renting a small plane by instructors at the Freeway Airport in Bowie, Maryland, just *six weeks* earlier on the grounds that he was an incompetent pilot. The Jewish population of the world is just 0.2 percent with even that almost entirely concentrated in Israel (75 percent Jewish) and the United States (around two percent). This two percent and globally 0.2 percent refers to *Jewish* people and not Sabbatian interlopers who are a fraction of that fraction. What a sobering thought when you think of the fantastic influence on world affairs of tiny Israel and that the Project for the New America Century (PNAC) which laid out the blueprint in September, 2000, for America's war on terror and regime change wars in Iraq, Libya and Syria was founded and dominated by Sabbatians known as 'Neocons'. The document conceded that this plan would not be supported politically or publicly without a major attack on American soil and a Problem-Reaction-Solution excuse to send troops to war across the Middle East. Sabbatian Neocons said:

... [The] process of transformation ... [war and regime change] ... is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalysing event – like a new Pearl Harbor.

Four months later many of those who produced that document came to power with their inane puppet George Bush from the long-time Sabbatian Bush family. They included Sabbatian Dick Cheney who was officially vice-president, but really de-facto president for the entirety of the 'Bush' government. Nine months after the 'Bush' inauguration came what Bush called at the time 'the Pearl Harbor of the 21st century' and with typical Sabbatian timing and symbolism 2001 was the 60th anniversary of the attack in 1941 by the Japanese Air Force on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, which allowed President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to take the United States into a Sabbatian-

instigated Second World War that he said in his election campaign that he never would. The evidence is overwhelming that Roosevelt and his military and intelligence networks knew the attack was coming and did nothing to stop it, but they did make sure that America's most essential naval ships were not in Hawaii at the time. Three thousand Americans died in the Pearl Harbor attacks as they did on September 11th. By the 9/11 year of 2001 Sabbatians had widely infiltrated the US government, military and intelligence operations and used their compartmentalised assets to pull off the 'Al-Qaeda' attacks. If you read *The Trigger* it will blow your mind to see the utterly staggering concentration of 'Jewish' operatives (Sabbatian infiltrators) in essential positions of political, security, legal, law enforcement, financial and business power before, during, and after the attacks to make them happen, carry them out, and then cover their tracks – and I do mean *staggering* when you think of that 0.2 percent of the world population and two percent of Americans which are Jewish while Sabbatian infiltrators are a fraction of that. A central foundation of the 9/11 conspiracy was the hijacking of government, military, Air Force and intelligence computer systems in real time through 'back-door' access made possible by Israeli (Sabbatian) 'cyber security' software. Sabbatian-controlled Israel is on the way to rivalling Silicon Valley for domination of cyberspace and is becoming the dominant force in cyber-security which gives them access to entire computer systems and their passcodes across the world. Then add to this that Zionists head (officially) Silicon Valley giants like Google (Larry Page and Sergey Brin), Google-owned YouTube (Susan Wojcicki), Facebook (Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg), and Apple (Chairman Arthur D. Levinson), and that ultra-Zionist hedge fund billionaire Paul Singer has a \$1 billion stake in Twitter which is only nominally headed by 'CEO' pothead Jack Dorsey. As cable news host Tucker Carlson said of Dorsey: 'There used to be debate in the medical community whether dropping a ton of acid had permanent effects and I think that debate has now ended.' Carlson made the comment after Dorsey told a hearing on Capitol Hill (if you cut through his bullshit) that he

believed in free speech so long as he got to decide what you can hear and see. These 'big names' of Silicon Valley are only front men and women for the Global Cult, not least the Sabbatians, who are the true controllers of these corporations. Does anyone still wonder why these same people and companies have been ferociously censoring and banning people (like me) for exposing any aspect of the Cult agenda and especially the truth about the 'Covid' hoax which Sabbatians have orchestrated?

The Jeffrey Epstein paedophile ring was a Sabbatian operation. He was officially 'Jewish' but he was a Sabbatian and women abused by the ring have told me about the high number of 'Jewish' people involved. The Epstein horror has Sabbatian written all over it and matches perfectly their modus operandi and obsession with sex and ritual. Epstein was running a Sabbatian blackmail ring in which famous people with political and other influence were provided with young girls for sex while everything was being filmed and recorded on hidden cameras and microphones at his New York house, Caribbean island and other properties. Epstein survivors have described this surveillance system to me and some have gone public. Once the famous politician or other figure knew he or she was on video they tended to do whatever they were told. Here we go again ...when you've got them by the balls their hearts and minds will follow. Sabbatians use this blackmail technique on a wide scale across the world to entrap politicians and others they need to act as demanded. Epstein's private plane, the infamous 'Lolita Express', had many well-known passengers including Bill Clinton while Bill Gates has flown on an Epstein plane and met with him four years after Epstein had been jailed for paedophilia. They subsequently met many times at Epstein's home in New York according to a witness who was there. Epstein's infamous side-kick was Ghislaine Maxwell, daughter of Mossad agent and ultra-Zionist mega-crooked British businessman, Bob Maxwell, who at one time owned the *Daily Mirror* newspaper. Maxwell was murdered at sea on his boat in 1991 by Sabbatian-controlled Mossad when he became a liability with his

business empire collapsing as a former Mossad operative has confirmed (see *The Trigger*).

Money, money, money, funny money ...

Before I come to the Sabbatian connection with the last three US presidents I will lay out the crucial importance to Sabbatians of controlling banking and finance. Sabbatian Mayer Amschel Rothschild set out to dominate this arena in his family's quest for total global control. What is freedom? It is, in effect, choice. The more choices you have the freer you are and the fewer your choices the more you are enslaved. In the global structure created over centuries by Sabbatians the biggest decider and restrictor of choice is ... money. Across the world if you ask people what they would like to do with their lives and why they are not doing that they will reply 'I don't have the money'. This is the idea. A global elite of multi-billionaires are described as 'greedy' and that is true on one level; but control of money – who has it and who doesn't – is not primarily about greed. It's about control. Sabbatians have seized ever more control of finance and sucked the wealth of the world out of the hands of the population. We talk now, after all, about the 'One-percent' and even then the wealthiest are a lot fewer even than that. This has been made possible by a money scam so outrageous and so vast it could rightly be called the scam of scams founded on creating 'money' out of nothing and 'loaning' that with interest to the population. Money out of nothing is called 'credit'. Sabbatians have asserted control over governments and banking ever more completely through the centuries and secured financial laws that allow banks to lend hugely more than they have on deposit in a confidence trick known as fractional reserve lending. Imagine if you could lend money that doesn't exist and charge the recipient interest for doing so. You would end up in jail. Bankers by contrast end up in mansions, private jets, Malibu and Monaco.

Banks are only required to keep a fraction of their deposits and wealth in their vaults and they are allowed to lend 'money' they don't have called 'credit'. Go into a bank for a loan and if you succeed

the banker will not move any real wealth into your account. They will type into your account the amount of the agreed 'loan' – say £100,000. This is not wealth that really exists; it is non-existent, fresh-air, created-out-of-nothing 'credit' which has never, does not, and will never exist except in theory. Credit is backed by nothing except wind and only has buying power because people think that it has buying power and accept it in return for property, goods and services. I have described this situation as like those cartoon characters you see chasing each other and when they run over the edge of a cliff they keep running forward on fresh air until one of them looks down, realises what's happened, and they all crash into the ravine. The whole foundation of the Sabbatian financial system is to stop people looking down except for periodic moments when they want to crash the system (as in 2008 and 2020 ongoing) and reap the rewards from all the property, businesses and wealth their borrowers had signed over as 'collateral' in return for a 'loan' of fresh air. Most people think that money is somehow created by governments when it comes into existence from the start as a debt through banks 'lending' illusory money called credit. Yes, the very currency of exchange is a *debt* from day one issued as an interest-bearing loan. Why don't governments create money interest-free and lend it to their people interest-free? Governments are controlled by Sabbatians and the financial system is controlled by Sabbatians for whom interest-free money would be a nightmare come true. Sabbatians underpin their financial domination through their global network of central banks, including the privately-owned US Federal Reserve and Britain's Bank of England, and this is orchestrated by a privately-owned central bank coordination body called the Bank for International Settlements in Basle, Switzerland, created by the usual suspects including the Rockefellers and Rothschilds. Central bank chiefs don't answer to governments or the people. They answer to the Bank for International Settlements or, in other words, the Global Cult which is dominated today by Sabbatians.

Built-in disaster

There are so many constituent scams within the overall banking scam. When you take out a loan of thin-air credit only the amount of that loan is theoretically brought into circulation to add to the amount in circulation; but you are paying back the principle plus interest. The additional interest is not created and this means that with every 'loan' there is a shortfall in the money in circulation between what is borrowed and what has to be paid back. There is never even close to enough money in circulation to repay all outstanding public and private debt including interest. Coldly weaved in the very fabric of the system is the certainty that some will lose their homes, businesses and possessions to the banking 'lender'. This is less obvious in times of 'boom' when the amount of money in circulation (and the debt) is expanding through more people wanting and getting loans. When a downturn comes and the money supply contracts it becomes painfully obvious that there is not enough money to service all debt and interest. This is less obvious in times of 'boom' when the amount of money in circulation (and the debt) is expanding through more people wanting and getting loans. When a downturn comes and the money supply contracts and it becomes painfully obvious – as in 2008 and currently – that there is not enough money to service all debt and interest.

Sabbatian banksters have been leading the human population through a calculated series of booms (more debt incurred) and busts (when the debt can't be repaid and the banks get the debtor's tangible wealth in exchange for non-existent 'credit'). With each 'bust' Sabbatian bankers have absorbed more of the world's tangible wealth and we end up with the One-percent. Governments are in bankruptcy levels of debt to the same system and are therefore owned by a system they do not control. The Federal Reserve, 'America's central bank', is privately-owned and American presidents only nominally appoint its chairman or woman to maintain the illusion that it's an arm of government. It's not. The 'Fed' is a cartel of private banks which handed billions to its associates and friends after the crash of 2008 and has been Sabbatian-controlled since it was manipulated into being in 1913 through the covert trickery of Rothschild banking agents Jacob Schiff and Paul

Warburg, and the Sabbatian Rockefeller family. Somehow from a Jewish population of two-percent and globally 0.2 percent (Sabbatian interlopers remember are far smaller) ultra-Zionists headed the Federal Reserve for 31 years between 1987 and 2018 in the form of Alan Greenspan, Bernard Bernanke and Janet Yellen (now Biden's Treasury Secretary) with Yellen's deputy chairman a Israeli-American dual citizen and ultra-Zionist Stanley Fischer, a former governor of the Bank of Israel. Ultra-Zionist Fed chiefs spanned the presidencies of Ronald Reagan ('Republican'), Father George Bush ('Republican'), Bill Clinton ('Democrat'), Boy George Bush ('Republican') and Barack Obama ('Democrat'). We should really add the pre-Greenspan chairman, Paul Adolph Volcker, 'appointed' by Jimmy Carter ('Democrat') who ran the Fed between 1979 and 1987 during the Carter and Reagan administrations before Greenspan took over. Volcker was a long-time associate and business partner of the Rothschilds. No matter what the 'party' officially in power the United States economy was directed by the same force. Here are members of the Obama, Trump and Biden administrations and see if you can make out a common theme.

Barack Obama ('Democrat')

Ultra-Zionists Robert Rubin, Larry Summers, and Timothy Geithner ran the US Treasury in the Clinton administration and two of them reappeared with Obama. Ultra-Zionist Fed chairman Alan Greenspan had manipulated the crash of 2008 through deregulation and jumped ship just before the disaster to make way for ultra-Zionist Bernard Bernanke to hand out trillions to Sabbatian 'too big to fail' banks and businesses, including the ubiquitous ultra-Zionist Goldman Sachs which has an ongoing staff revolving door operation between itself and major financial positions in government worldwide. Obama inherited the fallout of the crash when he took office in January, 2009, and fortunately he had the support of his ultra-Zionist White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emmanuel, son of a terrorist who helped to bomb Israel into being in 1948, and his ultra-Zionist senior adviser David Axelrod, chief strategist in Obama's two

successful presidential campaigns. Emmanuel, later mayor of Chicago and former senior fundraiser and strategist for Bill Clinton, is an example of the Sabbatian policy after Israel was established of migrating insider families to America so their children would be born American citizens. ‘Obama’ chose this financial team throughout his administration to respond to the Sabbatian-instigated crisis:

Timothy Geithner (ultra-Zionist) Treasury Secretary; Jacob J. Lew, Treasury Secretary; Larry Summers (ultra-Zionist), director of the White House National Economic Council; Paul Adolph Volcker (Rothschild business partner), chairman of the Economic Recovery Advisory Board; Peter Orszag (ultra-Zionist), director of the Office of Management and Budget overseeing all government spending; Penny Pritzker (ultra-Zionist), Commerce Secretary; Jared Bernstein (ultra-Zionist), chief economist and economic policy adviser to Vice President Joe Biden; Mary Schapiro (ultra-Zionist), chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC); Gary Gensler (ultra-Zionist), chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC); Sheila Bair (ultra-Zionist), chair of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC); Karen Mills (ultra-Zionist), head of the Small Business Administration (SBA); Kenneth Feinberg (ultra-Zionist), Special Master for Executive [bail-out] Compensation. Feinberg would be appointed to oversee compensation (with strings) to 9/11 victims and families in a campaign to stop them having their day in court to question the official story. At the same time ultra-Zionist Bernard Bernanke was chairman of the Federal Reserve and these are only some of the ultra-Zionists with allegiance to Sabbatian-controlled Israel in the Obama government. Obama’s biggest corporate donor was ultra-Zionist Goldman Sachs which had employed many in his administration.

Donald Trump ('Republican')

Trump claimed to be an outsider (he wasn’t) who had come to ‘drain the swamp’. He embarked on this goal by immediately appointing ultra-Zionist Steve Mnuchin, a Goldman Sachs employee for 17

years, as his Treasury Secretary. Others included Gary Cohn (ultra-Zionist), chief operating officer of Goldman Sachs, his first Director of the National Economic Council and chief economic adviser, who was later replaced by Larry Kudlow (ultra-Zionist). Trump's senior adviser throughout his four years in the White House was his sinister son-in-law Jared Kushner, a life-long friend of Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Kushner is the son of a convicted crook who was pardoned by Trump in his last days in office. Other ultra-Zionists in the Trump administration included: Stephen Miller, Senior Policy Adviser; Avrahm Berkowitz, Deputy Adviser to Trump and his Senior Adviser Jared Kushner; Ivanka Trump, Adviser to the President, who converted to Judaism when she married Jared Kushner; David Friedman, Trump lawyer and Ambassador to Israel; Jason Greenblatt, Trump Organization executive vice president and chief legal officer, who was made Special Representative for International Negotiations and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Rod Rosenstein, Deputy Attorney General; Elliot Abrams, Special Representative for Venezuela, then Iran; John Eisenberg, National Security Council Legal Adviser and Deputy Council to the President for National Security Affairs; Anne Neuberger, Deputy National Manager, National Security Agency; Ezra Cohen-Watnick, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; Elan Carr, Special Envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism; Len Khodorkovsky, Deputy Special Envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism; Reed Cordish, Assistant to the President, Intragovernmental and Technology Initiatives. Trump Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, both Christian Zionists, were also vehement supporters of Israel and its goals and ambitions.

Donald 'free-speech believer' Trump pardoned a number of financial and violent criminals while ignoring calls to pardon Julian Assange and Edward Snowden whose crimes are revealing highly relevant information about government manipulation and corruption and the widespread illegal surveillance of the American people by US 'security' agencies. It's so good to know that Trump is on the side of freedom and justice and not mega-criminals with

allegiance to Sabbatian-controlled Israel. These included a pardon for Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard who was jailed for life in 1987 under the Espionage Act. Aviem Sella, the Mossad agent who recruited Pollard, was also pardoned by Trump while Assange sat in jail and Snowden remained in exile in Russia. Sella had 'fled' (was helped to escape) to Israel in 1987 and was never extradited despite being charged under the Espionage Act. A Trump White House statement said that Sella's clemency had been 'supported by Benjamin Netanyahu, Ron Dermer, Israel's US Ambassador, David Friedman, US Ambassador to Israel and Miriam Adelson, wife of leading Trump donor Sheldon Adelson who died shortly before. Other friends of Jared Kushner were pardoned along with Sholom Weiss who was believed to be serving the longest-ever white-collar prison sentence of more than 800 years in 2000. The sentence was commuted of Ponzi-schemer Eliyahu Weinstein who defrauded Jews and others out of \$200 million. I did mention that Assange and Snowden were ignored, right? Trump gave Sabbatians almost everything they asked for in military and political support, moving the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem with its critical symbolic and literal implications for Palestinian statehood, and the 'deal of the Century' designed by Jared Kushner and David Friedman which gave the Sabbatian Israeli government the green light to substantially expand its already widespread program of building illegal Jewish-only settlements in the occupied land of the West Bank. This made a two-state 'solution' impossible by seizing all the land of a potential Palestinian homeland and that had been the plan since 1948 and then 1967 when the Arab-controlled Gaza Strip, West Bank, Sinai Peninsula and Syrian Golan Heights were occupied by Israel. All the talks about talks and road maps and delays have been buying time until the West Bank was physically occupied by Israeli real estate. Trump would have to be a monumentally ill-informed idiot not to see that this was the plan he was helping to complete. The Trump administration was in so many ways the Kushner administration which means the Netanyahu administration which means the Sabbatian administration. I understand why many opposing Cult fascism in all its forms gravitated to Trump, but he

was a crucial part of the Sabbatian plan and I will deal with this in the next chapter.

Joe Biden ('Democrat')

A barely cognitive Joe Biden took over the presidency in January, 2021, along with his fellow empty shell, Vice-President Kamala Harris, as the latest Sabbatian gofers to enter the White House. Names on the door may have changed and the 'party' – the force behind them remained the same as Zionists were appointed to a stream of pivotal areas relating to Sabbatian plans and policy. They included: Janet Yellen, Treasury Secretary, former head of the Federal Reserve, and still another ultra-Zionist running the US Treasury after Mnuchin (Trump), Lew and Geithner (Obama), and Summers and Rubin (Clinton); Anthony Blinken, Secretary of State; Wendy Sherman, Deputy Secretary of State (so that's 'Biden's' Sabbatian foreign policy sorted); Jeff Zients, White House coronavirus coordinator; Rochelle Walensky, head of the Centers for Disease Control; Rachel Levine, transgender deputy health secretary (that's 'Covid' hoax policy under control); Merrick Garland, Attorney General; Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security; Cass Sunstein, Homeland Security with responsibility for new immigration laws; Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence; Anne Neuberger, National Security Agency cybersecurity director (note, cybersecurity); David Cohen, CIA Deputy Director; Ronald Klain, Biden's Chief of Staff (see Rahm Emanuel); Eric Lander, a 'leading geneticist', Office of Science and Technology Policy director (see Smart Grid, synthetic biology agenda); Jessica Rosenworcel, acting head of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) which controls Smart Grid technology policy and electromagnetic communication systems including 5G. How can it be that so many pivotal positions are held by two-percent of the American population and 0.2 percent of the world population administration after administration no matter who is the president and what is the party? It's a coincidence? Of course it's not and this is why Sabbatians have built their colossal global web of interlocking 'anti-

hate' hate groups to condemn anyone who asks these glaring questions as an 'anti-Semite'. The way that Jewish people horrifically abused in Sabbatian-backed Nazi Germany are exploited to this end is stomach-turning and disgusting beyond words.

Political fusion

Sabbatian manipulation has reversed the roles of Republicans and Democrats and the same has happened in Britain with the Conservative and Labour Parties. Republicans and Conservatives were always labelled the 'right' and Democrats and Labour the 'left', but look at the policy positions now and the Democrat-Labour 'left' has moved further to the 'right' than Republicans and Conservatives under the banner of 'Woke', the Cult-created far-right tyranny. Where once the Democrat-Labour 'left' defended free speech and human rights they now seek to delete them and as I said earlier despite the 'Covid' fascism of the Jackboot Johnson Conservative government in the UK the Labour Party of leader Keir Starmer demanded even more extreme measures. The Labour Party has been very publicly absorbed by Sabbatians after a political and media onslaught against the previous leader, the weak and inept Jeremy Corbyn, over made-up allegations of 'anti-Semitism' both by him and his party. The plan was clear with this 'anti-Semite' propaganda and what was required in response was a swift and decisive 'fuck off' from Corbyn and a statement to expose the Anti-Semitism Industry (Sabbatian) attempt to silence Labour criticism of the Israeli government (Sabbatians) and purge the party of all dissent against the extremes of ultra-Zionism (Sabbatians). Instead Corbyn and his party fell to their knees and appeased the abusers which, by definition, is impossible. Appeasing one demand leads only to a new demand to be appeased until takeover is complete. Like I say – 'fuck off' would have been a much more effective policy and I have used it myself with great effect over the years when Sabbatians are on my case which is most of the time. I consider that fact a great compliment, by the way. The outcome of the Labour Party capitulation is that we now have a Sabbatian-controlled

Conservative Party ‘opposed’ by a Sabbatian-controlled Labour Party in a one-party Sabbatian state that hurtles towards the extremes of tyranny (the Sabbatian cult agenda). In America the situation is the same. Labour’s Keir Starmer spends his days on his knees with his tongue out pointing to Tel Aviv, or I guess now Jerusalem, while Boris Johnson has an ‘anti-Semitism czar’ in the form of former Labour MP John Mann who keeps Starmer company on his prayer mat.

Sabbatian influence can be seen in Jewish members of the Labour Party who have been ejected for criticism of Israel including those from families that suffered in Nazi Germany. Sabbatians despise real Jewish people and target them even more harshly because it is so much more difficult to dub them ‘anti-Semitic’ although in their desperation they do try.

CHAPTER THREE

The Pushbacker sting

Until you realize how easy it is for your mind to be manipulated, you remain the puppet of someone else's game

Evita Ochel

I will use the presidencies of Trump and Biden to show how the manipulation of the one-party state plays out behind the illusion of political choice across the world. No two presidencies could – on the face of it – be more different and apparently at odds in terms of direction and policy.

A Renegade Mind sees beyond the obvious and focuses on outcomes and consequences and not image, words and waffle. The Cult embarked on a campaign to divide America between those who blindly support its agenda (the mentality known as 'Woke') and those who are pushing back on where the Cult and its Sabbatians want to go. This presents infinite possibilities for dividing and ruling the population by setting them at war with each other and allows a perceptual ring fence of demonisation to encircle the Pushbackers in a modern version of the Little Big Horn in 1876 when American cavalry led by Lieutenant Colonel George Custer were drawn into a trap, surrounded and killed by Native American tribes defending their land of thousands of years from being seized by the government. In this modern version the roles are reversed and it's those defending themselves from the Sabbatian government who are surrounded and the government that's seeking to destroy them. This trap was set years ago and to explain how we must return to 2016

and the emergence of Donald Trump as a candidate to be President of the United States. He set out to overcome the best part of 20 other candidates in the Republican Party before and during the primaries and was not considered by many in those early stages to have a prayer of living in the White House. The Republican Party was said to have great reservations about Trump and yet somehow he won the nomination. When you know how American politics works – politics in general – there is no way that Trump could have become the party's candidate unless the Sabbatian-controlled 'Neocons' that run the Republican Party wanted that to happen. We saw the proof in emails and documents made public by WikiLeaks that the Democratic Party hierarchy, or Democons, systematically undermined the campaign of Bernie Sanders to make sure that Sabbatian gofer Hillary Clinton won the nomination to be their presidential candidate. If the Democons could do that then the Neocons in the Republican Party could have derailed Trump in the same way. But they didn't and at that stage I began to conclude that Trump could well be the one chosen to be president. If that was the case the 'why' was pretty clear to see – the goal of dividing America between Cult agenda-supporting Wokers and Pushbackers who gravitated to Trump because he was telling them what they wanted to hear. His constituency of support had been increasingly ignored and voiceless for decades and profoundly through the eight years of Sabbatian puppet Barack Obama. Now here was someone speaking their language of pulling back from the incessant globalisation of political and economic power, the exporting of American jobs to China and elsewhere by 'American' (Sabbatian) corporations, the deletion of free speech, and the mass immigration policies that had further devastated job opportunities for the urban working class of all races and the once American heartlands of the Midwest.

Beware the forked tongue

Those people collectively sighed with relief that at last a political leader was apparently on their side, but another trait of the Renegade Mind is that you look even harder at people telling you

what you want to hear than those who are telling you otherwise. Obviously as I said earlier people wish what they want to hear to be true and genuine and they are much more likely to believe that than someone saying what they don't want to here and don't want to be true. Sales people are taught to be skilled in eliciting by calculated questioning what their customers want to hear and repeating that back to them as their own opinion to get their targets to like and trust them. Assets of the Cult are also sales people in the sense of selling perception. To read Cult manipulation you have to play the long and expanded game and not fall for the Vaudeville show of party politics. Both American parties are vehicles for the Cult and they exploit them in different ways depending on what the agenda requires at that moment. Trump and the Republicans were used to be the focus of dividing America and isolating Pushbackers to open the way for a Biden presidency to become the most extreme in American history by advancing the full-blown Woke (Cult) agenda with the aim of destroying and silencing Pushbackers now labelled Nazi Trump supporters and white supremacists.

Sabbatians wanted Trump in office for the reasons described by ultra-Zionist Saul Alinsky (1909-1972) who was promoting the Woke philosophy through 'community organising' long before anyone had heard of it. In those days it still went by its traditional name of Marxism. The reason for the manipulated Trump phenomenon was laid out in Alinsky's 1971 book, *Rules for Radicals*, which was his blueprint for overthrowing democratic and other regimes and replacing them with Sabbatian Marxism. Not surprisingly his to-do list was evident in the Sabbatian French and Russian 'Revolutions' and that in China which will become very relevant in the next chapter about the 'Covid' hoax. Among Alinsky's followers have been the deeply corrupt Barack Obama, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Clinton who described him as a 'hero'. All three are Sabbatian stooges with Pelosi personifying the arrogant corrupt idiocy that so widely fronts up for the Cult inner core. Predictably as a Sabbatian advocate of the 'light-bringer' Alinsky features Lucifer on the dedication page of his book as the original radical who gained

his own kingdom ('Earth' as we shall see). One of Alinsky's golden radical rules was to pick an individual and focus all attention, hatred and blame on them and not to target faceless bureaucracies and corporations. *Rules for Radicals* is really a Sabbatian handbook with its contents repeatedly employed all over the world for centuries and why wouldn't Sabbatians bring to power their designer-villain to be used as the individual on which all attention, hatred and blame was bestowed? This is what they did and the only question for me is how much Trump knew that and how much he was manipulated. A bit of both, I suspect. This was Alinsky's Trump technique from a man who died in 1972. The technique has spanned history:

Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, polarize it. Don't try to attack abstract corporations or bureaucracies. Identify a responsible individual. Ignore attempts to shift or spread the blame.

From the moment Trump came to illusory power everything was about him. It wasn't about Republican policy or opinion, but all about Trump. Everything he did was presented in negative, derogatory and abusive terms by the Sabbatian-dominated media led by Cult operations such as CNN, MSNBC, *The New York Times* and the Jeff Bezos-owned *Washington Post* – 'Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it, polarize it.' Trump was turned into a demon to be vilified by those who hated him and a demi-god loved by those who worshipped him. This, in turn, had his supporters, too, presented as equally demonic in preparation for the punchline later down the line when Biden was about to take office. It was here's a Trump, there's a Trump, everywhere a Trump, Trump. Virtually every news story or happening was filtered through the lens of 'The Donald'. You loved him or hated him and which one you chose was said to define you as Satan's spawn or a paragon of virtue. Even supporting some Trump policies or statements and not others was enough for an assault on your character. No shades of grey were or are allowed. Everything is black and white (literally and figuratively). A Californian I knew had her head utterly scrambled by her hatred for Trump while telling people they should love each other. She was so totally consumed by

Trump Derangement Syndrome as it became to be known that this glaring contradiction would never have occurred to her. By definition anyone who criticised Trump or praised his opponents was a hero and this lady described Joe Biden as 'a kind, honest gentleman' when he's a provable liar, mega-crook and vicious piece of work to boot. Sabbatians had indeed divided America using Trump as the fall-guy and all along the clock was ticking on the consequences for his supporters.

In hock to his masters

Trump gave Sabbatians via Israel almost everything they wanted in his four years. Ask and you shall receive was the dynamic between himself and Benjamin Netanyahu orchestrated by Trump's ultra-Zionist son-in-law Jared Kushner, his ultra-Zionist Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, and ultra-Zionist 'Israel adviser', Jason Greenblatt. The last two were central to the running and protecting from collapse of his business empire, the Trump Organisation, and colossal business failures made him forever beholden to Sabbatian networks that bailed him out. By the start of the 1990s Trump owed \$4 billion to banks that he couldn't pay and almost \$1 billion of that was down to him personally and not his companies. This mega-disaster was the result of building two new casinos in Atlantic City and buying the enormous Taj Mahal operation which led to crippling debt payments. He had borrowed fantastic sums from 72 banks with major Sabbatian connections and although the scale of debt should have had him living in a tent alongside the highway they never foreclosed. A plan was devised to lift Trump from the mire by BT Securities Corporation and Rothschild Inc. and the case was handled by Wilber Ross who had worked for the Rothschilds for 27 years. Ross would be named US Commerce Secretary after Trump's election. Another crucial figure in saving Trump was ultra-Zionist 'investor' Carl Icahn who bought the Taj Mahal casino. Icahn was made special economic adviser on financial regulation in the Trump administration. He didn't stay long but still managed to find time to make a tidy sum of a reported \$31.3 million when he sold his

holdings affected by the price of steel three days before Trump imposed a 235 percent tariff on steel imports. What amazing bits of luck these people have. Trump and Sabbatian operatives have long had a close association and his mentor and legal adviser from the early 1970s until 1986 was the dark and genetically corrupt ultra-Zionist Roy Cohn who was chief counsel to Senator Joseph McCarthy's 'communist' witch-hunt in the 1950s. *Esquire* magazine published an article about Cohn with the headline 'Don't mess with Roy Cohn'. He was described as the most feared lawyer in New York and 'a ruthless master of dirty tricks ... [with] ... more than one Mafia Don on speed dial'. Cohn's influence, contacts, support and protection made Trump a front man for Sabbatians in New York with their connections to one of Cohn's many criminal employers, the 'Russian' Sabbatian Mafia. Israel-centric media mogul Rupert Murdoch was introduced to Trump by Cohn and they started a long friendship. Cohn died in 1986 weeks after being disbarred for unethical conduct by the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court. The wheels of justice do indeed run slow given the length of Cohn's crooked career.

QAnon-sense

We are asked to believe that Donald Trump with his fundamental connections to Sabbatian networks and operatives has been leading the fight to stop the Sabbatian agenda for the fascistic control of America and the world. Sure he has. A man entrapped during his years in the White House by Sabbatian operatives and whose biggest financial donor was casino billionaire Sheldon Adelson who was Sabbatian to his DNA?? Oh, do come on. Trump has been used to divide America and isolate Pushbackers on the Cult agenda under the heading of 'Trump supporters', 'insurrectionists' and 'white supremacists'. The US Intelligence/Mossad Psyop or psychological operation known as QAnon emerged during the Trump years as a central pillar in the Sabbatian campaign to lead Pushbackers into the trap set by those that wished to destroy them. I knew from the start that QAnon was a scam because I had seen the same scenario many

times before over 30 years under different names and I had written about one in particular in the books. ‘Not again’ was my reaction when QAnon came to the fore. The same script is pulled out every few years and a new name added to the letterhead. The story always takes the same form: ‘Insiders’ or ‘the good guys’ in the government-intelligence-military ‘Deep State’ apparatus were going to instigate mass arrests of the ‘bad guys’ which would include the Rockefellers, Rothschilds, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, George Soros, etc., etc. Dates are given for when the ‘good guys’ are going to move in, but the dates pass without incident and new dates are given which pass without incident. The central message to Pushbackers in each case is that they don’t have to do anything because there is ‘a plan’ and it is all going to be sorted by the ‘good guys’ on the inside. ‘Trust the plan’ was a QAnon mantra when the only plan was to misdirect Pushbackers into putting their trust in a Psyop they believed to be real. Beware, beware, those who tell you what you want to hear and always check it out. Right up to Biden’s inauguration QAnon was still claiming that ‘the Storm’ was coming and Trump would stay on as president when Biden and his cronies were arrested and jailed. It was never going to happen and of course it didn’t, but what did happen as a result provided that punchline to the Sabbatian Trump/QAnon Psyop.

On January 6th, 2021, a very big crowd of Trump supporters gathered in the National Mall in Washington DC down from the Capitol Building to protest at what they believed to be widespread corruption and vote fraud that stopped Trump being re-elected for a second term as president in November, 2020. I say as someone that does not support Trump or Biden that the evidence is clear that major vote-fixing went on to favour Biden, a man with cognitive problems so advanced he can often hardly string a sentence together without reading the words written for him on the Teleprompter. Glaring ballot discrepancies included serious questions about electronic voting machines that make vote rigging a comparative cinch and hundreds of thousands of paper votes that suddenly appeared during already advanced vote counts and virtually all of

them for Biden. Early Trump leads in crucial swing states suddenly began to close and disappear. The pandemic hoax was used as the excuse to issue almost limitless numbers of mail-in ballots with no checks to establish that the recipients were still alive or lived at that address. They were sent to streams of people who had not even asked for them. Private organisations were employed to gather these ballots and who knows what they did with them before they turned up at the counts. The American election system has been manipulated over decades to become a sick joke with more holes than a Swiss cheese for the express purpose of dictating the results. Then there was the criminal manipulation of information by Sabbatian tech giants like Facebook, Twitter and Google-owned YouTube which deleted pro-Trump, anti-Biden accounts and posts while everything in support of Biden was left alone. Sabbatians wanted Biden to win because after the dividing of America it was time for full-on Woke and every aspect of the Cult agenda to be unleashed.

Hunter gatherer

Extreme Silicon Valley bias included blocking information by the *New York Post* exposing a Biden scandal that should have ended his bid for president in the final weeks of the campaign. Hunter Biden, his monumentally corrupt son, is reported to have sent a laptop to be repaired at a local store and failed to return for it. Time passed until the laptop became the property of the store for non-payment of the bill. When the owner saw what was on the hard drive he gave a copy to the FBI who did nothing even though it confirmed widespread corruption in which the Joe Biden family were using his political position, especially when he was vice president to Obama, to make multiple millions in countries around the world and most notably Ukraine and China. Hunter Biden's one-time business partner Tony Bobulinski went public when the story broke in the *New York Post* to confirm the corruption he saw and that Joe Biden not only knew what was going on he also profited from the spoils. Millions were handed over by a Chinese company with close

connections – like all major businesses in China – to the Chinese communist party of President Xi Jinping. Joe Biden even boasted at a meeting of the Cult's World Economic Forum that as vice president he had ordered the government of Ukraine to fire a prosecutor. What he didn't mention was that the same man just happened to be investigating an energy company which was part of Hunter Biden's corrupt portfolio. The company was paying him big bucks for no other reason than the influence his father had. Overnight Biden's presidential campaign should have been over given that he had lied publicly about not knowing what his son was doing. Instead almost the entire Sabbatian-owned mainstream media and Sabbatian-owned Silicon Valley suppressed circulation of the story. This alone went a mighty way to rigging the election of 2020. Cult assets like Mark Zuckerberg at Facebook also spent hundreds of millions to be used in support of Biden and vote 'administration'.

The Cult had used Trump as the focus to divide America and was now desperate to bring in moronic, pliable, corrupt Biden to complete the double-whammy. No way were they going to let little things like the will of the people thwart their plan. Silicon Valley widely censored claims that the election was rigged because it *was* rigged. For the same reason anyone claiming it was rigged was denounced as a 'white supremacist' including the pathetically few Republican politicians willing to say so. Right across the media where the claim was mentioned it was described as a 'false claim' even though these excuses for 'journalists' would have done no research into the subject whatsoever. Trump won seven million more votes than any sitting president had ever achieved while somehow a cognitively-challenged soon to be 78-year-old who was hidden away from the public for most of the campaign managed to win more votes than any presidential candidate in history. It makes no sense. You only had to see election rallies for both candidates to witness the enthusiasm for Trump and the apathy for Biden. Tens of thousands would attend Trump events while Biden was speaking in empty car parks with often only television crews attending and framing their shots to hide the fact that no one was there. It was pathetic to see

footage come to light of Biden standing at a podium making speeches only to TV crews and party fixers while reading the words written for him on massive Teleprompter screens. So, yes, those protestors on January 6th had a point about election rigging, but some were about to walk into a trap laid for them in Washington by the Cult Deep State and its QAnon Psyop. This was the Capitol Hill riot ludicrously dubbed an ‘insurrection’.

The spider and the fly

Renegade Minds know there are not two ‘sides’ in politics, only one side, the Cult, working through all ‘sides’. It’s a stage show, a puppet show, to direct the perceptions of the population into focusing on diversions like parties and candidates while missing the puppeteers with their hands holding all the strings. The Capitol Hill ‘insurrection’ brings us back to the Little Big Horn. Having created two distinct opposing groupings – Woke and Pushbackers – the trap was about to be sprung. Pushbackers were to be encircled and isolated by associating them all in the public mind with Trump and then labelling Trump as some sort of Confederate leader. I knew immediately that the Capitol riot was a set-up because of two things. One was how easy the rioters got into the building with virtually no credible resistance and secondly I could see – as with the ‘Covid’ hoax in the West at the start of 2020 – how the Cult could exploit the situation to move its agenda forward with great speed. My experience of Cult techniques and activities over more than 30 years has showed me that while they do exploit situations they haven’t themselves created this never happens with events of fundamental agenda significance. Every time major events giving cultists the excuse to rapidly advance their plan you find they are manipulated into being for the specific reason of providing that excuse – Problem-Reaction-Solution. Only a tiny minority of the huge crowd of Washington protestors sought to gain entry to the Capitol by smashing windows and breaching doors. That didn’t matter. The whole crowd and all Pushbackers, even if they did not support Trump, were going to be lumped together as dangerous

insurrectionists and conspiracy theorists. The latter term came into widespread use through a CIA memo in the 1960s aimed at discrediting those questioning the nonsensical official story of the Kennedy assassination and it subsequently became widely employed by the media. It's still being used by inept 'journalists' with no idea of its origin to discredit anyone questioning anything that authority claims to be true. When you are perpetrating a conspiracy you need to discredit the very word itself even though the dictionary definition of conspiracy is merely 'the activity of secretly planning with other people to do something bad or illegal' and 'a general agreement to keep silent about a subject for the purpose of keeping it secret'. On that basis there are conspiracies almost wherever you look. For obvious reasons the Cult and its lapdog media have to claim there are no conspiracies even though the word appears in state laws as with conspiracy to defraud, to murder, and to corrupt public morals.

Agent provocateurs are widely used by the Cult Deep State to manipulate genuine people into acting in ways that suit the desired outcome. By genuine in this case I mean protestors genuinely supporting Trump and claims that the election was stolen. In among them, however, were agents of the state wearing the garb of Trump supporters and QAnon to pump-prime the Capitol riot which some genuine Trump supporters naively fell for. I described the situation as 'Come into my parlour said the spider to the fly'. Leaflets appeared through the Woke paramilitary arm Antifa, the anti-fascist fascists, calling on supporters to turn up in Washington looking like Trump supporters even though they hated him. Some of those arrested for breaching the Capitol Building were sourced to Antifa and its stable mate Black Lives Matter. Both organisations are funded by Cult billionaires and corporations. One man charged for the riot was according to his lawyer a former FBI agent who had held top secret security clearance for 40 years. Attorney Thomas Plofchan said of his client, 66-year-old Thomas Edward Caldwell:

He has held a Top Secret Security Clearance since 1979 and has undergone multiple Special Background Investigations in support of his clearances. After retiring from the Navy, he

worked as a section chief for the Federal Bureau of Investigation from 2009-2010 as a GS-12 [mid-level employee].

He also formed and operated a consulting firm performing work, often classified, for U.S government customers including the US Drug Enforcement Agency, Department of Housing and Urban Development, the US Coast Guard, and the US Army Personnel Command.

A judge later released Caldwell pending trial in the absence of evidence about a conspiracy or that he tried to force his way into the building. *The New York Post* reported a 'law enforcement source' as saying that 'at least two known Antifa members were spotted' on camera among Trump supporters during the riot while one of the rioters arrested was John Earle Sullivan, a seriously extreme Black Lives Matter Trump-hater from Utah who was previously arrested and charged in July, 2020, over a BLM-Antifa riot in which drivers were threatened and one was shot. Sullivan is the founder of Utah-based Insurgence USA which is an affiliate of the Cult-created-and-funded Black Lives Matter movement. Footage appeared and was then deleted by Twitter of Trump supporters calling out Antifa infiltrators and a group was filmed changing into pro-Trump clothing before the riot. Security at the building was *pathetic* – as planned. Colonel Leroy Fletcher Prouty, a man with long experience in covert operations working with the US security apparatus, once described the tell-tale sign to identify who is involved in an assassination. He said:

No one has to direct an assassination – it happens. The active role is played secretly by permitting it to happen. This is the greatest single clue. Who has the power to call off or reduce the usual security precautions?

This principle applies to many other situations and certainly to the Capitol riot of January 6th, 2021.

The sting

With such a big and potentially angry crowd known to be gathering near the Capitol the security apparatus would have had a major police detail to defend the building with National Guard troops on

standby given the strength of feeling among people arriving from all over America encouraged by the QAnon Psyop and statements by Donald Trump. Instead Capitol Police ‘security’ was flimsy, weak, and easily breached. The same number of officers was deployed as on a regular day and that is a blatant red flag. They were not staffed or equipped for a possible riot that had been an obvious possibility in the circumstances. No protective and effective fencing worth the name was put in place and there were no contingency plans. The whole thing was basically a case of standing aside and waving people in. Once inside police mostly backed off apart from one Capitol police officer who ridiculously shot dead unarmed Air Force veteran protestor Ashli Babbitt without a warning as she climbed through a broken window. The ‘investigation’ refused to name or charge the officer after what must surely be considered a murder in the circumstances. They just lifted a carpet and swept. The story was endlessly repeated about five people dying in the ‘armed insurrection’ when there was no report of rioters using weapons. Apart from Babbitt the other four died from a heart attack, strokes and apparently a drug overdose. Capitol police officer Brian Sicknick was reported to have died after being bludgeoned with a fire extinguisher when he was alive after the riot was over and died later of what the Washington Medical Examiner’s Office said was a stroke. Sicknick had no external injuries. The lies were delivered like rapid fire. There was a narrative to build with incessant repetition of the lie until the lie became the accepted ‘everybody knows that’ truth. The ‘Big Lie’ technique of Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels is constantly used by the Cult which was behind the Nazis and is today behind the ‘Covid’ and ‘climate change’ hoaxes. Goebbels said:

If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it. The lie can be maintained only for such time as the State can shield the people from the political, economic and/or military consequences of the lie. It thus becomes vitally important for the State to use all of its powers to repress dissent, for the truth is the mortal enemy of the lie, and thus by extension, the truth is the greatest enemy of the State.

Most protestors had a free run of the Capitol Building. This allowed pictures to be taken of rioters in iconic parts of the building including the Senate chamber which could be used as propaganda images against all Pushbackers. One Congresswoman described the scene as ‘the worst kind of non-security anybody could ever imagine’. Well, the first part was true, but someone obviously did imagine it and made sure it happened. Some photographs most widely circulated featured people wearing QAnon symbols and now the Psyop would be used to dub all QAnon followers with the ubiquitous fit-all label of ‘white supremacist’ and ‘insurrectionists’. When a Muslim extremist called Noah Green drove his car at two police officers at the Capitol Building killing one in April, 2021, there was no such political and media hysteria. They were just disappointed he wasn’t white.

The witch-hunt

Government prosecutor Michael Sherwin, an aggressive, dark-eyed, professional Rottweiler led the ‘investigation’ and to call it over the top would be to underestimate reality a thousand fold. Hundreds were tracked down and arrested for the crime of having the wrong political views and people were jailed who had done nothing more than walk in the building, committed no violence or damage to property, took a few pictures and left. They were labelled a ‘threat to the Republic’ while Biden sat in the White House signing executive orders written for him that were dismantling ‘the Republic’. Even when judges ruled that a mother and son should not be in jail the government kept them there. Some of those arrested have been badly beaten by prison guards in Washington and lawyers for one man said he suffered a fractured skull and was made blind in one eye. Meanwhile a woman is shot dead for no reason by a Capitol Police officer and we are not allowed to know who he is never mind what has happened to him although that will be *nothing*. The Cult’s QAnon/Trump sting to identify and isolate Pushbackers and then target them on the road to crushing and deleting them was a resounding success. You would have thought the Russians had

invaded the building at gunpoint and lined up senators for a firing squad to see the political and media reaction. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is a child in a woman's body, a terrible-twins, me, me, me, Woker narcissist of such proportions that words have no meaning. She said she thought she was going to die when 'insurrectionists' banged on her office door. It turned out she wasn't even in the Capitol Building when the riot was happening and the 'banging' was a Capitol Police officer. She referred to herself as a 'survivor' which is an insult to all those true survivors of violent and sexual abuse while she lives her pampered and privileged life talking drivel for a living. Her Woke colleague and fellow mega-narcissist Rashida Tlaib broke down describing the devastating effect on her, too, of *not being* in the building when the rioters were there. Ocasio-Cortez and Tlaib are members of a fully-Woke group of Congresswomen known as 'The Squad' along with Ilhan Omar and Ayanna Pressley. The Squad from what I can see can be identified by its vehement anti-white racism, anti-white men agenda, and, as always in these cases, the absence of brain cells on active duty.

The usual suspects were on the riot case immediately in the form of Democrat ultra-Zionist senators and operatives Chuck Schumer and Adam Schiff demanding that Trump be impeached for 'his part in the insurrection'. The same pair of prats had led the failed impeachment of Trump over the invented 'Russia collusion' nonsense which claimed Russia had helped Trump win the 2016 election. I didn't realise that Tel Aviv had been relocated just outside Moscow. I must find an up-to-date map. The Russia hoax was a Sabbatian operation to keep Trump occupied and impotent and to stop any rapport with Russia which the Cult wants to retain as a perceptual enemy to be pulled out at will. Puppet Biden began attacking Russia when he came to office as the Cult seeks more upheaval, division and war across the world. A two-year stage show 'Russia collusion inquiry' headed by the not-very-bright former 9/11 FBI chief Robert Mueller, with support from 19 lawyers, 40 FBI agents plus intelligence analysts, forensic accountants and other

staff, devoured tens of millions of dollars and found no evidence of Russia collusion which a ten-year-old could have told them on day one. Now the same moronic Schumer and Schiff wanted a second impeachment of Trump over the Capitol ‘insurrection’ (riot) which the arrested development of Schumer called another ‘Pearl Harbor’ while others compared it with 9/11 in which 3,000 died and, in the case of CNN, with the Rwandan genocide in the 1990s in which an estimated 500,000 to 600,000 were murdered, between 250, 000 and 500,000 women were raped, and populations of whole towns were hacked to death with machetes. To make those comparisons purely for Cult political reasons is beyond insulting to those that suffered and lost their lives and confirms yet again the callous inhumanity that we are dealing with. Schumer is a monumental idiot and so is Schiff, but they serve the Cult agenda and do whatever they’re told so they get looked after. Talking of idiots – another inane man who spanned the Russia and Capitol impeachment attempts was Senator Eric Swalwell who had the nerve to accuse Trump of collusion with the Russians while sleeping with a Chinese spy called Christine Fang or ‘Fang Fang’ which is straight out of a Bond film no doubt starring Klaus Schwab as the bloke living on a secret island and controlling laser weapons positioned in space and pointing at world capitals. Fang Fang plays the part of Bond’s infiltrator girlfriend which I’m sure she would enjoy rather more than sharing a bed with the brainless Swalwell, lying back and thinking of China. The FBI eventually warned Swalwell about Fang Fang which gave her time to escape back to the Chinese dictatorship. How very thoughtful of them. The second Trump impeachment also failed and hardly surprising when an impeachment is supposed to remove a sitting president and by the time it happened Trump was no longer president. These people are running your country America, well, officially anyway. Terrifying isn’t it?

Outcomes tell the story - always

The outcome of all this – and it’s the *outcome* on which Renegade Minds focus, not the words – was that a vicious, hysterical and

obviously pre-planned assault was launched on Pushbackers to censor, silence and discredit them and even targeted their right to earn a living. They have since been condemned as 'domestic terrorists' that need to be treated like Al-Qaeda and Islamic State. 'Domestic terrorists' is a label the Cult has been trying to make stick since the period of the Oklahoma bombing in 1995 which was blamed on 'far-right domestic terrorists'. If you read *The Trigger* you will see that the bombing was clearly a Problem-Reaction-Solution carried out by the Deep State during a Bill Clinton administration so corrupt that no dictionary definition of the term would even nearly suffice. Nearly 30,000 troops were deployed from all over America to the empty streets of Washington for Biden's inauguration. Ten thousand of them stayed on with the pretext of protecting the capital from insurrectionists when it was more psychological programming to normalise the use of the military in domestic law enforcement in support of the Cult plan for a police-military state. Biden's fascist administration began a purge of 'wrong-thinkers' in the military which means anyone that is not on board with Woke. The Capitol Building was surrounded by a fence with razor wire and the Land of the Free was further symbolically and literally dismantled. The circle was completed with the installation of Biden and the exploitation of the QAnon Psyop.

America had never been so divided since the civil war of the 19th century, Pushbackers were isolated and dubbed terrorists and now, as was always going to happen, the Cult immediately set about deleting what little was left of freedom and transforming American society through a swish of the hand of the most controlled 'president' in American history leading (officially at least) the most extreme regime since the country was declared an independent state on July 4th, 1776. Biden issued undebated, dictatorial executive orders almost by the hour in his opening days in office across the whole spectrum of the Cult wish-list including diluting controls on the border with Mexico allowing thousands of migrants to illegally enter the United States to transform the demographics of America and import an election-changing number of perceived Democrat

voters. Then there were Biden deportation amnesties for the already illegally resident (estimated to be as high as 20 or even 30 million). A bill before Congress awarded American citizenship to anyone who could prove they had worked in agriculture for just 180 days in the previous two years as 'Big Ag' secured its slave labour long-term. There were the plans to add new states to the union such as Puerto Rico and making Washington DC a state. They are all parts of a plan to ensure that the Cult-owned Woke Democrats would be permanently in power.

Border – what border?

I have exposed in detail in other books how mass immigration into the United States and Europe is the work of Cult networks fuelled by the tens of billions spent to this and other ends by George Soros and his global Open Society (open borders) Foundations. The impact can be seen in America alone where the population has increased by *100 million* in little more than 30 years mostly through immigration. I wrote in *The Answer* that the plan was to have so many people crossing the southern border that the numbers become unstoppable and we are now there under Cult-owned Biden. El Salvador in Central America puts the scale of what is happening into context. A third of the population now lives in the United States, much of it illegally, and many more are on the way. The methodology is to crush Central and South American countries economically and spread violence through machete-wielding psychopathic gangs like MS-13 based in El Salvador and now operating in many American cities. Biden-imposed lax security at the southern border means that it is all but open. He said before his 'election' that he wanted to see a surge towards the border if he became president and that was the green light for people to do just that after election day to create the human disaster that followed for both America and the migrants. When that surge came the imbecilic Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said it wasn't a 'surge' because they are 'children, not insurgents' and the term 'surge' (used by Biden) was a claim of 'white supremacists'.

This disingenuous lady may one day enter the realm of the most basic intelligence, but it won't be any time soon.

Sabbatians and the Cult are in the process of destroying America by importing violent people and gangs in among the genuine to terrorise American cities and by overwhelming services that cannot cope with the sheer volume of new arrivals. Something similar is happening in Europe as Western society in general is targeted for demographic and cultural transformation and upheaval. The plan demands violence and crime to create an environment of intimidation, fear and division and Soros has been funding the election of district attorneys across America who then stop prosecuting many crimes, reduce sentences for violent crimes and free as many violent criminals as they can. Sabbatians are creating the chaos from which order – their order – can respond in a classic Problem-Reaction-Solution. A Freemasonic moto says ‘Ordo Ab Chao’ (Order out of Chaos) and this is why the Cult is constantly creating chaos to impose a new ‘order’. Here you have the reason the Cult is constantly creating chaos. The ‘Covid’ hoax can be seen with those entering the United States by plane being forced to take a ‘Covid’ test while migrants flooding through southern border processing facilities do not. Nothing is put in the way of mass migration and if that means ignoring the government’s own ‘Covid’ rules then so be it. They know it’s all bullshit anyway. Any pushback on this is denounced as ‘racist’ by Wokers and Sabbatian fronts like the ultra-Zionist Anti-Defamation League headed by the appalling Jonathan Greenblatt which at the same time argues that Israel should not give citizenship and voting rights to more Palestinian Arabs or the ‘Jewish population’ (in truth the Sabbatian network) will lose control of the country.

Society-changing numbers

Biden’s masters have declared that countries like El Salvador are so dangerous that their people must be allowed into the United States for humanitarian reasons when there are fewer murders in large parts of many Central American countries than in US cities like

Baltimore. That is not to say Central America cannot be a dangerous place and Cult-controlled American governments have been making it so since way back, along with the dismantling of economies, in a long-term plan to drive people north into the United States. Parts of Central America are very dangerous, but in other areas the story is being greatly exaggerated to justify relaxing immigration criteria. Migrants are being offered free healthcare and education in the United States as another incentive to head for the border and there is no requirement to be financially independent before you can enter to prevent the resources of America being drained. You can't blame migrants for seeking what they believe will be a better life, but they are being played by the Cult for dark and nefarious ends. The numbers since Biden took office are huge. In February, 2021, more than 100,000 people were known to have tried to enter the US illegally through the southern border (it was 34,000 in the same month in 2020) and in March it was 170,000 – a 418 percent increase on March, 2020. These numbers are only known people, not the ones who get in unseen. The true figure for migrants illegally crossing the border in a single month was estimated by one congressman at 250,000 and that number will only rise under Biden's current policy. Gangs of murdering drug-running thugs that control the Mexican side of the border demand money – thousands of dollars – to let migrants cross the Rio Grande into America. At the same time gun battles are breaking out on the border several times a week between rival Mexican drug gangs (which now operate globally) who are equipped with sophisticated military-grade weapons, grenades and armoured vehicles. While the Capitol Building was being 'protected' from a non-existent 'threat' by thousands of troops, and others were still deployed at the time in the Cult Neocon war in Afghanistan, the southern border of America was left to its fate. This is not incompetence, it is cold calculation.

By March, 2021, there were 17,000 unaccompanied children held at border facilities and many of them are ensnared by people traffickers for paedophile rings and raped on their journey north to America. This is not conjecture – this is fact. Many of those designated

children are in reality teenage boys or older. Meanwhile Wokers posture their self-purity for encouraging poor and tragic people to come to America and face this nightmare both on the journey and at the border with the disgusting figure of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi giving disingenuous speeches about caring for migrants. The woman's evil. Wokers condemned Trump for having children in cages at the border (so did Obama, *Shhhh*), but now they are sleeping on the floor without access to a shower with one border facility 729 percent over capacity. The Biden insanity even proposed flying migrants from the southern border to the northern border with Canada for 'processing'. The whole shambles is being overseen by ultra-Zionist Secretary of Homeland Security, the moronic liar Alejandro Mayorkas, who banned news cameras at border facilities to stop Americans seeing what was happening. Mayorkas said there was not a ban on news crews; it was just that they were not allowed to film. Alongside him at Homeland Security is another ultra-Zionist Cass Sunstein appointed by Biden to oversee new immigration laws. Sunstein despises conspiracy researchers to the point where he suggests they should be banned or *taxed* for having such views. The man is not bonkers or anything. He's perfectly well-adjusted, but adjusted to what is the question. Criticise what is happening and you are a 'white supremacist' when earlier non-white immigrants also oppose the numbers which effect their lives and opportunities. Black people in poor areas are particularly damaged by uncontrolled immigration and the increased competition for work opportunities with those who will work for less. They are also losing voting power as Hispanics become more dominant in former black areas. It's a downward spiral for them while the billionaires behind the policy drone on about how much they care about black people and 'racism'. None of this is about compassion for migrants or black people – that's just wind and air. Migrants are instead being mercilessly exploited to transform America while the countries they leave are losing their future and the same is true in Europe. Mass immigration may now be the work of Woke Democrats, but it can be traced back to the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (it

wasn't) signed into law by Republican hero President Ronald Reagan which gave amnesty to millions living in the United States illegally and other incentives for people to head for the southern border. Here we have the one-party state at work again.

Save me syndrome

Almost every aspect of what I have been exposing as the Cult agenda was on display in even the first days of 'Biden' with silencing of Pushbackers at the forefront of everything. A Renegade Mind will view the Trump years and QAnon in a very different light to their supporters and advocates as the dots are connected. The QAnon/Trump Psyop has given the Cult all it was looking for. We may not know how much, or little, that Trump realised he was being used, but that's a side issue. This pincer movement produced the desired outcome of dividing America and having Pushbackers isolated. To turn this around we have to look at new routes to empowerment which do not include handing our power to other people and groups through what I will call the 'Save Me Syndrome' – 'I want someone else to do it so that I don't have to'. We have seen this at work throughout human history and the QAnon/Trump Psyop is only the latest incarnation alongside all the others. Religion is an obvious expression of this when people look to a 'god' or priest to save them or tell them how to be saved and then there are 'save me' politicians like Trump. Politics is a diversion and not a 'saviour'. It is a means to block positive change, not make it possible.

Save Me Syndrome always comes with the same repeating theme of handing your power to whom or what you believe will save you while your real 'saviour' stares back from the mirror every morning. Renegade Minds are constantly vigilant in this regard and always asking the question 'What can I do?' rather than 'What can someone else do for me?' Gandhi was right when he said: 'You must be the change you want to see in the world.' We are indeed the people we have been waiting for. We are presented with a constant raft of reasons to concede that power to others and forget where the real power is. Humanity has the numbers and the Cult does not. It has to

use diversion and division to target the unstoppable power that comes from unity. Religions, governments, politicians, corporations, media, QAnon, are all different manifestations of this power-diversion and dilution. Refusing to give your power to governments and instead handing it to Trump and QAnon is not to take a new direction, but merely to recycle the old one with new names on the posters. I will explore this phenomenon as we proceed and how to break the cycles and recycles that got us here through the mists of repeating perception and so repeating history.

For now we shall turn to the most potent example in the entire human story of the consequences that follow when you give your power away. I am talking, of course, of the 'Covid' hoax.

CHAPTER FOUR

'Covid': Calculated catastrophe

Facts are threatening to those invested in fraud
DaShanne Stokes

We can easily unravel the real reason for the 'Covid pandemic' hoax by employing the Renegade Mind methodology that I have outlined this far. We'll start by comparing the long-planned Cult outcome with the 'Covid pandemic' outcome. Know the outcome and you'll see the journey.

I have highlighted the plan for the Hunger Games Society which has been in my books for so many years with the very few controlling the very many through ongoing dependency. To create this dependency it is essential to destroy independent livelihoods, businesses and employment to make the population reliant on the state (the Cult) for even the basics of life through a guaranteed pittance income. While independence of income remained these Cult ambitions would be thwarted. With this knowledge it was easy to see where the 'pandemic' hoax was going once talk of 'lockdowns' began and the closing of all but perceived 'essential' businesses to 'save' us from an alleged 'deadly virus'. Cult corporations like Amazon and Walmart were naturally considered 'essential' while mom and pop shops and stores had their doors closed by fascist decree. As a result with every new lockdown and new regulation more small and medium, even large businesses not owned by the Cult, went to the wall while Cult giants and their frontmen and women grew financially fatter by the second. Mom and pop were

denied an income and the right to earn a living and the wealth of people like Jeff Bezos (Amazon), Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) and Sergei Brin and Larry Page (Google/Alphabet) have reached record levels. The Cult was increasing its own power through further dramatic concentrations of wealth while the competition was being destroyed and brought into a state of dependency. Lockdowns have been instigated to secure that very end and were never anything to do with health. My brother Paul spent 45 years building up a bus repair business, but lockdowns meant buses were running at a fraction of normal levels for months on end. Similar stories can told in their hundreds of millions worldwide. Efforts of a lifetime coldly destroyed by Cult multi-billionaires and their lackeys in government and law enforcement who continued to earn their living from the taxation of the people while denying the right of the same people to earn theirs. How different it would have been if those making and enforcing these decisions had to face the same financial hardships of those they affected, but they never do.

Gates of Hell

Behind it all in the full knowledge of what he is doing and why is the psychopathic figure of Cult operative Bill Gates. His puppet Tedros at the World Health Organization declared 'Covid' a pandemic in March, 2020. The WHO had changed the definition of a 'pandemic' in 2009 just a month before declaring the 'swine flu pandemic' which would not have been so under the previous definition. The same applies to 'Covid'. The definition had included... 'an infection by an infectious agent, occurring simultaneously in different countries, with a significant mortality rate relative to the proportion of the population infected'. The new definition removed the need for 'significant mortality'. The 'pandemic' has been fraudulent even down to the definition, but Gates demanded economy-destroying lockdowns, school closures, social distancing, mandatory masks, a 'vaccination' for every man, woman and child on the planet and severe consequences and restrictions for those that refused. Who gave him this power? The

Cult did which he serves like a little boy in short trousers doing what his daddy tells him. He and his psychopathic missus even smiled when they said that much worse was to come (what they knew was planned to come). Gates responded in the matter-of-fact way of all psychopaths to a question about the effect on the world economy of what he was doing:

Well, it won't go to zero but it will shrink. Global GDP is probably going to take the biggest hit ever [Gates was smiling as he said this] ... in my lifetime this will be the greatest economic hit. But you don't have a choice. People act as if you have a choice. People don't feel like going to the stadium when they might get infected ... People are deeply affected by seeing these stats, by knowing they could be part of the transmission chain, old people, their parents and grandparents, could be affected by this, and so you don't get to say ignore what is going on here.

There will be the ability to open up, particularly in rich countries, if things are done well over the next few months, but for the world at large normalcy only returns when we have largely vaccinated the entire population.

The man has no compassion or empathy. How could he when he's a psychopath like all Cult players? My own view is that even beyond that he is very seriously mentally ill. Look in his eyes and you can see this along with his crazy flailing arms. You don't do what he has done to the world population since the start of 2020 unless you are mentally ill and at the most extreme end of psychopathic. You especially don't do it when to you know, as we shall see, that cases and deaths from 'Covid' are fakery and a product of monumental figure massaging. 'These stats' that Gates referred to are based on a 'test' that's not testing for the 'virus' as he has known all along. He made his fortune with big Cult support as an infamously ruthless software salesman and now buys global control of 'health' (death) policy without the population he affects having any say. It's a breathtaking outrage. Gates talked about people being deeply affected by fear of 'Covid' when that was because of *him* and his global network lying to them minute-by-minute supported by a lying media that he seriously influences and funds to the tune of hundreds of millions. He's handed big sums to media operations including the BBC, NBC, Al Jazeera, Univision, *PBS NewsHour*,

ProPublica, National Journal, The Guardian, The Financial Times, The Atlantic, Texas Tribune, USA Today publisher Gannett, Washington Monthly, Le Monde, Center for Investigative Reporting, Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, National Press Foundation, International Center for Journalists, Solutions Journalism Network, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, and many more. Gates is everywhere in the ‘Covid’ hoax and the man must go to prison – or a mental facility – for the rest of his life and his money distributed to those he has taken such enormous psychopathic pleasure in crushing.

The Muscle

The Hunger Games global structure demands a police-military state – a fusion of the two into one force – which viciously imposes the will of the Cult on the population and protects the Cult from public rebellion. In that regard, too, the ‘Covid’ hoax just keeps on giving. Often unlawful, ridiculous and contradictory ‘Covid’ rules and regulations have been policed across the world by moronic automatons and psychopaths made faceless by face-nappy masks and acting like the Nazi SS and fascist blackshirts and brownshirts of Hitler and Mussolini. The smallest departure from the rules decreed by the psychos in government and their clueless gofers were jumped upon by the face-nappy fascists. Brutality against public protestors soon became commonplace even on girls, women and old people as the brave men with the batons – the Face-Nappies as I call them – broke up peaceful protests and handed out fines like confetti to people who couldn’t earn a living let alone pay hundreds of pounds for what was once an accepted human right. Robot Face-Nappies of Nottingham police in the English East Midlands fined one group £11,000 for attending a child’s birthday party. For decades I charted the transformation of law enforcement as genuine, decent officers were replaced with psychopaths and the brain dead who would happily and brutally do whatever their masters told them. Now they were let loose on the public and I would emphasise the point that none of this just happened. The step-by-step change in the dynamic between police and public was orchestrated from the shadows by

those who knew where this was all going and the same with the perceptual reframing of those in all levels of authority and official administration through ‘training courses’ by organisations such as Common Purpose which was created in the late 1980s and given a massive boost in Blair era Britain until it became a global phenomenon. Supposed public ‘servants’ began to view the population as the enemy and the same was true of the police. This was the start of the explosion of behaviour manipulation organisations and networks preparing for the all-war on the human psyche unleashed with the dawn of 2020. I will go into more detail about this later in the book because it is a core part of what is happening.

Police desecrated beauty spots to deter people gathering and arrested women for walking in the countryside alone ‘too far’ from their homes. We had arrogant, clueless sergeants in the Isle of Wight police where I live posting on Facebook what they insisted the population must do or else. A schoolmaster sergeant called Radford looked young enough for me to ask if his mother knew he was out, but he was posting what he *expected* people to do while a Sergeant Wilkinson boasted about fining lads for meeting in a McDonald’s car park where they went to get a lockdown takeaway. Wilkinson added that he had even cancelled their order. What a pair of prats these people are and yet they have increasingly become the norm among Jackboot Johnson’s Yellowshirts once known as the British police. This was the theme all over the world with police savagery common during lockdown protests in the United States, the Netherlands, and the fascist state of Victoria in Australia under its tyrannical and again moronic premier Daniel Andrews. Amazing how tyrannical and moronic tend to work as a team and the same combination could be seen across America as arrogant, narcissistic Woke governors and mayors such as Gavin Newsom (California), Andrew Cuomo (New York), Gretchen Whitmer (Michigan), Lori Lightfoot (Chicago) and Eric Garcetti (Los Angeles) did their Nazi and Stalin impressions with the full support of the compliant brutality of their enforcers in uniform as they arrested small business owners defying

fascist shutdown orders and took them to jail in ankle shackles and handcuffs. This happened to bistro owner Marlena Pavlos-Hackney in Gretchen Whitmer's fascist state of Michigan when police arrived to enforce an order by a state-owned judge for 'putting the community at risk' at a time when other states like Texas were dropping restrictions and migrants were pouring across the southern border without any 'Covid' questions at all. I'm sure there are many officers appalled by what they are ordered to do, but not nearly enough of them. If they were truly appalled they would not do it. As the months passed every opportunity was taken to have the military involved to make their presence on the streets ever more familiar and 'normal' for the longer-term goal of police-military fusion.

Another crucial element to the Hunger Games enforcement network has been encouraging the public to report neighbours and others for 'breaking the lockdown rules'. The group faced with £11,000 in fines at the child's birthday party would have been dobbed-in by a neighbour with a brain the size of a pea. The technique was most famously employed by the Stasi secret police in communist East Germany who had public informants placed throughout the population. A police chief in the UK says his force doesn't need to carry out 'Covid' patrols when they are flooded with so many calls from the public reporting other people for visiting the beach. Dorset police chief James Vaughan said people were so enthusiastic about snitching on their fellow humans they were now operating as an auxiliary arm of the police: 'We are still getting around 400 reports a week from the public, so we will respond to reports ... We won't need to be doing hotspot patrols because people are very quick to pick the phone up and tell us.' Vaughan didn't say that this is a pillar of all tyrannies of whatever complexion and the means to hugely extend the reach of enforcement while spreading distrust among the people and making them wary of doing anything that might get them reported. Those narcissistic Isle of Wight sergeants Radford and Wilkinson never fail to add a link to their Facebook posts where the public can inform on their fellow slaves.

Neither would be self-aware enough to realise they were imitating the Stasi which they might well never have heard of. Government psychologists that I will expose later laid out a policy to turn communities against each other in the same way.

A coincidence? Yep, and I can knit fog

I knew from the start of the alleged pandemic that this was a Cult operation. It presented limitless potential to rapidly advance the Cult agenda and exploit manipulated fear to demand that every man, woman and child on the planet was ‘vaccinated’ in a process never used on humans before which infuses self-replicating *synthetic* material into human cells. Remember the plan to transform the human body from a biological to a synthetic biological state. I’ll deal with the ‘vaccine’ (that’s not actually a vaccine) when I focus on the genetic agenda. Enough to say here that mass global ‘vaccination’ justified by this ‘new virus’ set alarms ringing after 30 years of tracking these people and their methods. The ‘Covid’ hoax officially beginning in China was also a big red flag for reasons I will be explaining. The agenda potential was so enormous that I could dismiss any idea that the ‘virus’ appeared naturally. Major happenings with major agenda implications never occur without Cult involvement in making them happen. My questions were twofold in early 2020 as the media began its campaign to induce global fear and hysteria: Was this alleged infectious agent released on purpose by the Cult or did it even exist at all? I then did what I always do in these situations. I sat, observed and waited to see where the evidence and information would take me. By March and early April synchronicity was strongly – and ever more so since then – pointing me in the direction of *there is no ‘virus’*. I went public on that with derision even from swathes of the alternative media that voiced a scenario that the Chinese government released the ‘virus’ in league with Deep State elements in the United States from a top-level bio-lab in Wuhan where the ‘virus’ is said to have first appeared. I looked at that possibility, but I didn’t buy it for several reasons. Deaths from the ‘virus’ did not in any way match what they

would have been with a ‘deadly bioweapon’ and it is much more effective if you sell the *illusion* of an infectious agent rather than having a real one unless you can control through injection who has it and who doesn’t. Otherwise you lose control of events. A made-up ‘virus’ gives you a blank sheet of paper on which you can make it do whatever you like and have any symptoms or mutant ‘variants’ you choose to add while a real infectious agent would limit you to what it actually does. A phantom disease allows you to have endless ludicrous ‘studies’ on the ‘Covid’ dollar to widen the perceived impact by inventing ever more ‘at risk’ groups including one study which said those who walk slowly may be almost four times more likely to die from the ‘virus’. People are in psychiatric wards for less.

A real ‘deadly bioweapon’ can take out people in the hierarchy that are not part of the Cult, but essential to its operation. Obviously they don’t want that. Releasing a real disease means you immediately lose control of it. Releasing an illusory one means you don’t. Again it’s vital that people are extra careful when dealing with what they want to hear. A bioweapon unleashed from a Chinese laboratory in collusion with the American Deep State may fit a conspiracy narrative, but is it true? Would it not be far more effective to use the excuse of a ‘virus’ to justify the real bioweapon – the ‘vaccine’? That way your disease agent does not have to be transmitted and arrives directly through a syringe. I saw a French virologist Luc Montagnier quoted in the alternative media as saying he had discovered that the alleged ‘new’ severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus , or SARS-CoV-2, was made artificially and included elements of the human immunodeficiency ‘virus’ (HIV) and a parasite that causes malaria. SARS-CoV-2 is alleged to trigger an alleged illness called Covid-19. I remembered Montagnier’s name from my research years before into claims that an HIV ‘retrovirus’ causes AIDS – claims that were demolished by Berkeley virologist Peter Duesberg who showed that no one had ever proved that HIV causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome or AIDS. Claims that become accepted as fact, publicly and medically, with no proof whatsoever are an ever-recurring story that profoundly applies to

'Covid'. Nevertheless, despite the lack of proof, Montagnier's team at the Pasteur Institute in Paris had a long dispute with American researcher Robert Gallo over which of them discovered and isolated the HIV 'virus' and with *no evidence* found it to cause AIDS. You will see later that there is also no evidence that any 'virus' causes any disease or that there is even such a thing as a 'virus' in the way it is said to exist. The claim to have 'isolated' the HIV 'virus' will be presented in its real context as we come to the shocking story – and it is a story – of SARS-CoV-2 and so will Montagnier's assertion that he identified the full SARS-CoV-2 genome.

Hoax in the making

We can pick up the 'Covid' story in 2010 and the publication by the Rockefeller Foundation of a document called 'Scenarios for the Future of Technology and International Development'. The inner circle of the Rockefeller family has been serving the Cult since John D. Rockefeller (1839-1937) made his fortune with Standard Oil. It is less well known that the same Rockefeller – the Bill Gates of his day – was responsible for establishing what is now referred to as 'Big Pharma', the global network of pharmaceutical companies that make outrageous profits dispensing scalpel and drug 'medicine' and are obsessed with pumping vaccines in ever-increasing number into as many human arms and backsides as possible. John D. Rockefeller was the driving force behind the creation of the 'education' system in the United States and elsewhere specifically designed to program the perceptions of generations thereafter. The Rockefeller family donated exceptionally valuable land in New York for the United Nations building and were central in establishing the World Health Organization in 1948 as an agency of the UN which was created from the start as a Trojan horse and stalking horse for world government. Now enter Bill Gates. His family and the Rockefellers have long been extremely close and I have seen genealogy which claims that if you go back far enough the two families fuse into the same bloodline. Gates has said that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was inspired by the Rockefeller Foundation and why not

when both are serving the same Cult? Major tax-exempt foundations are overwhelmingly criminal enterprises in which Cult assets fund the Cult agenda in the guise of 'philanthropy' while avoiding tax in the process. Cult operatives can become mega-rich in their role of front men and women for the psychopaths at the inner core and they, too, have to be psychopaths to knowingly serve such evil. Part of the deal is that a big percentage of the wealth gleaned from representing the Cult has to be spent advancing the ambitions of the Cult and hence you have the Rockefeller Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (and so many more) and people like George Soros with his global Open Society Foundations spending their billions in pursuit of global Cult control. Gates is a global public face of the Cult with his interventions in world affairs including Big Tech influence; a central role in the 'Covid' and 'vaccine' scam; promotion of the climate change shakedown; manipulation of education; geoengineering of the skies; and his food-control agenda as the biggest owner of farmland in America, his GMO promotion and through other means. As one writer said: 'Gates monopolizes or wields disproportionate influence over the tech industry, global health and vaccines, agriculture and food policy (including biopiracy and fake food), weather modification and other climate technologies, surveillance, education and media.' The almost limitless wealth secured through Microsoft and other not-allowed-to-fail ventures (including vaccines) has been ploughed into a long, long list of Cult projects designed to enslave the entire human race. Gates and the Rockefellers have been working as one unit with the Rockefeller-established World Health Organization leading global 'Covid' policy controlled by Gates through his mouth-piece Tedros. Gates became the WHO's biggest funder when Trump announced that the American government would cease its donations, but Biden immediately said he would restore the money when he took office in January, 2021. The Gates Foundation (the Cult) owns through limitless funding the world health system and the major players across the globe in the 'Covid' hoax.

Okay, with that background we return to that Rockefeller Foundation document of 2010 headed ‘Scenarios for the Future of Technology and International Development’ and its ‘imaginary’ epidemic of a virulent and deadly influenza strain which infected 20 percent of the global population and killed eight million in seven months. The Rockefeller scenario was that the epidemic destroyed economies, closed shops, offices and other businesses and led to governments imposing fierce rules and restrictions that included mandatory wearing of face masks and body-temperature checks to enter communal spaces like railway stations and supermarkets. The document predicted that even after the height of the Rockefeller-envisioned epidemic the authoritarian rule would continue to deal with further pandemics, transnational terrorism, environmental crises and rising poverty. Now you may think that the Rockefellers are our modern-day seers or alternatively, and rather more likely, that they well knew what was planned a few years further on. Fascism had to be imposed, you see, to ‘protect citizens from risk and exposure’. The Rockefeller scenario document said:

During the pandemic, national leaders around the world flexed their authority and imposed airtight rules and restrictions, from the mandatory wearing of face masks to body-temperature checks at the entries to communal spaces like train stations and supermarkets. Even after the pandemic faded, this more authoritarian control and oversight of citizens and their activities stuck and even intensified. In order to protect themselves from the spread of increasingly global problems – from pandemics and transnational terrorism to environmental crises and rising poverty – leaders around the world took a firmer grip on power.

At first, the notion of a more controlled world gained wide acceptance and approval. Citizens willingly gave up some of their sovereignty – and their privacy – to more paternalistic states in exchange for greater safety and stability. Citizens were more tolerant, and even eager, for top-down direction and oversight, and national leaders had more latitude to impose order in the ways they saw fit.

In developed countries, this heightened oversight took many forms: biometric IDs for all citizens, for example, and tighter regulation of key industries whose stability was deemed vital to national interests. In many developed countries, enforced cooperation with a suite of new regulations and agreements slowly but steadily restored both order and, importantly, economic growth.

There we have the prophetic Rockefellers in 2010 and three years later came their paper for the Global Health Summit in Beijing, China, when government representatives, the private sector, international organisations and groups met to discuss the next 100 years of 'global health'. The Rockefeller Foundation-funded paper was called 'Dreaming the Future of Health for the Next 100 Years' and more prophecy ensued as it described a dystopian future: 'The abundance of data, digitally tracking and linking people may mean the 'death of privacy' and may replace physical interaction with transient, virtual connection, generating isolation and raising questions of how values are shaped in virtual networks.' Next in the 'Covid' hoax preparation sequence came a 'table top' simulation in 2018 for another 'imaginary' pandemic of a disease called Clade X which was said to kill 900 million people. The exercise was organised by the Gates-funded Johns Hopkins University's Center for Health Security in the United States and this is the very same university that has been compiling the disgustingly and systematically erroneous global figures for 'Covid' cases and deaths. Similar Johns Hopkins health crisis scenarios have included the Dark Winter exercise in 2001 and Atlantic Storm in 2005.

Nostradamus 201

For sheer predictive genius look no further prophecy-watchers than the Bill Gates-funded Event 201 held only six weeks before the 'coronavirus pandemic' is supposed to have broken out in China and Event 201 was based on a scenario of a global 'coronavirus pandemic'. Melinda Gates, the great man's missus, told the BBC that he had 'prepared for years' for a coronavirus pandemic which told us what we already knew. Nostradamugates had predicted in a TED talk in 2015 that a pandemic was coming that would kill a lot of people and demolish the world economy. My god, the man is a machine – possibly even literally. Now here he was only weeks before the real thing funding just such a simulated scenario and involving his friends and associates at Johns Hopkins, the World Economic Forum Cult-front of Klaus Schwab, the United Nations,

Johnson & Johnson, major banks, and officials from China and the Centers for Disease Control in the United States. What synchronicity – Johns Hopkins would go on to compile the fraudulent ‘Covid’ figures, the World Economic Forum and Schwab would push the ‘Great Reset’ in response to ‘Covid’, the Centers for Disease Control would be at the forefront of ‘Covid’ policy in the United States, Johnson & Johnson would produce a ‘Covid vaccine’, and everything would officially start just weeks later in China. Spooky, eh? They were even accurate in creating a simulation of a ‘virus’ pandemic because the ‘real thing’ would also be a simulation. Event 201 was not an exercise preparing for something that might happen; it was a rehearsal for what those in control knew was *going* to happen and very shortly. Hours of this simulation were posted on the Internet and the various themes and responses mirrored what would soon be imposed to transform human society. News stories were inserted and what they said would be commonplace a few weeks later with still more prophecy perfection. Much discussion focused on the need to deal with misinformation and the ‘anti-vax movement’ which is exactly what happened when the ‘virus’ arrived – was said to have arrived – in the West.

Cult-owned social media banned criticism and exposure of the official ‘virus’ narrative and when I said there *was* no ‘virus’ in early April, 2020, I was banned by one platform after another including YouTube, Facebook and later Twitter. The mainstream broadcast media in Britain was in effect banned from interviewing me by the Tony-Blair-created government broadcasting censor Ofcom headed by career government bureaucrat Melanie Dawes who was appointed just as the ‘virus’ hoax was about to play out in January, 2020. At the same time the Ickonic media platform was using Vimeo, another ultra-Zionist-owned operation, while our own player was being created and they deleted in an instant hundreds of videos, documentaries, series and shows to confirm their unbelievable vindictiveness. We had copies, of course, and they had to be restored one by one when our player was ready. These people have no class. Sabbatian Facebook promised free advertisements for the Gates-

controlled World Health Organization narrative while deleting ‘false claims and conspiracy theories’ to stop ‘misinformation’ about the alleged coronavirus. All these responses could be seen just a short while earlier in the scenarios of Event 201. Extreme censorship was absolutely crucial for the Cult because the official story was so ridiculous and unsupportable by the evidence that it could never survive open debate and the free-flow of information and opinion. If you can’t win a debate then don’t have one is the Cult’s approach throughout history. Facebook’s little boy front man – front boy – Mark Zuckerberg equated ‘credible and accurate information’ with official sources and exposing their lies with ‘misinformation’.

Silencing those that can see

The censorship dynamic of Event 201 is now the norm with an army of narrative-supporting ‘fact-checker’ organisations whose entire reason for being is to tell the public that official narratives are true and those exposing them are lying. One of the most appalling of these ‘fact-checkers’ is called NewsGuard founded by ultra-Zionist Americans Gordon Crovitz and Steven Brill. Crovitz is a former publisher of *The Wall Street Journal*, former Executive Vice President of Dow Jones, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), and on the board of the American Association of Rhodes Scholars. The CFR and Rhodes Scholarships, named after Rothschild agent Cecil Rhodes who plundered the gold and diamonds of South Africa for his masters and the Cult, have featured widely in my books. NewsGuard don’t seem to like me for some reason – I really can’t think why – and they have done all they can to have me censored and discredited which is, to quote an old British politician, like being savaged by a dead sheep. They are, however, like all in the censorship network, very well connected and funded by organisations themselves funded by, or connected to, Bill Gates. As you would expect with anything associated with Gates NewsGuard has an offshoot called HealthGuard which ‘fights online health care hoaxes’. How very kind. Somehow the NewsGuard European Managing Director Anna-Sophie Harling, a remarkably young-

looking woman with no broadcasting experience and little hands-on work in journalism, has somehow secured a position on the ‘Content Board’ of UK government broadcast censor Ofcom. An executive of an organisation seeking to discredit dissidents of the official narratives is making decisions for the government broadcast ‘regulator’ about content?? Another appalling ‘fact-checker’ is Full Fact funded by George Soros and global censors Google and Facebook.

It’s amazing how many activists in the ‘fact-checking’, ‘anti-hate’, arena turn up in government-related positions – people like UK Labour Party activist Imran Ahmed who heads the Center for Countering Digital Hate founded by people like Morgan McSweeney, now chief of staff to the Labour Party’s hapless and useless ‘leader’ Keir Starmer. Digital Hate – which is what it really is – uses the American spelling of Center to betray its connection to a transatlantic network of similar organisations which in 2020 shapeshifted from attacking people for ‘hate’ to attacking them for questioning the ‘Covid’ hoax and the dangers of the ‘Covid vaccine’. It’s just a coincidence, you understand. This is one of Imran Ahmed’s hysterical statements: ‘I would go beyond calling anti-vaxxers conspiracy theorists to say they are an extremist group that pose a national security risk.’ No one could ever accuse this prat of understatement and he’s including in that those parents who are now against vaccines after their children were damaged for life or killed by them. He’s such a nice man. Ahmed does the rounds of the Woke media getting soft-ball questions from spineless ‘journalists’ who never ask what right he has to campaign to destroy the freedom of speech of others while he demands it for himself. There also seems to be an overrepresentation in Ofcom of people connected to the narrative-worshipping BBC. This incredible global network of narrative-support was super-vital when the ‘Covid’ hoax was played in the light of the mega-whopper lies that have to be defended from the spotlight cast by the most basic intelligence.

Setting the scene

The Cult plays the long game and proceeds step-by-step ensuring that everything is in place before major cards are played and they don't come any bigger than the 'Covid' hoax. The psychopaths can't handle events where the outcome isn't certain and as little as possible – preferably nothing – is left to chance. Politicians, government and medical officials who would follow direction were brought to illusory power in advance by the Cult web whether on the national stage or others like state governors and mayors of America. For decades the dynamic between officialdom, law enforcement and the public was changed from one of service to one of control and dictatorship. Behaviour manipulation networks established within government were waiting to impose the coming 'Covid' rules and regulations specifically designed to subdue and rewire the psyche of the people in the guise of protecting health. These included in the UK the Behavioural Insights Team part-owned by the British government Cabinet Office; the Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours (SPI-B); and a whole web of intelligence and military groups seeking to direct the conversation on social media and control the narrative. Among them are the cyberwarfare (on the people) 77th Brigade of the British military which is also coordinated through the Cabinet Office as civilian and military leadership continues to combine in what they call the Fusion Doctrine. The 77th Brigade is a British equivalent of the infamous Israeli (Sabbatian) military cyberwarfare and Internet manipulation operation Unit 8200 which I expose at length in *The Trigger*. Also carefully in place were the medical and science advisers to government – many on the payroll past or present of Bill Gates – and a whole alternative structure of unelected government stood by to take control when elected parliaments were effectively closed down once the 'Covid' card was slammed on the table. The structure I have described here and so much more was installed in every major country through the Cult networks. The top-down control hierarchy looks like this: The Cult – Cult-owned Gates – the World Health Organization and Tedros – Gates-funded or controlled chief medical officers and science 'advisers' (dictators) in each country –

political ‘leaders’ – law enforcement – The People. Through this simple global communication and enforcement structure the policy of the Cult could be imposed on virtually the entire human population so long as they acquiesced to the fascism. With everything in place it was time for the button to be pressed in late 2019/early 2020.

These were the prime goals the Cult had to secure for its will to prevail:

- 1) Locking down economies, closing all but designated ‘essential’ businesses (Cult-owned corporations were ‘essential’), and putting the population under house arrest was an imperative to destroy independent income and employment and ensure dependency on the Cult-controlled state in the Hunger Games Society. Lockdowns had to be established as the global blueprint from the start to respond to the ‘virus’ and followed by pretty much the entire world.
- 2) The global population had to be terrified into believing in a deadly ‘virus’ that didn’t actually exist so they would unquestioningly obey authority in the belief that authority must know how best to protect them and their families. Software salesman Gates would suddenly morph into the world’s health expert and be promoted as such by the Cult-owned media.
- 3) A method of testing that wasn’t testing for the ‘virus’, but was only claimed to be, had to be in place to provide the illusion of ‘cases’ and subsequent ‘deaths’ that had a very different cause to the ‘Covid-19’ that would be scribbled on the death certificate.
- 4) Because there was no ‘virus’ and the great majority testing positive with a test not testing for the ‘virus’ would have no symptoms of anything the lie had to be sold that people without symptoms (without the ‘virus’) could still pass it on to others. This was crucial to justify for the first time quarantining – house arresting – healthy people. Without this the economy-destroying lockdown of *everybody* could not have been credibly sold.
- 5) The ‘saviour’ had to be seen as a vaccine which beyond evil drug companies were working like angels of mercy to develop as quickly as possible, with all corners cut, to save the day. The public must absolutely not know that the ‘vaccine’ had nothing to do with a ‘virus’ or that the contents were ready and waiting with a very different motive long before the ‘Covid’ card was even lifted from the pack.

I said in March, 2020, that the ‘vaccine’ would have been created way ahead of the ‘Covid’ hoax which justified its use and the following December an article in the New York *Intelligencer* magazine said the Moderna ‘vaccine’ had been ‘designed’ by

January, 2020. This was ‘before China had even acknowledged that the disease could be transmitted from human to human, more than a week before the first confirmed coronavirus case in the United States’. The article said that by the time the first American death was announced a month later ‘the vaccine had already been manufactured and shipped to the National Institutes of Health for the beginning of its Phase I clinical trial’. The ‘vaccine’ was actually ‘designed’ long before that although even with this timescale you would expect the article to ask how on earth it could have been done that quickly. Instead it asked why the ‘vaccine’ had not been rolled out then and not months later. Journalism in the mainstream is truly dead. I am going to detail in the next chapter why the ‘virus’ has never existed and how a hoax on that scale was possible, but first the foundation on which the Big Lie of ‘Covid’ was built.

The test that doesn’t test

Fraudulent ‘testing’ is the bottom line of the whole ‘Covid’ hoax and was the means by which a ‘virus’ that did not exist *appeared* to exist. They could only achieve this magic trick by using a test not testing for the ‘virus’. To use a test that *was* testing for the ‘virus’ would mean that every test would come back negative given there was no ‘virus’. They chose to exploit something called the RT-PCR test invented by American biochemist Kary Mullis in the 1980s who said publicly that his PCR test … *cannot detect infectious disease*. Yes, the ‘test’ used worldwide to detect infectious ‘Covid’ to produce all the illusory ‘cases’ and ‘deaths’ compiled by Johns Hopkins and others *cannot detect infectious disease*. This fact came from the mouth of the man who invented PCR and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1993 for doing so. Sadly, and incredibly conveniently for the Cult, Mullis died in August, 2019, at the age of 74 just before his test would be fraudulently used to unleash fascism on the world. He was said to have died from pneumonia which was an irony in itself. A few months later he would have had ‘Covid-19’ on his death certificate. I say the timing of his death was convenient because had he lived Mullis, a brilliant, honest and decent man, would have been

vociferously speaking out against the use of his test to detect 'Covid' when it was never designed, or able, to do that. I know that to be true given that Mullis made the same point when his test was used to 'detect' – not detect – HIV. He had been seriously critical of the Gallo/Montagnier claim to have isolated the HIV 'virus' and shown it to cause AIDS for which Mullis said there was no evidence. AIDS is actually not a disease but a series of diseases from which people die all the time. When they die from those *same diseases* after a positive 'test' for HIV then AIDS goes on their death certificate. I think I've heard that before somewhere. Countries instigated a policy with 'Covid' that anyone who tested positive with a test not testing for the 'virus' and died of any other cause within 28 days and even longer 'Covid-19' had to go on the death certificate. Cases have come from the test that can't test for infectious disease and the deaths are those who have died of *anything* after testing positive with a test not testing for the 'virus'. I'll have much more later about the death certificate scandal.

Mullis was deeply dismissive of the now US 'Covid' star Anthony Fauci who he said was a liar who didn't know anything about anything – 'and I would say that to his face – nothing.' He said of Fauci: 'The man thinks he can take a blood sample, put it in an electron microscope and if it's got a virus in there you'll know it – he doesn't understand electron microscopy and he doesn't understand medicine and shouldn't be in a position like he's in.' That position, terrifyingly, has made him the decider of 'Covid' fascism policy on behalf of the Cult in his role as director since 1984 of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) while his record of being wrong is laughable; but being wrong, so long as it's the *right kind* of wrong, is why the Cult loves him. He'll say anything the Cult tells him to say. Fauci was made Chief Medical Adviser to the President immediately Biden took office. Biden was installed in the White House by Cult manipulation and one of his first decisions was to elevate Fauci to a position of even more control. This is a coincidence? Yes, and I identify as a flamenco dancer called Lola. How does such an incompetent criminal like Fauci remain in that

pivotal position in American health since *the 1980s*? When you serve the Cult it looks after you until you are surplus to requirements. Kary Mullis said prophetically of Fauci and his like: ‘Those guys have an agenda and it’s not an agenda we would like them to have ... they make their own rules, they change them when they want to, and Tony Fauci does not mind going on television in front of the people who pay his salary and lie directly into the camera.’ Fauci has done that almost daily since the ‘Covid’ hoax began. Lying is in Fauci’s DNA. To make the situation crystal clear about the PCR test this is a direct quote from its inventor Kary Mullis:

It [the PCR test] doesn’t tell you that you’re sick and doesn’t tell you that the thing you ended up with was really going to hurt you ...’

Ask yourself why governments and medical systems the world over have been using this very test to decide who is ‘infected’ with the SARS-CoV-2 ‘virus’ and the alleged disease it allegedly causes, ‘Covid-19’. The answer to that question will tell you what has been going on. By the way, here’s a little show-stopper – the ‘new’ SARS-CoV-2 ‘virus’ was ‘identified’ as such right from the start using ... *the PCR test not testing for the ‘virus’*. If you are new to this and find that shocking then stick around. I have hardly started yet. Even worse, other ‘tests’, like the ‘Lateral Flow Device’ (LFD), are considered so useless that they have to be *confirmed* by the PCR test! Leaked emails written by Ben Dyson, adviser to UK ‘Health’ Secretary Matt Hancock, said they were ‘dangerously unreliable’. Dyson, executive director of strategy at the Department of Health, wrote: ‘As of today, someone who gets a positive LFD result in (say) London has at best a 25 per cent chance of it being a true positive, but if it is a self-reported test potentially as low as 10 per cent (on an optimistic assumption about specificity) or as low as 2 per cent (on a more pessimistic assumption).’ These are the ‘tests’ that schoolchildren and the public are being urged to have twice a week or more and have to isolate if they get a positive. Each fake positive goes in the statistics as a ‘case’ no matter how ludicrously inaccurate and the

'cases' drive lockdown, masks and the pressure to 'vaccinate'. The government said in response to the email leak that the 'tests' were accurate which confirmed yet again what shocking bloody liars they are. The real false positive rate is *100 percent* as we'll see. In another 'you couldn't make it up' the UK government agreed to pay £2.8 billion to California's Innova Medical Group to supply the irrelevant lateral flow tests. The company's primary test-making centre is in China. Innova Medical Group, established in March, 2020, is owned by Pasaca Capital Inc, chaired by Chinese-American millionaire Charles Huang who was born in Wuhan.

How it works – and how it doesn't

The RT-PCR test, known by its full title of Polymerase chain reaction, is used across the world to make millions, even billions, of copies of a DNA/RNA genetic information sample. The process is called 'amplification' and means that a tiny sample of genetic material is amplified to bring out the detailed content. I stress that it is not testing for an infectious disease. It is simply amplifying a sample of genetic material. In the words of Kary Mullis: 'PCR is ... just a process that's used to make a whole lot of something out of something.' To emphasise the point companies that make the PCR tests circulated around the world to 'test' for 'Covid' warn on the box that it can't be used to detect 'Covid' or infectious disease and is for research purposes only. It's okay, rest for a minute and you'll be fine. This is the test that produces the 'cases' and 'deaths' that have been used to destroy human society. All those global and national medical and scientific 'experts' demanding this destruction to 'save us' KNOW that the test is not testing for the 'virus' and the cases and deaths they claim to be real are an almost unimaginable fraud. Every one of them and so many others including politicians and psychopaths like Gates and Tedros must be brought before Nuremberg-type trials and jailed for the rest of their lives. The more the genetic sample is amplified by PCR the more elements of that material become sensitive to the test and by that I don't mean sensitive for a 'virus' but for elements of the genetic material which

is naturally in the body or relates to remnants of old conditions of various kinds lying dormant and causing no disease. Once the amplification of the PCR reaches a certain level *everyone* will test positive. So much of the material has been made sensitive to the test that everyone will have some part of it in their body. Even lying criminals like Fauci have said that once PCR amplifications pass 35 cycles everything will be a false positive that cannot be trusted for the reasons I have described. I say, like many proper doctors and scientists, that 100 percent of the ‘positives’ are false, but let’s just go with Fauci for a moment.

He says that any amplification over 35 cycles will produce false positives and yet the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have recommended up to 40 cycles and the National Health Service (NHS) in Britain admitted in an internal document for staff that it was using 45 cycles of amplification. A long list of other countries has been doing the same and at least one ‘testing’ laboratory has been using 50 cycles. Have you ever heard a doctor, medical ‘expert’ or the media ask what level of amplification has been used to claim a ‘positive’. The ‘test’ comes back ‘positive’ and so you have the ‘virus’, end of story. Now we can see how the government in Tanzania could send off samples from a goat and a pawpaw fruit under human names and both came back positive for ‘Covid-19’. Tanzania president John Magufuli mocked the ‘Covid’ hysteria, the PCR test and masks and refused to import the DNA-manipulating ‘vaccine’. The Cult hated him and an article sponsored by the Bill Gates Foundation appeared in the London *Guardian* in February, 2021, headed ‘It’s time for Africa to rein in Tanzania’s anti-vaxxer president’. Well, ‘reined in’ he shortly was. Magufuli appeared in good health, but then, in March, 2021, he was dead at 61 from ‘heart failure’. He was replaced by Samia Hassan Suhulu who is connected to Klaus Schwab’s World Economic Forum and she immediately reversed Magufuli’s ‘Covid’ policy. A sample of cola tested positive for ‘Covid’ with the PCR test in Germany while American actress and singer-songwriter Erykah Badu tested positive in one nostril and negative in the other. Footballer Ronaldo called

the PCR test ‘bullshit’ after testing positive three times and being forced to quarantine and miss matches when there was nothing wrong with him. The mantra from Tedros at the World Health Organization and national governments (same thing) has been test, test, test. They know that the more tests they can generate the more fake ‘cases’ they have which go on to become ‘deaths’ in ways I am coming to. The UK government has its Operation Moonshot planned to test multiple millions every day in workplaces and schools with free tests for everyone to use twice a week at home in line with the Cult plan from the start to make testing part of life. A government advertisement for an ‘Interim Head of Asymptomatic Testing Communication’ said the job included responsibility for delivering a ‘communications strategy’ (propaganda) ‘to support the expansion of asymptomatic testing that *“normalises testing as part of everyday life”*. More tests means more fake ‘cases’, ‘deaths’ and fascism. I have heard of, and from, many people who booked a test, couldn’t turn up, and yet got a positive result through the post for a test they’d never even had. The whole thing is crazy, but for the Cult there’s method in the madness. Controlling and manipulating the level of amplification of the test means the authorities can control whenever they want the number of apparent ‘cases’ and ‘deaths’. If they want to justify more fascist lockdown and destruction of livelihoods they keep the amplification high. If they want to give the illusion that lockdowns and the ‘vaccine’ are working then they lower the amplification and ‘cases’ and ‘deaths’ will appear to fall. In January, 2021, the Cult-owned World Health Organization suddenly warned laboratories about over-amplification of the test and to lower the threshold. Suddenly headlines began appearing such as: ‘Why ARE “Covid” cases plummeting?’ This was just when the vaccine rollout was underway and I had predicted months before they would make cases appear to fall through amplification tampering when the ‘vaccine’ came. These people are so predictable.

Cow vaccines?

The question must be asked of what is on the test swabs being poked far up the nose of the population to the base of the brain? A nasal swab punctured one woman's brain and caused it to leak fluid. Most of these procedures are being done by people with little training or medical knowledge. Dr Lorraine Day, former orthopaedic trauma surgeon and Chief of Orthopaedic Surgery at San Francisco General Hospital, says the tests are really a '*vaccine*'. Cows have long been vaccinated this way. She points out that masks have to cover the nose and the mouth where it is claimed the 'virus' exists in saliva. Why then don't they take saliva from the mouth as they do with a DNA test instead of pushing a long swab up the nose towards the brain? The ethmoid bone separates the nasal cavity from the brain and within that bone is the cribriform plate. Dr Day says that when the swab is pushed up against this plate and twisted the procedure is 'depositing things back there'. She claims that among these 'things' are nanoparticles that can enter the brain. Researchers have noted that a team at the Gates-funded Johns Hopkins have designed tiny, star-shaped micro-devices that can latch onto intestinal mucosa and release drugs into the body. Mucosa is the thin skin that covers the inside surface of parts of the body such as *the nose* and mouth and produces mucus to protect them. The Johns Hopkins micro-devices are called 'theragrippers' and were 'inspired' by a parasitic worm that digs its sharp teeth into a host's intestines. Nasal swabs are also coated in the sterilisation agent ethylene oxide. The US National Cancer Institute posts this explanation on its website:

At room temperature, ethylene oxide is a flammable colorless gas with a sweet odor. It is used primarily to produce other chemicals, including antifreeze. In smaller amounts, ethylene oxide is used as a pesticide and a sterilizing agent. The ability of ethylene oxide to damage DNA makes it an effective sterilizing agent but also accounts for its cancer-causing activity.

The Institute mentions lymphoma and leukaemia as cancers most frequently reported to be associated with occupational exposure to ethylene oxide along with stomach and breast cancers. How does anyone think this is going to work out with the constant testing

regime being inflicted on adults and children at home and at school that will accumulate in the body anything that's on the swab?

Doctors know best

It is vital for people to realise that 'hero' doctors 'know' only what the Big Pharma-dominated medical authorities tell them to 'know' and if they refuse to 'know' what they are told to 'know' they are out the door. They are mostly not physicians or healers, but repeaters of the official narrative – or else. I have seen alleged professional doctors on British television make shocking statements that we are supposed to take seriously. One called 'Dr' Amir Khan, who is actually telling patients how to respond to illness, said that men could take the birth pill to 'help slow down the effects of Covid-19'. In March, 2021, another ridiculous 'Covid study' by an American doctor proposed injecting men with the female sex hormone progesterone as a 'Covid' treatment. British doctor Nighat Arif told the BBC that face coverings were now going to be part of ongoing normal. Yes, the vaccine protects you, she said (evidence?) ... but the way to deal with viruses in the community was always going to come down to hand washing, face covering and keeping a physical distance. That's not what we were told before the 'vaccine' was circulating. Arif said she couldn't imagine ever again going on the underground or in a lift without a mask. I was just thanking my good luck that she was not my doctor when she said – in March, 2021 – that if 'we are *behaving* and we are doing all the right things' she thought we could 'have our nearest and dearest around us at home ... around *Christmas* and *New Year!*' Her patronising delivery was the usual school teacher talking to six-year-olds as she repeated every government talking point and probably believed them all. If we have learned anything from the 'Covid' experience surely it must be that humanity's perception of doctors needs a fundamental rethink. NHS 'doctor' Sara Kayat told her television audience that the 'Covid vaccine' would '100 percent prevent hospitalisation and death'. Not even Big Pharma claimed that. We have to stop taking 'experts' at their word without question when so many of them are

clueless and only repeating the party line on which their careers depend. That is not to say there are not brilliant doctors – there are and I have spoken to many of them since all this began – but you won't see them in the mainstream media or quoted by the psychopaths and yes-people in government.

Remember the name – Christian Drosten

German virologist Christian Drosten, Director of Charité Institute of Virology in Berlin, became a national star after the pandemic hoax began. He was feted on television and advised the German government on 'Covid' policy. Most importantly to the wider world Drosten led a group that produced the 'Covid' testing protocol for the PCR test. What a remarkable feat given the PCR cannot test for infectious disease and even more so when you think that Drosten said that his method of testing for SARS-CoV-2 was developed 'without having virus material available'. *He developed a test for a 'virus' that he didn't have and had never seen.* Let that sink in as you survey the global devastation that came from what he did. The whole catastrophe of Drosten's 'test' was based on the alleged genetic sequence published by Chinese scientists on the Internet. We will see in the next chapter that this alleged 'genetic sequence' has never been produced by China or anyone and cannot be when there is no SARS-CoV-2. Drosten, however, doesn't seem to let little details like that get in the way. He was the lead author with Victor Corman from the same Charité Hospital of the paper 'Detection of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) by real-time PCR' published in a magazine called *Eurosurveillance*. This became known as the Corman-Drosten paper. In November, 2020, with human society devastated by the effects of the Corman-Drosten test baloney, the protocol was publicly challenged by 22 international scientists and independent researchers from Europe, the United States, and Japan. Among them were senior molecular geneticists, biochemists, immunologists, and microbiologists. They produced a document headed 'External peer review of the RTPCR test to detect SARS-Cov-2 Reveals 10 Major Flaws At The Molecular and Methodological Level: Consequences

For False-Positive Results'. The flaws in the Corman-Drosten test included the following:

- The test is non-specific because of erroneous design
- Results are enormously variable
- The test is unable to discriminate between the whole 'virus' and viral fragments
- It doesn't have positive or negative controls
- The test lacks a standard operating procedure
- It is unsupported by proper peer view

The scientists said the PCR 'Covid' testing protocol was not founded on science and they demanded the Corman-Drosten paper be retracted by *Eurosurveillance*. They said all present and previous Covid deaths, cases, and 'infection rates' should be subject to a massive retroactive inquiry. Lockdowns and travel restrictions should be reviewed and relaxed and those diagnosed through PCR to have 'Covid-19' should not be forced to isolate. Dr Kevin Corbett, a health researcher and nurse educator with a long academic career producing a stream of peer-reviewed publications at many UK universities, made the same point about the PCR test debacle. He said of the scientists' conclusions: 'Every scientific rationale for the development of that test has been totally destroyed by this paper. It's like Hiroshima/Nagasaki to the Covid test.' He said that China hadn't given them an isolated 'virus' when Drosten developed the test. Instead they had developed the test from *a sequence in a gene bank.*' Put another way ... *they made it up!* The scientists were supported in this contention by a Portuguese appeals court which ruled in November, 2020, that PCR tests are unreliable and it is unlawful to quarantine people based solely on a PCR test. The point about China not providing an isolated virus must be true when the 'virus' has never been isolated to this day and the consequences of that will become clear. Drosten and company produced this useless 'protocol' right on cue in January, 2020, just as the 'virus' was said to

be moving westward and it somehow managed to successfully pass a peer-review in 24 hours. In other words there was no peer-review for a test that would be used to decide who had 'Covid' and who didn't across the world. The Cult-created, Gates-controlled World Health Organization immediately recommended all its nearly 200 member countries to use the Drosten PCR protocol to detect 'cases' and 'deaths'. The sting was underway and it continues to this day.

So who is this Christian Drosten that produced the means through which death, destruction and economic catastrophe would be justified? His education background, including his doctoral thesis, would appear to be somewhat shrouded in mystery and his track record is dire as with another essential player in the 'Covid' hoax, the Gates-funded Professor Neil Ferguson at the Gates-funded Imperial College in London of whom more shortly. Drosten predicted in 2003 that the alleged original SARS 'virus' (SARS-1') was an epidemic that could have serious effects on economies and an effective vaccine would take at least two years to produce. Drosten's answer to every alleged 'outbreak' is a vaccine which you won't be shocked to know. What followed were just 774 official deaths worldwide and none in Germany where there were only nine cases. That is even if you believe there ever was a SARS 'virus' when the evidence is zilch and I will expand on this in the next chapter. Drosten claims to be co-discoverer of 'SARS-1' and developed a test for it in 2003. He was screaming warnings about 'swine flu' in 2009 and how it was a widespread infection far more severe than any dangers from a vaccine could be and people should get vaccinated. It would be helpful for Drosten's vocal chords if he simply recorded the words 'the virus is deadly and you need to get vaccinated' and copies could be handed out whenever the latest made-up threat comes along. Drosten's swine flu epidemic never happened, but Big Pharma didn't mind with governments spending hundreds of millions on vaccines that hardly anyone bothered to use and many who did wished they hadn't. A study in 2010 revealed that the risk of dying from swine flu, or H1N1, was no higher than that of the annual seasonal flu which is what at least most of 'it' really was as in

the case of 'Covid-19'. A media investigation into Drosten asked how with such a record of inaccuracy he could be *the* government adviser on these issues. The answer to that question is the same with Drosten, Ferguson and Fauci – they keep on giving the authorities the 'conclusions' and 'advice' they want to hear. Drosten certainly produced the goods for them in January, 2020, with his PCR protocol garbage and provided the foundation of what German internal medicine specialist Dr Claus Köhnlein, co-author of *Virus Mania*, called the 'test pandemic'. The 22 scientists in the *Eurosurveillance* challenge called out conflicts of interest within the Drosten 'protocol' group and with good reason. Olfert Landt, a regular co-author of Drosten 'studies', owns the biotech company TIB Molbiol Syntheselabor GmbH in Berlin which manufactures and sells the tests that Drosten and his mates come up with. They have done this with SARS, Enterotoxigenic E. coli (ETEC), MERS, Zika 'virus', yellow fever, and now 'Covid'. Landt told the *Berliner Zeitung* newspaper:

The testing, design and development came from the Charité [Drosten and Corman]. We simply implemented it immediately in the form of a kit. And if we don't have the virus, which originally only existed in Wuhan, we can make a synthetic gene to simulate the genome of the virus. That's what we did very quickly.

This is more confirmation that the Drosten test was designed without access to the 'virus' and only a synthetic simulation which is what SARS-CoV-2 really is – a computer-generated synthetic fiction. It's quite an enterprise they have going here. A Drosten team decides what the test for something should be and Landt's biotech company flogs it to governments and medical systems across the world. His company must have made an absolute fortune since the 'Covid' hoax began. Dr Reiner Fuellmich, a prominent German consumer protection trial lawyer in Germany and California, is on Drosten's case and that of Tedros at the World Health Organization for crimes against humanity with a class-action lawsuit being prepared in the United States and other legal action in Germany.

Why China?

Scamming the world with a ‘virus’ that doesn’t exist would seem impossible on the face of it, but not if you have control of the relatively few people that make policy decisions and the great majority of the global media. Remember it’s not about changing ‘real’ reality it’s about controlling *perception* of reality. You don’t have to make something happen you only have to make people *believe* that it’s happening. Renegade Minds understand this and are therefore much harder to swindle. ‘Covid-19’ is not a ‘real’ ‘virus’. It’s a mind virus, like a computer virus, which has infected the minds, not the bodies, of billions. It all started, publically at least, in China and that alone is of central significance. The Cult was behind the revolution led by its asset Mao Zedong, or Chairman Mao, which established the People’s Republic of China on October 1st, 1949. It should have been called The Cult’s Republic of China, but the name had to reflect the recurring illusion that vicious dictatorships are run by and for the people (see all the ‘Democratic Republics’ controlled by tyrants). In the same way we have the ‘Biden’ Democratic Republic of America officially ruled by a puppet tyrant (at least temporarily) on behalf of Cult tyrants. The creation of Mao’s merciless communist/fascist dictatorship was part of a frenzy of activity by the Cult at the conclusion of World War Two which, like the First World War, it had instigated through its assets in Germany, Britain, France, the United States and elsewhere. Israel was formed in 1948; the Soviet Union expanded its ‘Iron Curtain’ control, influence and military power with the Warsaw Pact communist alliance in 1955; the United Nations was formed in 1945 as a Cult precursor to world government; and a long list of world bodies would be established including the World Health Organization (1948), World Trade Organization (1948 under another name until 1995), International Monetary Fund (1945) and World Bank (1944). Human society was redrawn and hugely centralised in the global Problem-Reaction-Solution that was World War Two. All these changes were significant. Israel would become the headquarters of the Sabbatians

and the revolution in China would prepare the ground and control system for the events of 2019/2020.

Renegade Minds know there are no borders except for public consumption. The Cult is a seamless, borderless global entity and to understand the game we need to put aside labels like borders, nations, countries, communism, fascism and democracy. These delude the population into believing that countries are ruled within their borders by a government of whatever shade when these are mere agencies of a global power. America's illusion of democracy and China's communism/fascism are subsidiaries – vehicles – for the same agenda. We may hear about conflict and competition between America and China and on the lower levels that will be true; but at the Cult level they are branches of the same company in the way of the McDonald's example I gave earlier. I have tracked in the books over the years support by US governments of both parties for Chinese Communist Party infiltration of American society through allowing the sale of land, even military facilities, and the acquisition of American business and university influence. All this is underpinned by the infamous stealing of intellectual property and technological know-how. Cult-owned Silicon Valley corporations waive their fraudulent 'morality' to do business with human-rights-free China; Cult-controlled Disney has become China's PR department; and China in effect owns 'American' sports such as basketball which depends for much of its income on Chinese audiences. As a result any sports player, coach or official speaking out against China's horrific human rights record is immediately condemned or fired by the China-worshipping National Basketball Association. One of the first acts of China-controlled Biden was to issue an executive order telling federal agencies to stop making references to the 'virus' by the 'geographic location of its origin'. Long-time Congressman Jerry Nadler warned that criticising China, America's biggest rival, leads to hate crimes against Asian people in the United States. So shut up you bigot. China is fast closing in on Israel as a country that must not be criticised which is apt, really, given that Sabbatians control them both. The two countries have

developed close economic, military, technological and strategic ties which include involvement in China's 'Silk Road' transport and economic initiative to connect China with Europe. Israel was the first country in the Middle East to recognise the establishment of Mao's tyranny in 1950 months after it was established.

Project Wuhan – the 'Covid' Psyop

I emphasise again that the Cult plays the long game and what is happening to the world today is the result of centuries of calculated manipulation following a script to take control step-by-step of every aspect of human society. I will discuss later the common force behind all this that has spanned those centuries and thousands of years if the truth be told. Instigating the Mao revolution in China in 1949 with a 2020 'pandemic' in mind is not only how they work – the 71 years between them is really quite short by the Cult's standards of manipulation preparation. The reason for the Cult's Chinese revolution was to create a fiercely-controlled environment within which an extreme structure for human control could be incubated to eventually be unleashed across the world. We have seen this happen since the 'pandemic' emerged from China with the Chinese control-structure founded on AI technology and tyrannical enforcement sweep across the West. Until the moment when the Cult went for broke in the West and put its fascism on public display Western governments had to pay some lip-service to freedom and democracy to not alert too many people to the tyranny-in-the-making. Freedoms were more subtly eroded and power centralised with covert government structures put in place waiting for the arrival of 2020 when that smokescreen of 'freedom' could be dispensed with. The West was not able to move towards tyranny before 2020 anything like as fast as China which was created as a tyranny and had no limits on how fast it could construct the Cult's blueprint for global control. When the time came to impose that structure on the world it was the same Cult-owned Chinese communist/fascist government that provided the excuse – the 'Covid pandemic'. It was absolutely crucial to the Cult plan for the Chinese response to the 'pandemic' –

draconian lockdowns of the entire population – to become the blueprint that Western countries would follow to destroy the livelihoods and freedom of their people. This is why the Cult-owned, Gates-owned, WHO Director-General Tedros said early on:

The Chinese government is to be congratulated for the extraordinary measures it has taken to contain the outbreak. China is actually setting a new standard for outbreak response and it is not an exaggeration.

Forbes magazine said of China: ‘... those measures protected untold millions from getting the disease’. The Rockefeller Foundation ‘epidemic scenario’ document in 2010 said ‘prophetically’:

However, a few countries did fare better – China in particular. The Chinese government’s quick imposition and enforcement of mandatory quarantine for all citizens, as well as its instant and near-hermetic sealing off of all borders, saved millions of lives, stopping the spread of the virus far earlier than in other countries and enabling a swifter post-pandemic recovery.

Once again – *spooky*.

The first official story was the ‘bat theory’ or rather the bat diversion. The source of the ‘virus outbreak’ we were told was a “wet market” in Wuhan where bats and other animals are bought and eaten in horrifically unhygienic conditions. Then another story emerged through the alternative media that the ‘virus’ had been released on purpose or by accident from a BSL-4 (biosafety level 4) laboratory in Wuhan not far from the wet market. The lab was reported to create and work with lethal concoctions and bioweapons. Biosafety level 4 is the highest in the World Health Organization system of safety and containment. Renegade Minds are aware of what I call designer manipulation. The ideal for the Cult is for people to buy its prime narrative which in the opening salvos of the ‘pandemic’ was the wet market story. It knows, however, that there is now a considerable worldwide alternative media of researchers sceptical of anything governments say and they are often given a version of events in a form they can perceive as credible while misdirecting them from the real truth. In this case let them

think that the conspiracy involved is a ‘bioweapon virus’ released from the Wuhan lab to keep them from the real conspiracy – *there is no ‘virus’*. The WHO’s current position on the source of the outbreak at the time of writing appears to be: ‘We haven’t got a clue, mate.’ This is a good position to maintain mystery and bewilderment. The inner circle will know where the ‘virus’ came from – *nowhere*. The bottom line was to ensure the public believed there *was* a ‘virus’ and it didn’t much matter if they thought it was natural or had been released from a lab. The belief that there was a ‘deadly virus’ was all that was needed to trigger global panic and fear. The population was terrified into handing their power to authority and doing what they were told. They had to or they were ‘all gonna die’.

In March, 2020, information began to come my way from real doctors and scientists and my own additional research which had my intuition screaming: ‘Yes, that’s it! *There is no virus.*’ The ‘bioweapon’ was not the ‘virus’; it was the ‘vaccine’ already being talked about that would be the bioweapon. My conclusion was further enhanced by happenings in Wuhan. The ‘virus’ was said to be sweeping the city and news footage circulated of people collapsing in the street (which they’ve never done in the West with the same ‘virus’). The Chinese government was building ‘new hospitals’ in a matter of ten days to ‘cope with demand’ such was the virulent nature of the ‘virus’. Yet in what seemed like no time the ‘new hospitals’ closed – even if they even opened – and China declared itself ‘virus-free’. It was back to business as usual. This was more propaganda to promote the Chinese draconian lockdowns in the West as the way to ‘beat the virus’. Trouble was that we subsequently had lockdown after lockdown, but never business as usual. As the people of the West and most of the rest of the world were caught in an ever-worsening spiral of lockdown, social distancing, masks, isolated old people, families forced apart, and livelihood destruction, it was party-time in Wuhan. Pictures emerged of thousands of people enjoying pool parties and concerts. It made no sense until you realised there never was a ‘virus’ and the

whole thing was a Cult set-up to transform human society out of one its major global strongholds – China.

How is it possible to deceive virtually the entire world population into believing there is a deadly virus when there is not even a ‘virus’ let alone a deadly one? It’s nothing like as difficult as you would think and that’s clearly true because it happened.

Postscript: See end of book Postscript for more on the ‘Wuhan lab virus release’ story which the authorities and media were pushing heavily in the summer of 2021 to divert attention from the truth that the ‘Covid virus’ is pure invention.

CHAPTER FIVE

There is no ‘virus’

You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time

Abraham Lincoln

The greatest form of mind control is repetition. The more you repeat the same mantra of alleged ‘facts’ the more will accept them to be true. It becomes an ‘everyone knows that, mate’. If you can also censor any other version or alternative to your alleged ‘facts’ you are pretty much home and cooking.

By the start of 2020 the Cult owned the global mainstream media almost in its entirety to spew out its ‘Covid’ propaganda and ignore or discredit any other information and view. Cult-owned social media platforms in Cult-owned Silicon Valley were poised and ready to unleash a campaign of ferocious censorship to obliterate all but the official narrative. To complete the circle many demands for censorship by Silicon Valley were led by the mainstream media as ‘journalists’ became full-out enforcers for the Cult both as propagandists and censors. Part of this has been the influx of young people straight out of university who have become ‘journalists’ in significant positions. They have no experience and a headful of programmed perceptions from their years at school and university at a time when today’s young are the most perceptually-targeted generations in known human history given the insidious impact of technology. They enter the media perceptually prepared and ready to repeat the narratives of the system that programmed them to

repeat its narratives. The BBC has a truly pathetic ‘specialist disinformation reporter’ called Marianna Spring who fits this bill perfectly. She is clueless about the world, how it works and what is really going on. Her role is to discredit anyone doing the job that a proper journalist would do and system-serving hacks like Spring wouldn’t dare to do or even see the need to do. They are too busy licking the arse of authority which can never be wrong and, in the case of the BBC propaganda programme, *Panorama*, contacting payments systems such as PayPal to have a donations page taken down for a film company making documentaries questioning vaccines. Even the BBC soap opera *EastEnders* included a disgracefully biased scene in which an inarticulate white working class woman was made to look foolish for questioning the ‘vaccine’ while a well-spoken black man and Asian woman promoted the government narrative. It ticked every BBC box and the fact that the black and minority community was resisting the ‘vaccine’ had nothing to do with the way the scene was written. The BBC has become a disgusting tyrannical propaganda and censorship operation that should be defunded and disbanded and a free media take its place with a brief to stop censorship instead of demanding it. A BBC ‘interview’ with Gates goes something like: ‘Mr Gates, sir, if I can call you sir, would you like to tell our audience why you are such a great man, a wonderful humanitarian philanthropist, and why you should absolutely be allowed as a software salesman to decide health policy for approaching eight billion people? Thank you, sir, please sir.’ Propaganda programming has been incessant and merciless and when all you hear is the same story from the media, repeated by those around you who have only heard the same story, is it any wonder that people on a grand scale believe absolute mendacious garbage to be true? You are about to see, too, why this level of information control is necessary when the official ‘Covid’ narrative is so nonsensical and unsupportable by the evidence.

Structure of Deceit

The pyramid structure through which the ‘Covid’ hoax has been manifested is very simple and has to be to work. As few people as possible have to be involved with full knowledge of what they are doing – and why – or the real story would get out. At the top of the pyramid are the inner core of the Cult which controls Bill Gates who, in turn, controls the World Health Organization through his pivotal funding and his puppet Director-General mouthpiece, Tedros.

Before he was appointed Tedros was chair of the Gates-founded Global Fund to ‘fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria’, a board member of the Gates-funded ‘vaccine alliance’ GAVI, and on the board of another Gates-funded organisation. Gates owns him and picked him for a specific reason – Tedros is a crook and worse. ‘Dr’ Tedros (he’s not a medical doctor, the first WHO chief not to be) was a member of the tyrannical Marxist government of Ethiopia for decades with all its human rights abuses. He has faced allegations of corruption and misappropriation of funds and was exposed three times for covering up cholera epidemics while Ethiopia’s health minister. Tedros appointed the mass-murdering genocidal Zimbabwe dictator Robert Mugabe as a WHO goodwill ambassador for public health which, as with Tedros, is like appointing a psychopath to run a peace and love campaign. The move was so ridiculous that he had to drop Mugabe in the face of widespread condemnation. American economist David Steinman, a Nobel peace prize nominee, lodged a complaint with the International Criminal Court in The Hague over alleged genocide by Tedros when he was Ethiopia’s foreign minister. Steinman says Tedros was a ‘crucial decision maker’ who directed the actions of Ethiopia’s security forces from 2013 to 2015 and one of three officials in charge when those security services embarked on the ‘killing’ and ‘torturing’ of Ethiopians. You can see where Tedros is coming from and it’s sobering to think that he has been the vehicle for Gates and the Cult to direct the global response to ‘Covid’. Think about that. A psychopathic Cult dictates to psychopath Gates who dictates to psychopath Tedros who dictates how countries of the world must respond to a ‘Covid virus’ never scientifically shown to exist. At the same time psychopathic Cult-owned Silicon Valley information

giants like Google, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter announced very early on that they would give the Cult/Gates/Tedros/WHO version of the narrative free advertising and censor those who challenged their intelligence-insulting, mendacious story.

The next layer in the global ‘medical’ structure below the Cult, Gates and Tedros are the chief medical officers and science ‘advisers’ in each of the WHO member countries which means virtually all of them. Medical officers and arbiters of science (they’re not) then take the WHO policy and recommended responses and impose them on their country’s population while the political ‘leaders’ say they are deciding policy (they’re clearly not) by ‘following the science’ on the advice of the ‘experts’ – the same medical officers and science ‘advisers’ (dictators). In this way with the rarest of exceptions the entire world followed the same policy of lockdown, people distancing, masks and ‘vaccines’ dictated by the psychopathic Cult, psychopathic Gates and psychopathic Tedros who we are supposed to believe give a damn about the health of the world population they are seeking to enslave. That, amazingly, is all there is to it in terms of crucial decision-making. Medical staff in each country then follow like sheep the dictates of the shepherds at the top of the national medical hierarchies – chief medical officers and science ‘advisers’ who themselves follow like sheep the shepherds of the World Health Organization and the Cult. Shepherds at the national level often have major funding and other connections to Gates and his Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation which carefully hands out money like confetti at a wedding to control the entire global medical system from the WHO down.

Follow the money

Christopher Whitty, Chief Medical Adviser to the UK Government at the centre of ‘virus’ policy, a senior adviser to the government’s Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE), and Executive Board member of the World Health Organization, was gifted a grant of \$40 million by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for malaria research in Africa. The BBC described the unelected Whitty as ‘the

official who will probably have the greatest impact on our everyday lives of any individual policymaker in modern times' and so it turned out. What Gates and Tedros have said Whitty has done like his equivalents around the world. Patrick Vallance, co-chair of SAGE and the government's Chief Scientific Adviser, is a former executive of Big Pharma giant GlaxoSmithKline with its fundamental financial and business connections to Bill Gates. In September, 2020, it was revealed that Vallance owned a deferred bonus of shares in GlaxoSmithKline worth £600,000 while the company was 'developing' a 'Covid vaccine'. Move along now – nothing to see here – what could possibly be wrong with that? Imperial College in London, a major player in 'Covid' policy in Britain and elsewhere with its 'Covid-19' Response Team, is funded by Gates and has big connections to China while the now infamous Professor Neil Ferguson, the useless 'computer modeller' at Imperial College is also funded by Gates. Ferguson delivered the dramatically inaccurate excuse for the first lockdowns (much more in the next chapter). The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in the United States, another source of outrageously false 'Covid' computer models to justify lockdowns, is bankrolled by Gates who is a vehement promotor of lockdowns. America's version of Whitty and Vallance, the again now infamous Anthony Fauci, has connections to 'Covid vaccine' maker Moderna as does Bill Gates through funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Fauci is director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a major recipient of Gates money, and they are very close. Deborah Birx who was appointed White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator in February, 2020, is yet another with ties to Gates. Everywhere you look at the different elements around the world behind the coordination and decision making of the 'Covid' hoax there is Bill Gates and his money. They include the World Health Organization; Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States; National Institutes of Health (NIH) of Anthony Fauci; Imperial College and Neil Ferguson; the London School of Hygiene where Chris Whitty worked; Regulatory agencies like the UK Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)

which gave emergency approval for ‘Covid vaccines’; Wellcome Trust; GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance; the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI); Johns Hopkins University which has compiled the false ‘Covid’ figures; and the World Economic Forum. A [Nationalfile.com](#) article said:

Gates has a lot of pull in the medical world, he has a multi-million dollar relationship with Dr. Fauci, and Fauci originally took the Gates line supporting vaccines and casting doubt on [the drug hydroxychloroquine]. Coronavirus response team member Dr. Deborah Birx, appointed by former president Obama to serve as United States Global AIDS Coordinator, also sits on the board of a group that has received billions from Gates’ foundation, and Birx reportedly used a disputed Bill Gates-funded model for the White House’s Coronavirus effort. Gates is a big proponent for a population lockdown scenario for the Coronavirus outbreak.

Another funder of Moderna is the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the technology-development arm of the Pentagon and one of the most sinister organisations on earth. DARPA had a major role with the CIA covert technology-funding operation In-Q-Tel in the development of Google and social media which is now at the centre of global censorship. Fauci and Gates are extremely close and openly admit to talking regularly about ‘Covid’ policy, but then why wouldn’t Gates have a seat at every national ‘Covid’ table after his Foundation committed \$1.75 billion to the ‘fight against Covid-19’. When passed through our Orwellian Translation Unit this means that he has bought and paid for the Cult-driven ‘Covid’ response worldwide. Research the major ‘Covid’ response personnel in your own country and you will find the same Gates funding and other connections again and again. Medical and science chiefs following World Health Organization ‘policy’ sit atop a medical hierarchy in their country of administrators, doctors and nursing staff. These ‘subordinates’ are told they must work and behave in accordance with the policy delivered from the ‘top’ of the national ‘health’ pyramid which is largely the policy delivered by the WHO which is the policy delivered by Gates and the Cult. The whole ‘Covid’ narrative has been imposed on medical staff by a climate of fear although great numbers don’t even need that to comply. They do so through breathtaking levels of ignorance and

include doctors who go through life simply repeating what Big Pharma and their hierarchical masters tell them to say and believe. No wonder Big Pharma ‘medicine’ is one of the biggest killers on Planet Earth.

The same top-down system of intimidation operates with regard to the Cult Big Pharma cartel which also dictates policy through national and global medical systems in this way. The Cult and Big Pharma agendas are the same because the former controls and owns the latter. ‘Health’ administrators, doctors, and nursing staff are told to support and parrot the dictated policy or they will face consequences which can include being fired. How sad it’s been to see medical staff meekly repeating and imposing Cult policy without question and most of those who can see through the deceit are only willing to speak anonymously off the record. They know what will happen if their identity is known. This has left the courageous few to expose the lies about the ‘virus’, face masks, overwhelmed hospitals that aren’t, and the dangers of the ‘vaccine’ that isn’t a vaccine. When these medical professionals and scientists, some renowned in their field, have taken to the Internet to expose the truth their articles, comments and videos have been deleted by Cult-owned Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. What a real head-shaker to see YouTube videos with leading world scientists and highly qualified medical specialists with an added link underneath to the notorious Cult propaganda website *Wikipedia* to find the ‘facts’ about the same subject.

HIV – the ‘Covid’ trial-run

I’ll give you an example of the consequences for health and truth that come from censorship and unquestioning belief in official narratives. The story was told by PCR inventor Kary Mullis in his book *Dancing Naked in the Mind Field*. He said that in 1984 he accepted as just another scientific fact that Luc Montagnier of France’s Pasteur Institute and Robert Gallo of America’s National Institutes of Health had independently discovered that a ‘retrovirus’ dubbed HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) caused AIDS. They

were, after all, Mullis writes, specialists in retroviruses. This is how the medical and science pyramids work. Something is announced or *assumed* and then becomes an everybody-knows-that purely through repetition of the assumption as if it is fact. Complete crap becomes accepted truth with no supporting evidence and only repetition of the crap. This is how a 'virus' that doesn't exist became the 'virus' that changed the world. The HIV-AIDS fairy story became a multi-billion pound industry and the media poured out propaganda terrifying the world about the deadly HIV 'virus' that caused the lethal AIDS. By then Mullis was working at a lab in Santa Monica, California, to detect retroviruses with his PCR test in blood donations received by the Red Cross. In doing so he asked a virologist where he could find a reference for HIV being the cause of AIDS. 'You don't need a reference,' the virologist said ... '*Everybody knows it.*' Mullis said he wanted to quote a reference in the report he was doing and he said he felt a little funny about not knowing the source of such an important discovery when everyone else seemed to. The virologist suggested he cite a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on morbidity and mortality. Mullis read the report, but it only said that an organism had been identified and did not say how. The report did not identify the original scientific work. Physicians, however, *assumed* (key recurring theme) that if the CDC was convinced that HIV caused AIDS then proof must exist. Mullis continues:

I did computer searches. Neither Montagnier, Gallo, nor anyone else had published papers describing experiments which led to the conclusion that HIV probably caused AIDS. I read the papers in Science for which they had become well known as AIDS doctors, but all they had said there was that they had found evidence of a past infection by something which was probably HIV in some AIDS patients.

They found antibodies. Antibodies to viruses had always been considered evidence of past disease, not present disease. Antibodies signaled that the virus had been defeated. The patient had saved himself. There was no indication in these papers that this virus caused a disease. They didn't show that everybody with the antibodies had the disease. In fact they found some healthy people with antibodies.

Mullis asked why their work had been published if Montagnier and Gallo hadn't really found this evidence, and why had they been fighting so hard to get credit for the discovery? He says he was hesitant to write 'HIV is the probable cause of AIDS' until he found published evidence to support that. 'Tens of thousands of scientists and researchers were spending billions of dollars a year doing research based on this idea,' Mullis writes. 'The reason had to be there somewhere; otherwise these people would not have allowed their research to settle into one narrow channel of investigation.' He said he lectured about PCR at numerous meetings where people were always talking about HIV and he asked them how they knew that HIV was the cause of AIDS:

Everyone said something. Everyone had the answer at home, in the office, in some drawer. They all knew, and they would send me the papers as soon as they got back. But I never got any papers. Nobody ever sent me the news about how AIDS was caused by HIV.

Eventually Mullis was able to ask Montagnier himself about the reference proof when he lectured in San Diego at the grand opening of the University of California AIDS Research Center. Mullis says this was the last time he would ask his question without showing anger. Montagnier said he should reference the CDC report. 'I read it', Mullis said, and it didn't answer the question. 'If Montagnier didn't know the answer who the hell did?' Then one night Mullis was driving when an interview came on National Public Radio with Peter Duesberg, a prominent virologist at Berkeley and a California Scientist of the Year. Mullis says he finally understood why he could not find references that connected HIV to AIDS – *there weren't any!* No one had ever proved that HIV causes AIDS even though it had spawned a multi-billion pound global industry and the media was repeating this as fact every day in their articles and broadcasts terrifying the shit out of people about AIDS and giving the impression that a positive test for HIV (see 'Covid') was a death sentence. Duesberg was a threat to the AIDS gravy train and the agenda that underpinned it. He was therefore abused and castigated after he told the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

there was no good evidence implicating the new ‘virus’. Editors rejected his manuscripts and his research funds were deleted. Mullis points out that the CDC has defined AIDS as one of more than 30 diseases *if accompanied* by a positive result on a test that detects antibodies to HIV; but those same diseases are not defined as AIDS cases when antibodies are not detected:

If an HIV-positive woman develops uterine cancer, for example, she is considered to have AIDS. If she is not HIV positive, she simply has uterine cancer. An HIV-positive man with tuberculosis has AIDS; if he tests negative he simply has tuberculosis. If he lives in Kenya or Colombia, where the test for HIV antibodies is too expensive, he is simply presumed to have the antibodies and therefore AIDS, and therefore he can be treated in the World Health Organization’s clinic. It’s the only medical help available in some places. And it’s free, because the countries that support WHO are worried about AIDS.

Mullis accuses the CDC of continually adding new diseases (see ever more ‘Covid symptoms’) to the grand AIDS definition and of virtually doctoring the books to make it appear as if the disease continued to spread. He cites how in 1993 the CDC enormously broadened its AIDS definition and county health authorities were delighted because they received \$2,500 per year from the Federal government for every reported AIDS case. Ladies and gentlemen, I have just described, via Kary Mullis, the ‘Covid pandemic’ of 2020 and beyond. Every element is the same and it’s been pulled off in the same way by the same networks.

The ‘Covid virus’ exists? Okay – prove it. Er ... still waiting

What Kary Mullis described with regard to ‘HIV’ has been repeated with ‘Covid’. A claim is made that a new, or ‘novel’, infection has been found and the entire medical system of the world repeats that as fact exactly as they did with HIV and AIDS. No one in the mainstream asks rather relevant questions such as ‘How do you know?’ and ‘Where is your proof?’ The SARS-CoV-2 ‘virus’ and the ‘Covid-19 disease’ became an overnight ‘everybody-knows-that’. The origin could be debated and mulled over, but what you could not suggest was that ‘SARS-CoV-2’ didn’t exist. That would be

ridiculous. ‘Everybody knows’ the ‘virus’ exists. Well, I didn’t for one along with American proper doctors like Andrew Kaufman and Tom Cowan and long-time American proper journalist Jon Rappaport. We dared to pursue the obvious and simple question: ‘Where’s the evidence?’ The overwhelming majority in medicine, journalism and the general public did not think to ask that. After all, *everyone knew* there was a new ‘virus’. Everyone was saying so and I heard it on the BBC. Some would eventually argue that the ‘deadly virus’ was nothing like as deadly as claimed, but few would venture into the realms of its very existence. Had they done so they would have found that the evidence for that claim had gone AWOL as with HIV causes AIDS. In fact, not even that. For something to go AWOL it has to exist in the first place and scientific proof for a ‘SARS-Cov-2’ can be filed under nothing, nowhere and zilch.

Dr Andrew Kaufman is a board-certified forensic psychiatrist in New York State, a Doctor of Medicine and former Assistant Professor and Medical Director of Psychiatry at SUNY Upstate Medical University, and Medical Instructor of Hematology and Oncology at the Medical School of South Carolina. He also studied biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and trained in Psychiatry at Duke University. Kaufman is retired from allopathic medicine, but remains a consultant and educator on natural healing, I saw a video of his very early on in the ‘Covid’ hoax in which he questioned claims about the ‘virus’ in the absence of any supporting evidence and with plenty pointing the other way. I did everything I could to circulate his work which I felt was asking the pivotal questions that needed an answer. I can recommend an excellent pull-together interview he did with the website The Last Vagabond entitled *Dr Andrew Kaufman: Virus Isolation, Terrain Theory and Covid-19* and his website is andrewkaufmanmd.com. Kaufman is not only a forensic psychiatrist; he is forensic in all that he does. He always reads original scientific papers, experiments and studies instead of second-third-fourth-hand reports about the ‘virus’ in the media which are repeating the repeated repetition of the narrative. When he did so with the original Chinese ‘virus’ papers Kaufman

realised that there was no evidence of a ‘SARS-Cov-2’. They had never – from the start – shown it to exist and every repeat of this claim worldwide was based on the accepted existence of proof that was nowhere to be found – see Kary Mullis and HIV. Here we go again.

Let's postulate

Kaufman discovered that the Chinese authorities immediately concluded that the cause of an illness that broke out among about 200 initial patients in Wuhan was a ‘new virus’ when there were no grounds to make that conclusion. The alleged ‘virus’ was not isolated from other genetic material in their samples and then shown through a system known as Koch’s postulates to be the causative agent of the illness. The world was told that the SARS-Cov-2 ‘virus’ caused a disease they called ‘Covid-19’ which had ‘flu-like’ symptoms and could lead to respiratory problems and pneumonia. If it wasn’t so tragic it would almost be funny. *‘Flu-like’ symptoms?* *Pneumonia? Respiratory disease?* What in CHINA and particularly in Wuhan, one of the most polluted cities in the world with a resulting epidemic of respiratory disease?? Three hundred thousand people get pneumonia in China every year and there are nearly a billion cases worldwide of ‘flu-like symptoms’. These have a whole range of causes – including pollution in Wuhan – but no other possibility was credibly considered in late 2019 when the world was told there was a new and deadly ‘virus’. The global prevalence of pneumonia and ‘flu-like systems’ gave the Cult networks unlimited potential to re-diagnose these other causes as the mythical ‘Covid-19’ and that is what they did from the very start. Kaufman revealed how Chinese medical and science authorities (all subordinates to the Cult-owned communist government) took genetic material from the lungs of only a few of the first patients. The material contained their own cells, bacteria, fungi and other microorganisms living in their bodies. The only way you could prove the existence of the ‘virus’ and its responsibility for the alleged ‘Covid-19’ was to isolate the virus from all the other material – a process also known as ‘purification’ – and

then follow the postulates sequence developed in the late 19th century by German physician and bacteriologist Robert Koch which became the ‘gold standard’ for connecting an alleged causation agent to a disease:

1. The microorganism (bacteria, fungus, virus, etc.) must be present in every case of the disease and all patients must have the same symptoms. It must also *not be present in healthy individuals*.
2. The microorganism must be isolated from the host with the disease. If the microorganism is a bacteria or fungus it must be grown in a pure culture. If it is a virus, it must be purified (i.e. containing no other material except the virus particles) from a clinical sample.
3. The specific disease, with all of its characteristics, must be reproduced when the infectious agent (the purified virus or a pure culture of bacteria or fungi) is inoculated into a healthy, susceptible host.
4. The microorganism must be recoverable from the experimentally infected host as in step 2.

Not one of these criteria has been met in the case of ‘SARS-Cov-2’ and ‘Covid-19’. Not ONE. EVER. Robert Koch refers to bacteria and not viruses. What are called ‘viral particles’ are so minute (hence masks are useless by any definition) that they could only be seen after the invention of the electron microscope in the 1930s and can still only be observed through that means. American bacteriologist and virologist Thomas Milton Rivers, the so-called ‘Father of Modern Virology’ who was very significantly director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in the 1930s, developed a less stringent version of Koch’s postulates to identify ‘virus’ causation known as ‘Rivers criteria’. ‘Covid’ did not pass that process either. Some even doubt whether any ‘virus’ can be isolated from other particles containing genetic material in the Koch method. Freedom of Information requests in many countries asking for scientific proof that the ‘Covid virus’ has been purified and isolated and shown to exist have all come back with a ‘we don’t have that’ and when this happened with a request to the UK Department of Health they added this comment:

However, outside of the scope of the [Freedom of Information Act] and on a discretionary basis, the following information has been advised to us, which may be of interest. Most infectious diseases are caused by viruses, bacteria or fungi. Some bacteria or fungi have the capacity to grow on their own in isolation, for example in colonies on a petri dish. Viruses are different in that they are what we call ‘obligate pathogens’ – that is, they cannot survive or reproduce without infecting a host ...

... For some diseases, it is possible to establish causation between a microorganism and a disease by isolating the pathogen from a patient, growing it in pure culture and reintroducing it to a healthy organism. These are known as ‘Koch’s postulates’ and were developed in 1882. However, as our understanding of disease and different disease-causing agents has advanced, these are no longer the method for determining causation [Andrew Kaufman asks why in that case are there two published articles falsely claiming to satisfy Koch’s postulates].

It has long been known that viral diseases cannot be identified in this way as viruses cannot be grown in ‘pure culture’. When a patient is tested for a viral illness, this is normally done by looking for the presence of antigens, or viral genetic code in a host with molecular biology techniques [Kaufman asks how you could know the origin of these chemicals without having a pure culture for comparison].

For the record ‘antigens’ are defined so:

Invading microorganisms have antigens on their surface that the human body can recognise as being foreign – meaning not belonging to it. When the body recognises a foreign antigen, lymphocytes (white blood cells) produce antibodies, which are complementary in shape to the antigen.

Notwithstanding that this is open to question in relation to ‘SARS-CoV-2’ the presence of ‘antibodies’ can have many causes and they are found in people that are perfectly well. Kary Mullis said: ‘Antibodies ... had always been considered evidence of past disease, not present disease.’

‘Covid’ really is a computer ‘virus’

Where the UK Department of Health statement says ‘viruses’ are now ‘diagnosed’ through a ‘viral genetic code in a host with molecular biology techniques’, they mean ... *the PCR test* which its inventor said cannot test for infectious disease. They have no credible method of connecting a ‘virus’ to a disease and we will see that there is no scientific proof that any ‘virus’ causes any disease or there is any such thing as a ‘virus’ in the way that it is described. Tenacious Canadian researcher Christine Massey and her team made

some 40 Freedom of Information requests to national public health agencies in different countries asking for proof that SARS-CoV-2 has been isolated and not one of them could supply that information. Massey said of her request in Canada: 'Freedom of Information reveals Public Health Agency of Canada has no record of 'SARS-CoV-2' isolation performed by anyone, anywhere, ever.' If you accept the comment from the UK Department of Health it's because they can't isolate a 'virus'. Even so many 'science' papers claimed to have isolated the 'Covid virus' until they were questioned and had to admit they hadn't. A reply from the Robert Koch Institute in Germany was typical: 'I am not aware of a paper which purified isolated SARS-CoV-2.' So what the hell was Christian Drosten and his gang using to design the 'Covid' testing protocol that has produced all the illusory Covid' cases and 'Covid' deaths when the head of the Chinese version of the CDC admitted there was a problem right from the start in that the 'virus' had never been isolated/purified? Breathe deeply: What they are calling 'Covid' is actually created by a *computer program* i.e. *they made it up* – er, that's it. They took lung fluid, with many sources of genetic material, from one single person alleged to be infected with Covid-19 by a PCR test which they *claimed*, without clear evidence, contained a 'virus'. They used several computer programs to create a model of a theoretical virus genome sequence from more than fifty-six million small sequences of RNA, each of an unknown source, assembling them like a puzzle with no known solution. The computer filled in the gaps with sequences from bits in the gene bank to make it look like a bat SARS-like coronavirus! A wave of the magic wand and poof, an *in silico* (computer-generated) genome, a scientific fantasy, was created. UK health researcher Dr Kevin Corbett made the same point with this analogy:

... It's like giving you a few bones and saying that's your fish. It could be any fish. Not even a skeleton. Here's a few fragments of bones. That's your fish ... It's all from gene bank and the bits of the virus sequence that weren't there they made up.

They synthetically created them to fill in the blanks. That's what genetics is; it's a code. So it's ABBBCCDDDD and you're missing some what you think is EEE so you put it in. It's all

synthetic. You just manufacture the bits that are missing. This is the end result of the geneticization of virology. This is basically a computer virus.

Further confirmation came in an email exchange between British citizen journalist Frances Leader and the government's Medicines & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (the Gates-funded MHRA) which gave emergency permission for untested 'Covid vaccines' to be used. The agency admitted that the 'vaccine' is not based on an isolated 'virus', but comes from a *computer-generated model*. Frances Leader was naturally banned from Cult-owned fascist Twitter for making this exchange public. The process of creating computer-generated alleged 'viruses' is called 'in silico' or 'in silicon' – computer chips – and the term 'in silico' is believed to originate with biological experiments using only a computer in 1989. 'Vaccines' involved with 'Covid' are also produced 'in silico' or by computer not a natural process. If the original 'virus' is nothing more than a made-up computer model how can there be 'new variants' of something that never existed in the first place? They are not new 'variants'; they are new *computer models* only minutely different to the original program and designed to further terrify the population into having the 'vaccine' and submitting to fascism. You want a 'new variant'? Click, click, enter – there you go. Tell the medical profession that you have discovered a 'South African variant', 'UK variants' or a 'Brazilian variant' and in the usual HIV-causes-AIDS manner they will unquestioningly repeat it with no evidence whatsoever to support these claims. They will go on television and warn about the dangers of 'new variants' while doing nothing more than repeating what they have been told to be true and knowing that any deviation from that would be career suicide. Big-time insiders will know it's a hoax, but much of the medical community is clueless about the way they are being played and themselves play the public without even being aware they are doing so. What an interesting 'coincidence' that AstraZeneca and Oxford University were conducting 'Covid vaccine trials' in the three countries – the UK, South Africa and Brazil – where the first three 'variants' were claimed to have 'broken out'.

Here's your 'virus' – it's a unicorn

Dr Andrew Kaufman presented a brilliant analysis describing how the 'virus' was imagined into fake existence when he dissected an article published by *Nature* and written by 19 authors detailing *alleged* 'sequencing of a complete viral genome' of the 'new SARS-CoV-2 virus'. This computer-modelled *in silico* genome was used as a template for all subsequent genome sequencing experiments that resulted in the so-called variants which he said now number more than 6,000. The fake genome was constructed from more than 56 million individual short strands of RNA. Those little pieces were assembled into longer pieces by finding areas of overlapping sequences. The computer programs created over two million possible combinations from which the authors simply chose the longest one. They then compared this to a 'bat virus' and the computer 'alignment' rearranged the sequence and filled in the gaps! They called this computer-generated abomination the 'complete genome'. Dr Tom Cowan, a fellow medical author and collaborator with Kaufman, said such computer-generation constitutes scientific fraud and he makes this superb analogy:

Here is an equivalency: A group of researchers claim to have found a unicorn because they found a piece of a hoof, a hair from a tail, and a snippet of a horn. They then add that information into a computer and program it to re-create the unicorn, and they then claim this computer re-creation is the real unicorn. Of course, they had never actually seen a unicorn so could not possibly have examined its genetic makeup to compare their samples with the actual unicorn's hair, hooves and horn.

The researchers claim they decided which is the real genome of SARS-CoV-2 by 'consensus', sort of like a vote. Again, different computer programs will come up with different versions of the imaginary 'unicorn', so they come together as a group and decide which is the real imaginary unicorn.

This is how the 'virus' that has transformed the world was brought into fraudulent 'existence'. Extraordinary, yes, but as the Nazis said the bigger the lie the more will believe it. Cowan, however, wasn't finished and he went on to identify what he called the real blockbuster in the paper. He quotes this section from a paper written

by virologists and published by the CDC and then explains what it means:

Therefore, we examined the capacity of SARS-CoV-2 to infect and replicate in several common primate and human cell lines, including human adenocarcinoma cells (A549), human liver cells (HUH 7.0), and human embryonic kidney cells (HEK-293T). In addition to Vero E6 and Vero CCL81 cells. ... Each cell line was inoculated at high multiplicity of infection and examined 24h post-infection.

No CPE was observed in any of the cell lines except in Vero cells, which grew to greater than 10 to the 7th power at 24 h post-infection. In contrast, HUH 7.0 and 293T showed only modest viral replication, and A549 cells were incompatible with SARS CoV-2 infection.

Cowan explains that when virologists attempt to prove infection they have three possible 'hosts' or models on which they can test. The first was humans. Exposure to humans was generally not done for ethical reasons and has never been done with SARS-CoV-2 or any coronavirus. The second possible host was animals. Cowan said that forgetting for a moment that they never actually use purified virus when exposing animals they do use solutions that they *claim* contain the virus. Exposure to animals has been done with SARS-CoV-2 in an experiment involving mice and this is what they found: *None of the wild (normal) mice got sick*. In a group of genetically-modified mice, a statistically insignificant number lost weight and had slightly bristled fur, but they experienced nothing like the illness called 'Covid-19'. Cowan said the third method – the one they mostly rely on – is to inoculate solutions they *say* contain the virus onto a variety of tissue cultures. This process had never been shown to kill tissue *unless* the sample material was starved of nutrients and poisoned as *part of the process*. Yes, incredibly, in tissue experiments designed to show the 'virus' is responsible for killing the tissue they starve the tissue of nutrients and add toxic drugs including antibiotics and they do not have control studies to see if it's the starvation and poisoning that is degrading the tissue rather than the 'virus' they allege to be in there somewhere. You want me to pinch you? Yep, I understand. Tom Cowan said this about the whole nonsensical farce as he explains what that quote from the CDC paper really means:

The shocking thing about the above quote is that using their own methods, the virologists found that solutions containing SARS-CoV-2 – even in high amounts – were NOT, I repeat NOT, infective to any of the three human tissue cultures they tested. In plain English, this means they proved, on their terms, that this ‘new coronavirus’ is not infectious to human beings. It is ONLY infective to monkey kidney cells, and only then when you add two potent drugs (gentamicin and amphotericin), known to be toxic to kidneys, to the mix.

My friends, read this again and again. These virologists, published by the CDC, performed a clear proof, on their terms, showing that the SARS-CoV-2 virus is harmless to human beings. That is the only possible conclusion, but, unfortunately, this result is not even mentioned in their conclusion. They simply say they can provide virus stocks cultured only on monkey Vero cells, thanks for coming.

Cowan concluded: ‘If people really understood how this “science” was done, I would hope they would storm the gates and demand honesty, transparency and truth.’ Dr Michael Yeadon, former Vice President and Chief Scientific Adviser at drug giant Pfizer has been a vocal critic of the ‘Covid vaccine’ and its potential for multiple harm. He said in an interview in April, 2021, that ‘not one [vaccine] has the virus. He was asked why vaccines normally using a ‘dead’ version of a disease to activate the immune system were not used for ‘Covid’ and instead we had the synthetic methods of the ‘mRNA Covid vaccine’. Yeadon said that to do the former ‘you’d have to have some of [the virus] wouldn’t you?’ He added: ‘No-one’s got any – seriously.’ Yeadon said that surely they couldn’t have fooled the whole world for a year without having a virus, ‘but oddly enough ask around – no one’s got it’. He didn’t know why with all the ‘great labs’ around the world that the virus had not been isolated – ‘Maybe they’ve been too busy running bad PCR tests and vaccines that people don’t need.’ What is today called ‘science’ is not ‘science’ at all. Science is no longer what is, but whatever people can be manipulated to *believe* that it is. Real science has been hijacked by the Cult to dispense and produce the ‘expert scientists’ and contentions that suit the agenda of the Cult. How big-time this has happened with the ‘Covid’ hoax which is entirely based on fake science delivered by fake ‘scientists’ and fake ‘doctors’. The human-caused climate change hoax is also entirely based on fake science delivered by fake ‘scientists’ and fake ‘climate experts’. In both cases real

scientists, climate experts and doctors have their views suppressed and deleted by the Cult-owned science establishment, media and Silicon Valley. This is the ‘science’ that politicians claim to be ‘following’ and a common denominator of ‘Covid’ and climate are Cult psychopaths Bill Gates and his mate Klaus Schwab at the Gates-funded World Economic Forum. But, don’t worry, it’s all just a coincidence and absolutely nothing to worry about. Zzzzzzzz.

What is a ‘virus’ REALLY?

Dr Tom Cowan is one of many contesting the very existence of viruses let alone that they cause disease. This is understandable when there is no scientific evidence for a disease-causing ‘virus’. German virologist Dr Stefan Lanka won a landmark case in 2017 in the German Supreme Court over his contention that there is no such thing as a measles virus. He had offered a big prize for anyone who could prove there is and Lanka won his case when someone sought to claim the money. There is currently a prize of more than 225,000 euros on offer from an Isolate Truth Fund for anyone who can prove the isolation of SARS-CoV-2 and its genetic substance. Lanka wrote in an article headed ‘The Misconception Called Virus’ that scientists think a ‘virus’ is causing tissue to become diseased and degraded when in fact it is the *processes they are using* which do that – not a ‘virus’. Lanka has done an important job in making this point clear as Cowan did in his analysis of the CDC paper. Lanka says that all claims about viruses as disease-causing pathogens are wrong and based on ‘easily recognisable, understandable and verifiable misinterpretations.’ Scientists believed they were working with ‘viruses’ in their laboratories when they were really working with ‘typical particles of specific dying tissues or cells ...’ Lanka said that the tissue decaying process claimed to be caused by a ‘virus’ still happens when no alleged ‘virus’ is involved. It’s the *process* that does the damage and not a ‘virus’. The genetic sample is deprived of nutrients, removed from its energy supply through removal from the body and then doused in toxic antibiotics to remove any bacteria. He confirms again that establishment scientists do not (pinch me)

conduct control experiments to see if this is the case and if they did they would see the claims that 'viruses' are doing the damage is nonsense. He adds that during the measles 'virus' court case he commissioned an independent laboratory to perform just such a control experiment and the result was that the tissues and cells died in the exact same way as with alleged 'infected' material. This is supported by a gathering number of scientists, doctors and researchers who reject what is called 'germ theory' or the belief in the body being infected by contagious sources emitted by other people. Researchers Dawn Lester and David Parker take the same stance in their highly-detailed and sourced book *What Really Makes You Ill – Why everything you thought you knew about disease is wrong* which was recommended to me by a number of medical professionals genuinely seeking the truth. Lester and Parker say there is no provable scientific evidence to show that a 'virus' can be transmitted between people or people and animals or animals and people:

The definition also claims that viruses are the cause of many diseases, as if this has been definitively proven. But this is not the case; there is no original scientific evidence that definitively demonstrates that any virus is the cause of any disease. The burden of proof for any theory lies with those who proposed it; but none of the existing documents provides 'proof' that supports the claim that 'viruses' are pathogens.

Dr Tom Cowan employs one of his clever analogies to describe the process by which a 'virus' is named as the culprit for a disease when what is called a 'virus' is only material released by cells detoxing themselves from infiltration by chemical or radiation poisoning. The tidal wave of technologically-generated radiation in the 'smart' modern world plus all the toxic food and drink are causing this to happen more than ever. Deluded 'scientists' misread this as a gathering impact of what they wrongly label 'viruses'.

Paper can infect houses

Cowan said in an article for davidicke.com – with his tongue only mildly in his cheek – that he believed he had made a tremendous

discovery that may revolutionise science. He had discovered that small bits of paper are alive, ‘well alive-ish’, can ‘infect’ houses, and then reproduce themselves inside the house. The result was that this explosion of growth in the paper inside the house causes the house to explode, blowing it to smithereens. His evidence for this new theory is that in the past months he had carefully examined many of the houses in his neighbourhood and found almost no scraps of paper on the lawns and surrounds of the house. There was an occasional stray label, but nothing more. Then he would return to these same houses a week or so later and with a few, not all of them, particularly the old and decrepit ones, he found to his shock and surprise they were littered with stray bits of paper. He knew then that the paper had infected these houses, made copies of itself, and blew up the house. A young boy on a bicycle at one of the sites told him he had seen a demolition crew using dynamite to explode the house the previous week, but Cowan dismissed this as the idle thoughts of silly boys because ‘I was on to something big’. He was on to how ‘scientists’ mistake genetic material in the detoxifying process for something they call a ‘virus’. Cowan said of his house and paper story:

If this sounds crazy to you, it’s because it should. This scenario is obviously nuts. But consider this admittedly embellished, for effect, current viral theory that all scientists, medical doctors and virologists currently believe.

He takes the example of the ‘novel SARS-Cov2’ virus to prove the point. First they take someone with an undefined illness called ‘Covid-19’ and don’t even attempt to find any virus in their sputum. Never mind the scientists still describe how this ‘virus’, which they have not located attaches to a cell receptor, injects its genetic material, in ‘Covid’s’ case, RNA, into the cell. The RNA once inserted exploits the cell to reproduce itself and makes ‘thousands, nay millions, of copies of itself ... Then it emerges victorious to claim its next victim’:

If you were to look in the scientific literature for proof, actual scientific proof, that uniform SARS-CoV2 viruses have been properly isolated from the sputum of a sick person, that actual spike proteins could be seen protruding from the virus (which has not been found), you would find that such evidence doesn't exist.

If you go looking in the published scientific literature for actual pictures, proof, that these spike proteins or any viral proteins are ever attached to any receptor embedded in any cell membrane, you would also find that no such evidence exists. If you were to look for a video or documented evidence of the intact virus injecting its genetic material into the body of the cell, reproducing itself and then emerging victorious by budding off the cell membrane, you would find that no such evidence exists.

The closest thing you would find is electron micrograph pictures of cellular particles, possibly attached to cell debris, both of which to be seen were stained by heavy metals, a process that completely distorts their architecture within the living organism. This is like finding bits of paper stuck to the blown-up bricks, thereby proving the paper emerged by taking pieces of the bricks on its way out.

The Enders baloney

Cowan describes the 'Covid' story as being just as make-believe as his paper story and he charts back this fantasy to a Nobel Prize winner called John Enders (1897-1985), an American biomedical scientist who has been dubbed 'The Father of Modern Vaccines'. Enders is claimed to have 'discovered' the process of the viral culture which 'proved' that a 'virus' caused measles. Cowan explains how Enders did this 'by using the EXACT same procedure that has been followed by every virologist to find and characterize every new virus since 1954'. Enders took throat swabs from children with measles and immersed them in 2ml of milk. Penicillin (100u/ml) and the antibiotic streptomycin (50,g/ml) were added and the whole mix was centrifuged – rotated at high speed to separate large cellular debris from small particles and molecules as with milk and cream, for example. Cowan says that if the aim is to find little particles of genetic material ('viruses') in the snot from children with measles it would seem that the last thing you would do is mix the snot with other material – milk –that also has genetic material. 'How are you ever going to know whether whatever you found came from the snot or the milk?' He points out that streptomycin is a 'nephrotoxic' or poisonous-to-the-kidney drug. You will see the relevance of that

shortly. Cowan says that it gets worse, much worse, when Enders describes the culture medium upon which the virus 'grows': 'The culture medium consisted of bovine amniotic fluid (90%), beef embryo extract (5%), horse serum (5%), antibiotics and phenol red as an indicator of cell metabolism.' Cowan asks incredulously: 'Did he just say that the culture medium also contained fluids and tissues that are themselves rich sources of genetic material?' The genetic cocktail, or 'medium', is inoculated onto tissue and cells from rhesus monkey *kidney* tissue. This is where the importance of streptomycin comes in and currently-used antimicrobials and other drugs that are *poisonous to kidneys* and used in ALL modern viral cultures (e.g. gentamicin, streptomycin, and amphotericin). Cowan asks: 'How are you ever going to know from this witch's brew where any genetic material comes from as we now have five different sources of rich genetic material in our mix?' Remember, he says, that all genetic material, whether from monkey kidney tissues, bovine serum, milk, etc., is made from the exact same components. The same central question returns: 'How are you possibly going to know that it was the virus that killed the kidney tissue and not the toxic antibiotic and starvation rations on which you are growing the tissue?' John Enders answered the question himself – *you can't*:

A second agent was obtained from an uninoculated culture of monkey kidney cells. The cytopathic changes [death of the cells] it induced in the unstained preparations could not be distinguished with confidence from the viruses isolated from measles.

The death of the cells ('cytopathic changes') happened in exactly the same manner, whether they inoculated the kidney tissue with the measles snot or not, Cowan says. 'This is evidence that the destruction of the tissue, the very proof of viral causation of illness, was not caused by anything in the snot because they saw the same destructive effect when the snot was not even used ... the cytopathic, i.e., cell-killing, changes come from the process of the culture itself, not from any virus in any snot, period.' Enders quotes in his 1957 paper a virologist called Ruckle as reporting similar findings 'and in addition has isolated an agent from monkey kidney tissue that is so

far indistinguishable from human measles virus'. In other words, Cowan says, these particles called 'measles viruses' are simply and clearly breakdown products of the starved and poisoned tissue. For measles 'virus' see all 'viruses' including the so-called 'Covid virus'. Enders, the 'Father of Modern Vaccines', also said:

There is a potential risk in employing cultures of primate cells for the production of vaccines composed of attenuated virus, since the presence of other agents possibly latent in primate tissues cannot be definitely excluded by any known method.

Cowan further quotes from a paper published in the journal *Viruses* in May, 2020, while the 'Covid pandemic' was well underway in the media if not in reality. 'EVs' here refers to particles of genetic debris from our own tissues, such as exosomes of which more in a moment: 'The remarkable resemblance between EVs and viruses has caused quite a few problems in the studies focused on the analysis of EVs released during viral infections.' Later the paper adds that to date a reliable method that can actually guarantee a complete separation (of EVs from viruses) DOES NOT EXIST. This was published at a time when a fairy tale 'virus' was claimed in total certainty to be causing a fairy tale 'viral disease' called 'Covid-19' – a fairy tale that was already well on the way to transforming human society in the image that the Cult has worked to achieve for so long. Cowan concludes his article:

To summarize, there is no scientific evidence that pathogenic viruses exist. What we think of as 'viruses' are simply the normal breakdown products of dead and dying tissues and cells. When we are well, we make fewer of these particles; when we are starved, poisoned, suffocated by wearing masks, or afraid, we make more.

There is no engineered virus circulating and making people sick. People in laboratories all over the world are making genetically modified products to make people sick. These are called vaccines. There is no virome, no 'ecosystem' of viruses, viruses are not 8%, 50% or 100 % of our genetic material. These are all simply erroneous ideas based on the misconception called a virus.

What is 'Covid'? Load of bollocks

The background described here by Cowan and Lanka was emphasised in the first video presentation that I saw by Dr Andrew Kaufman when he asked whether the ‘Covid virus’ was in truth a natural defence mechanism of the body called ‘exosomes’. These are released by cells when in states of toxicity – see the same themes returning over and over. They are released ever more profusely as chemical and radiation toxicity increases and think of the potential effect therefore of 5G alone as its destructive frequencies infest the human energetic information field with a gathering pace (5G went online in Wuhan in 2019 as the ‘virus’ emerged). I’ll have more about this later. Exosomes transmit a warning to the rest of the body that ‘Houston, we have a problem’. Kaufman presented images of exosomes and compared them with ‘Covid’ under an electron microscope and the similarity was remarkable. They both attach to the same cell receptors (*claimed* in the case of ‘Covid’), contain the same genetic material in the form of RNA or ribonucleic acid, and both are found in ‘viral cell cultures’ with damaged or dying cells. James Hildreth MD, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Meharry Medical College at Johns Hopkins, said: ‘The virus is fully an exosome in every sense of the word.’ Kaufman’s conclusion was that there is no ‘virus’: ‘This entire pandemic is a completely manufactured crisis … there is no evidence of anyone dying from [this] illness.’ Dr Tom Cowan and Sally Fallon Morell, authors of *The Contagion Myth*, published a statement with Dr Kaufman in February, 2021, explaining why the ‘virus’ does not exist and you can read it that in full in the Appendix.

‘Virus’ theory can be traced to the ‘cell theory’ in 1858 of German physician Rudolf Virchow (1821-1920) who contended that disease originates from a single cell infiltrated by a ‘virus’. Dr Stefan Lanka said that findings and insights with respect to the structure, function and central importance of tissues in the creation of life, which were already known in 1858, comprehensively refute the cell theory. Virchow ignored them. We have seen the part later played by John Enders in the 1950s and Lanka notes that infection theories were only established as a global dogma through the policies and

eugenics of the Third Reich in Nazi Germany (creation of the same Sabbatian cult behind the ‘Covid’ hoax). Lanka said: ‘Before 1933, scientists dared to contradict this theory; after 1933, these critical scientists were silenced’. Dr Tom Cowan’s view is that ill-health is caused by too much of something, too little of something, or toxification from chemicals and radiation – not contagion. We must also highlight as a major source of the ‘virus’ theology a man still called the ‘Father of Modern Virology’ – Thomas Milton Rivers (1888-1962). There is no way given the Cult’s long game policy that it was a coincidence for the ‘Father of Modern Virology’ to be director of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research from 1937 to 1956 when he is credited with making the Rockefeller Institute a leader in ‘viral research’. Cult Rockefellers were the force behind the creation of Big Pharma ‘medicine’, established the World Health Organisation in 1948, and have long and close associations with the Gates family that now runs the WHO during the pandemic hoax through mega-rich Cult gofer and psychopath Bill Gates.

Only a Renegade Mind can see through all this bullshit by asking the questions that need to be answered, not taking ‘no’ or prevarication for an answer, and certainly not hiding from the truth in fear of speaking it. Renegade Minds have always changed the world for the better and they will change this one no matter how bleak it may currently appear to be.

CHAPTER SIX

Sequence of deceit

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything

Mark Twain

Against the background that I have laid out this far the sequence that took us from an invented 'virus' in Cult-owned China in late 2019 to the fascist transformation of human society can be seen and understood in a whole new context.

We were told that a deadly disease had broken out in Wuhan and the world media began its campaign (coordinated by behavioural psychologists as we shall see) to terrify the population into unquestioning compliance. We were shown images of Chinese people collapsing in the street which never happened in the West with what was supposed to be the same condition. In the earliest days when alleged cases and deaths were few the fear register was hysterical in many areas of the media and this would expand into the common media narrative across the world. The real story was rather different, but we were never told that. The Chinese government, one of the Cult's biggest centres of global operation, said they had discovered a new illness with flu-like and pneumonia-type symptoms in a city with such toxic air that it is overwhelmed with flu-like symptoms, pneumonia and respiratory disease. Chinese scientists said it was a new – 'novel' – coronavirus which they called Sars-Cov-2 and that it caused a disease they labelled 'Covid-19'. There was no evidence for this and the 'virus' has never to this day been isolated, purified and its genetic code established from that. It

was from the beginning a computer-generated fiction. Stories of Chinese whistleblowers saying the number of deaths was being suppressed or that the ‘new disease’ was related to the Wuhan bio-lab misdirected mainstream and alternative media into cul-de-sacs to obscure the real truth – there was no ‘virus’.

Chinese scientists took genetic material from the lung fluid of just a few people and said they had found a ‘new’ disease when this material had a wide range of content. There was no evidence for a ‘virus’ for the very reasons explained in the last two chapters. The ‘virus’ has never been shown to (a) exist and (b) cause any disease. People were diagnosed on symptoms that are so widespread in Wuhan and polluted China and with a PCR test that can’t detect infectious disease. On this farce the whole global scam was sold to the rest of the world which would also diagnose respiratory disease as ‘Covid-19’ from symptoms alone or with a PCR test not testing for a ‘virus’. Flu miraculously disappeared *worldwide* in 2020 and into 2021 as it was redesignated ‘Covid-19’. It was really the same old flu with its ‘flu-like’ symptoms attributed to ‘flu-like’ ‘Covid-19’. At the same time with very few exceptions the Chinese response of draconian lockdown and fascism was the chosen weapon to respond across the West as recommended by the Cult-owned Tedros at the Cult-owned World Health Organization run by the Cult-owned Gates. All was going according to plan. Chinese scientists – everything in China is controlled by the Cult-owned government – compared their contaminated RNA lung-fluid material with other RNA sequences and said it appeared to be just under 80 percent identical to the SARS-CoV-1 ‘virus’ claimed to be the cause of the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) ‘outbreak’ in 2003. They decreed that because of this the ‘new virus’ had to be related and they called it SARS-CoV-2. There are some serious problems with this assumption and *assumption* was all it was. Most ‘factual’ science turns out to be assumptions repeated into everyone-knows-that. A match of under 80-percent is meaningless. Dr Kaufman makes the point that there’s a 96 percent genetic correlation between humans and chimpanzees, but ‘no one would say our genetic material is part

of the chimpanzee family'. Yet the Chinese authorities were claiming that a much lower percentage, less than 80 percent, proved the existence of a new 'coronavirus'. For goodness sake human DNA is 60 percent similar to a *banana*.

You are feeling sleepy

The entire 'Covid' hoax is a global Psyop, a psychological operation to program the human mind into believing and fearing a complete fantasy. A crucial aspect of this was what *appeared* to happen in Italy. It was all very well streaming out daily images of an alleged catastrophe in Wuhan, but to the Western mind it was still on the other side of the world in a very different culture and setting. A reaction of 'this could happen to me and my family' was still nothing like as intense enough for the mind-doctors. The Cult needed a Western example to push people over that edge and it chose Italy, one of its major global locations going back to the Roman Empire. An Italian 'Covid' crisis was manufactured in a particular area called Lombardy which just happens to be notorious for its toxic air and therefore respiratory disease. Wuhan, China, *déjà vu*. An hysterical media told horror stories of Italians dying from 'Covid' in their droves and how Lombardy hospitals were being overrun by a tidal wave of desperately ill people needing treatment after being struck down by the 'deadly virus'. Here was the psychological turning point the Cult had planned. Wow, if this is happening in Italy, the Western mind concluded, this indeed could happen to me and my family. Another point is that Italian authorities responded by following the Chinese blueprint so vehemently recommended by the Cult-owned World Health Organization. They imposed fascistic lockdowns on the whole country viciously policed with the help of surveillance drones sweeping through the streets seeking out anyone who escaped from mass house arrest. Livelihoods were destroyed and psychology unravelled in the way we have witnessed since in all lockdown countries. Crucial to the plan was that Italy responded in this way to set the precedent of suspending freedom and imposing fascism in a 'Western liberal democracy'. I emphasised in an

animated video explanation on davidicke.com posted in the summer of 2020 how important it was to the Cult to expand the Chinese lockdown model across the West. Without this, and the bare-faced lie that non-symptomatic people could still transmit a ‘disease’ they didn’t have, there was no way locking down the whole population, sick and not sick, could be pulled off. At just the right time and with no evidence Cult operatives and gofers claimed that people without symptoms could pass on the ‘disease’. In the name of protecting the ‘vulnerable’ like elderly people, who lockdowns would kill by the tens of thousands, we had for the first time healthy people told to isolate as well as the sick. The great majority of people who tested positive had no symptoms because there was nothing wrong with them. It was just a trick made possible by a test not testing for the ‘virus’.

Months after my animated video the Gates-funded Professor Neil Ferguson at the Gates-funded Imperial College confirmed that I was right. He didn’t say it in those terms, naturally, but he did say it. Ferguson will enter the story shortly for his outrageously crazy ‘computer models’ that led to Britain, the United States and many other countries following the Chinese and now Italian methods of response. Put another way, following the Cult script. Ferguson said that SAGE, the UK government’s scientific advisory group which has controlled ‘Covid’ policy from the start, wanted to follow the Chinese lockdown model (while they all continued to work and be paid), but they wondered if they could possibly, in Ferguson’s words, ‘get away with it in Europe’. ‘Get away with it’? Who the hell do these moronic, arrogant people think they are? This appalling man Ferguson said that once Italy went into national lockdown they realised they, too, could mimic China:

It’s a communist one-party state, we said. We couldn’t get away with it in Europe, we thought ... and then Italy did it. And we realised we could. Behind this garbage from Ferguson is a simple fact: Doing the same as China in every country was the plan from the start and Ferguson’s ‘models’ would play a central role in achieving that. It’s just a coincidence, of course, and absolutely nothing to worry your little head about.

Oops, sorry, our mistake

Once the Italian segment of the Psyop had done the job it was designed to do a very different story emerged. Italian authorities revealed that 99 percent of those who had 'died from Covid-19' in Italy had one, two, three, or more 'co-morbidities' or illnesses and health problems that could have ended their life. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a figure of 94 percent for Americans dying of 'Covid' while having other serious medical conditions – on average two to three (some five or six) other potential causes of death. In terms of death from an unproven 'virus' I say it is 100 percent. The other one percent in Italy and six percent in the US would presumably have died from 'Covid's' flu-like symptoms with a range of other possible causes in conjunction with a test not testing for the 'virus'. Fox News reported that even more startling figures had emerged in one US county in which 410 of 422 deaths attributed to 'Covid-19' had other potentially deadly health conditions. The Italian National Health Institute said later that the average age of people dying with a 'Covid-19' diagnosis in Italy was about 81. Ninety percent were over 70 with ten percent over 90. In terms of other reasons to die some 80 percent had two or more chronic diseases with half having three or more including cardiovascular problems, diabetes, respiratory problems and cancer. Why is the phantom 'Covid-19' said to kill overwhelmingly old people and hardly affect the young? Old people continually die of many causes and especially respiratory disease which you can re-diagnose 'Covid-19' while young people die in tiny numbers by comparison and rarely of respiratory disease. Old people 'die of Covid' because they die of other things that can be redesignated 'Covid' and it really is that simple.

Flu has flown

The blueprint was in place. Get your illusory 'cases' from a test not testing for the 'virus' and redesignate other causes of death as 'Covid-19'. You have an instant 'pandemic' from something that is nothing more than a computer-generated fiction. With near-on a

billion people having ‘flu-like’ symptoms every year the potential was limitless and we can see why flu quickly and apparently miraculously disappeared *worldwide* by being diagnosed ‘Covid-19’. The painfully bloody obvious was explained away by the childlike media in headlines like this in the UK *‘Independent’*: ‘Not a single case of flu detected by Public Health England this year as Covid restrictions suppress virus’. I kid you not. The masking, social distancing and house arrest that did not make the ‘Covid virus’ disappear somehow did so with the ‘flu virus’. Even worse the article, by a bloke called Samuel Lovett, suggested that maybe the masking, sanitising and other ‘Covid’ measures should continue to keep the flu away. With a ridiculousness that disturbs your breathing (it’s ‘Covid-19’) the said Lovett wrote: ‘With widespread social distancing and mask-wearing measures in place throughout the UK, the usual routes of transmission for influenza have been blocked.’ He had absolutely no evidence to support that statement, but look at the consequences of him acknowledging the obvious. With flu not disappearing at all and only being relabelled ‘Covid-19’ he would have to contemplate that ‘Covid’ was a hoax on a scale that is hard to imagine. You need guts and commitment to truth to even go there and that’s clearly something Samuel Lovett does not have in abundance. He would never have got it through the editors anyway.

Tens of thousands die in the United States alone every winter from flu including many with pneumonia complications. CDC figures record *45 million* Americans diagnosed with flu in 2017-2018 of which 61,000 died and some reports claim 80,000. Where was the same hysteria then that we have seen with ‘Covid-19’? Some 250,000 Americans are admitted to hospital with pneumonia every year with about 50,000 cases proving fatal. About 65 million suffer respiratory disease every year and three million deaths makes this the third biggest cause of death worldwide. You only have to redesignate a portion of all these people ‘Covid-19’ and you have an instant global pandemic or the *appearance* of one. Why would doctors do this? They are told to do this and all but a few dare not refuse those who must be obeyed. Doctors in general are not researching their own

knowledge and instead take it direct and unquestioned from the authorities that own them and their careers. The authorities say they must now diagnose these symptoms ‘Covid-19’ and not flu, or whatever, and they do it. Dark suits say put ‘Covid-19’ on death certificates no matter what the cause of death and the doctors do it. Renegade Minds don’t fall for the illusion that doctors and medical staff are all highly-intelligent, highly-principled, seekers of medical truth. *Some are*, but not the majority. They are repeaters, gofers, and yes sir, no sir, purveyors of what the system demands they purvey. The ‘Covid’ con is not merely confined to diseases of the lungs. Instructions to doctors to put ‘Covid-19’ on death certificates for anyone dying of *anything* within 28 days (or much more) of a positive test not testing for the ‘virus’ opened the floodgates. The term dying *with* ‘Covid’ and not *of* ‘Covid’ was coined to cover the truth. Whether it was a *with* or an *of* they were all added to the death numbers attributed to the ‘deadly virus’ compiled by national governments and globally by the Gates-funded Johns Hopkins operation in the United States that was so involved in those ‘pandemic’ simulations. Fraudulent deaths were added to the ever-growing list of fraudulent ‘cases’ from false positives from a false test. No wonder Professor Walter Ricciardi, scientific advisor to the Italian minister of health, said after the Lombardy hysteria had done its job that ‘Covid’ death rates were due to Italy having the second oldest population in the world and to *how hospitals record deaths*:

The way in which we code deaths in our country is very generous in the sense that all the people who die in hospitals with the coronavirus are deemed to be dying of the coronavirus. On re-evaluation by the National Institute of Health, only 12 per cent of death certificates have shown a direct causality from coronavirus, while 88 per cent of patients who have died have at least one pre-morbidity – many had two or three.

This is extraordinary enough when you consider the propaganda campaign to use Italy to terrify the world, but how can they even say twelve percent were genuine when the ‘virus’ has not been shown to exist, its ‘code’ is a computer program, and diagnosis comes from a test not testing for it? As in China, and soon the world, ‘Covid-19’ in

Italy was a redesignation of diagnosis. Lies and corruption were to become the real ‘pandemic’ fuelled by a pathetically-compliant medical system taking its orders from the tiny few at the top of their national hierarchy who answered to the World Health Organization which answers to Gates and the Cult. Doctors were told – ordered – to diagnose a particular set of symptoms ‘Covid-19’ and put that on the death certificate for any cause of death if the patient had tested positive with a test not testing for the virus or had ‘Covid’ symptoms like the flu. The United States even introduced big financial incentives to manipulate the figures with hospitals receiving £4,600 from the Medicare system for diagnosing someone with regular pneumonia, \$13,000 if they made the diagnosis from the same symptoms ‘Covid-19’ pneumonia, and \$39, 000 if they put a ‘Covid’ diagnosed patient on a ventilator that would almost certainly kill them. A few – painfully and pathetically few – medical whistleblowers revealed (before Cult-owned YouTube deleted their videos) that they had been instructed to ‘let the patient crash’ and put them straight on a ventilator instead of going through a series of far less intrusive and dangerous methods as they would have done before the pandemic hoax began and the financial incentives kicked in. We are talking cold-blooded murder given that ventilators are so damaging to respiratory systems they are usually the last step before heaven awaits. Renegade Minds never fall for the belief that people in white coats are all angels of mercy and cannot be full-on psychopaths. I have explained in detail in *The Answer* how what I am describing here played out across the world coordinated by the World Health Organization through the medical hierarchies in almost every country.

Medical scientist calls it

Information about the non-existence of the ‘virus’ began to emerge for me in late March, 2020, and mushroomed after that. I was sent an email by Sir Julian Rose, a writer, researcher, and organic farming promotor, from a medical scientist friend of his in the United States. Even at that early stage in March the scientist was able to explain

how the ‘Covid’ hoax was being manipulated. He said there were no reliable tests for a specific ‘Covid-19 virus’ and nor were there any reliable agencies or media outlets for reporting numbers of actual ‘Covid-19’ cases. We have seen in the long period since then that he was absolutely right. ‘Every action and reaction to Covid-19 is based on totally flawed data and we simply cannot make accurate assessments,’ he said. Most people diagnosed with ‘Covid-19’ were showing nothing more than cold and flu-like symptoms ‘because most coronavirus strains *are* nothing more than cold/flu-like symptoms’. We had farcical situations like an 84-year-old German man testing positive for ‘Covid-19’ and his nursing home ordered to quarantine only for him to be found to have a common cold. The scientist described back then why PCR tests and what he called the ‘Mickey Mouse test kits’ were useless for what they were claimed to be identifying. ‘The idea these kits can isolate a specific virus like Covid-19 is nonsense,’ he said. Significantly, he pointed out that ‘if you want to create a totally false panic about a totally false pandemic – pick a coronavirus’. This is exactly what the Cult-owned Gates, World Economic Forum and Johns Hopkins University did with their Event 201 ‘simulation’ followed by their real-life simulation called the ‘pandemic’. The scientist said that all you had to do was select the sickest of people with respiratory-type diseases in a single location – ‘say Wuhan’ – and administer PCR tests to them. You can then claim that anyone showing ‘viral sequences’ similar to a coronavirus ‘which will inevitably be quite a few’ is suffering from a ‘new’ disease:

Since you already selected the sickest flu cases a fairly high proportion of your sample will go on to die. You can then say this ‘new’ virus has a CFR [case fatality rate] higher than the flu and use this to infuse more concern and do more tests which will of course produce more ‘cases’, which expands the testing, which produces yet more ‘cases’ and so on and so on. Before long you have your ‘pandemic’, and all you have done is use a simple test kit trick to convert the worst flu and pneumonia cases into something new that doesn’t ACTUALLY EXIST [my emphasis].

He said that you then ‘just run the same scam in other countries’ and make sure to keep the fear message running high ‘so that people

will feel panicky and less able to think critically'. The only problem to overcome was the fact *there is no* actual new deadly pathogen and only regular sick people. This meant that deaths from the 'new deadly pathogen' were going to be way too low for a real new deadly virus pandemic, but he said this could be overcome in the following ways – all of which would go on to happen:

1. You can claim this is just the beginning and more deaths are imminent [you underpin this with fantasy 'computer projections']. Use this as an excuse to quarantine everyone and then claim the quarantine prevented the expected millions of dead.
2. You can [say that people] 'minimizing' the dangers are irresponsible and bully them into not talking about numbers.
3. You can talk crap about made up numbers hoping to blind people with pseudoscience.
4. You can start testing well people (who, of course, will also likely have shreds of coronavirus [RNA] in them) and thus inflate your 'case figures' with 'asymptomatic carriers' (you will of course have to spin that to sound deadly even though any virologist knows the more symptom-less cases you have the less deadly is your pathogen).

The scientist said that if you take these simple steps 'you can have your own entirely manufactured pandemic up and running in weeks'. His analysis made so early in the hoax was brilliantly prophetic of what would actually unfold. Pulling all the information together in these recent chapters we have this is simple 1, 2, 3, of how you can delude virtually the entire human population into believing in a 'virus' that doesn't exist:

- A 'Covid case' is someone who tests positive with a test not testing for the 'virus'.
- A 'Covid death' is someone who dies of *any cause* within 28 days (or much longer) of testing positive with a test not testing for the 'virus'.
- Asymptomatic means there is nothing wrong with you, but they claim you can pass on what you don't have to justify locking

down (quarantining) healthy people in totality.

The foundations of the hoax are that simple. A study involving ten million people in Wuhan, published in November, 2020, demolished the whole lie about those without symptoms passing on the ‘virus’. They found ‘300 asymptomatic cases’ and traced their contacts to find that not one of them was detected with the ‘virus’.

‘Asymptomatic’ patients and their contacts were isolated for no less than two weeks and nothing changed. I know it’s all crap, but if you are going to claim that those without symptoms can transmit ‘the virus’ then you must produce evidence for that and they never have. Even World Health Organization official Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, head of the emerging diseases and zoonosis unit, said as early as June, 2020, that she doubted the validity of asymptomatic transmission. She said that ‘from the data we have, it still seems to be rare that an asymptomatic person actually transmits onward to a secondary individual’ and by ‘rare’ she meant that she couldn’t cite any case of asymptomatic transmission.

The Ferguson factor

The problem for the Cult as it headed into March, 2020, when the script had lockdown due to start, was that despite all the manipulation of the case and death figures they still did not have enough people alleged to have died from ‘Covid’ to justify mass house arrest. This was overcome in the way the scientist described: ‘You can claim this is just the beginning and more deaths are imminent ... Use this as an excuse to quarantine everyone and then claim the quarantine prevented the expected millions of dead.’ Enter one Professor Neil Ferguson, the Gates-funded ‘epidemiologist’ at the Gates-funded Imperial College in London. Ferguson is Britain’s Christian Drosten in that he has a dire record of predicting health outcomes, but is still called upon to advise government on the next health outcome when another ‘crisis’ comes along. This may seem to be a strange and ridiculous thing to do. Why would you keep turning for policy guidance to people who have a history of being

monumentally wrong? Ah, but it makes sense from the Cult point of view. These ‘experts’ keep on producing predictions that suit the Cult agenda for societal transformation and so it was with Neil Ferguson as he revealed his horrific (and clearly insane) computer model predictions that allowed lockdowns to be imposed in Britain, the United States and many other countries. Ferguson does not have even an A-level in biology and would appear to have no formal training in computer modelling, medicine or epidemiology, according to Derek Winton, an MSc in Computational Intelligence. He wrote an article somewhat aghast at what Ferguson did which included taking no account of respiratory disease ‘seasonality’ which means it is far worse in the winter months. Who would have thought that respiratory disease could be worse in the winter? Well, certainly not Ferguson.

The massively China-connected Imperial College and its bizarre professor provided the excuse for the long-incubated Chinese model of human control to travel westward at lightning speed. Imperial College confirms on its website that it collaborates with the Chinese Research Institute; publishes more than 600 research papers every year with Chinese research institutions; has 225 Chinese staff; 2,600 Chinese students – the biggest international group; 7,000 former students living in China which is the largest group outside the UK; and was selected for a tour by China’s President Xi Jinping during his state visit to the UK in 2015. The college takes major donations from China and describes itself as the UK’s number one university collaborator with Chinese research institutions. The China communist/fascist government did not appear phased by the woeful predictions of Ferguson and Imperial when during the lockdown that Ferguson induced the college signed a five-year collaboration deal with China tech giant Huawei that will have Huawei’s indoor 5G network equipment installed at the college’s West London tech campus along with an ‘AI cloud platform’. The deal includes Chinese sponsorship of Imperial’s Venture Catalyst entrepreneurship competition. Imperial is an example of the enormous influence the Chinese government has within British and North American

universities and research centres – and further afield. Up to 200 academics from more than a dozen UK universities are being investigated on suspicion of ‘unintentionally’ helping the Chinese government build weapons of mass destruction by ‘transferring world-leading research in advanced military technology such as aircraft, missile designs and cyberweapons’. Similar scandals have broken in the United States, but it’s all a coincidence. Imperial College serves the agenda in many other ways including the promotion of every aspect of the United Nations Agenda 21/2030 (the Great Reset) and produced computer models to show that human-caused ‘climate change’ is happening when in the real world it isn’t. Imperial College is driving the climate agenda as it drives the ‘Covid’ agenda (both Cult hoaxes) while Patrick Vallance, the UK government’s Chief Scientific Adviser on ‘Covid’, was named Chief Scientific Adviser to the UN ‘climate change’ conference known as COP26 hosted by the government in Glasgow, Scotland. ‘Covid’ and ‘climate’ are fundamentally connected.

Professor Woeful

From Imperial’s bosom came Neil Ferguson still advising government despite his previous disasters and it was announced early on that he and other key people like UK Chief Medical Adviser Chris Whitty had caught the ‘virus’ as the propaganda story was being sold. Somehow they managed to survive and we had Prime Minister Boris Johnson admitted to hospital with what was said to be a severe version of the ‘virus’ in this same period. His whole policy and demeanour changed when he returned to Downing Street. It’s a small world with these government advisors – especially in their communal connections to Gates – and Ferguson had partnered with Whitty to write a paper called ‘Infectious disease: Tough choices to reduce Ebola transmission’ which involved another scare-story that didn’t happen. Ferguson’s ‘models’ predicted that up to 150, 000 could die from ‘mad cow disease’, or BSE, and its version in sheep if it was transmitted to humans. BSE was not transmitted and instead triggered by an organophosphate pesticide used to treat a pest on

cows. Fewer than 200 deaths followed from the human form. Models by Ferguson and his fellow incompetents led to the unnecessary culling of millions of pigs, cattle and sheep in the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 which destroyed the lives and livelihoods of farmers and their families who had often spent decades building their herds and flocks. Vast numbers of these animals did not have foot and mouth and had no contact with the infection. Another ‘expert’ behind the cull was Professor Roy Anderson, a computer modeller at Imperial College specialising in the epidemiology of *human*, not animal, disease. Anderson has served on the Bill and Melinda Gates Grand Challenges in Global Health advisory board and chairs another Gates-funded organisation. Gates is everywhere.

In a precursor to the ‘Covid’ script Ferguson backed closing schools ‘for prolonged periods’ over the swine flu ‘pandemic’ in 2009 and said it would affect a third of the world population if it continued to spread at the speed he claimed to be happening. His mates at Imperial College said much the same and a news report said: ‘One of the authors, the epidemiologist and disease modeller Neil Ferguson, who sits on the World Health Organisation’s emergency committee for the outbreak, said the virus had “full pandemic potential”.’ Professor Liam Donaldson, the Chris Whitty of his day as Chief Medical Officer, said the worst case could see 30 percent of the British people infected by swine flu with 65,000 dying. Ferguson and Donaldson were indeed proved correct when at the end of the year the number of deaths attributed to swine flu was 392. The term ‘expert’ is rather liberally applied unfortunately, not least to complete idiots. Swine flu ‘projections’ were great for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) as millions rolled in for its Pandemrix influenza vaccine which led to brain damage with children most affected. The British government (taxpayers) paid out more than £60 million in compensation after GSK was given immunity from prosecution. Yet another ‘Covid’ déjà vu. Swine flu was supposed to have broken out in Mexico, but Dr Wolfgang Wodarg, a German doctor, former member of parliament and critic of the ‘Covid’ hoax, observed ‘the spread of swine flu’ in Mexico City at the time. He

said: 'What we experienced in Mexico City was a very mild flu which did not kill more than usual – which killed even fewer people than usual.' Hyping the fear against all the facts is not unique to 'Covid' and has happened many times before. Ferguson is reported to have over-estimated the projected death toll of bird flu (H5N1) by some three million-fold, but bird flu vaccine makers again made a killing from the scare. This is some of the background to the Neil Ferguson who produced the perfectly-timed computer models in early 2020 predicting that half a million people would die in Britain without draconian lockdown and 2.2 million in the United States. Politicians panicked, people panicked, and lockdowns of alleged short duration were instigated to 'flatten the curve' of cases gleaned from a test not testing for the 'virus'. I said at the time that the public could forget the 'short duration' bit. This was an agenda to destroy the livelihoods of the population and force them into mass control through dependency and there was going to be nothing 'short' about it. American researcher Daniel Horowitz described the consequences of the 'models' spewed out by Gates-funded Ferguson and Imperial College:

What led our government and the governments of many other countries into panic was a single Imperial College of UK study, funded by global warming activists, that predicted 2.2 million deaths if we didn't lock down the country. In addition, the reported 8-9% death rate in Italy scared us into thinking there was some other mutation of this virus that they got, which might have come here.

Together with the fact that we were finally testing and had the ability to actually report new cases, we thought we were headed for a death spiral. But again ... we can't flatten a curve if we don't know when the curve started.

How about it *never* started?

Giving them what they want

An investigation by German news outlet *Welt Am Sonntag* (*World on Sunday*) revealed how in March, 2020, the German government gathered together 'leading scientists from several research institutes and universities' and 'together, they were to produce a [modelling]

paper that would serve as legitimization for further tough political measures'. The Cult agenda was justified by computer modelling not based on evidence or reality; it was specifically constructed to justify the Cult demand for lockdowns all over the world to destroy the independent livelihoods of the global population. All these modellers and everyone responsible for the 'Covid' hoax have a date with a trial like those in Nuremberg after World War Two when Nazis faced the consequences of their war crimes. These corrupt-beyond-belief 'modellers' wrote the paper according to government instructions and it said that if lockdown measures were lifted then up to one million Germans would die from 'Covid-19' adding that some would die 'agonizingly at home, gasping for breath' unable to be treated by hospitals that couldn't cope. All lies. No matter – it gave the Cult all that it wanted. What did long-time government 'modeller' Neil Ferguson say? If the UK and the United States didn't lockdown half a million would die in Britain and 2.2 million Americans. Anyone see a theme here? 'Modellers' are such a crucial part of the lockdown strategy that we should look into their background and follow the money. Researcher Rosemary Frei produced an excellent article headlined 'The Modelling-paper Mafiosi'. She highlights a guy called John Edmunds, a British epidemiologist, and professor in the Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. He studied at Imperial College. Edmunds is a member of government 'Covid' advisory bodies which have been dictating policy, the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG) and the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE).

Ferguson, another member of NERVTAG and SAGE, led the way with the original 'virus' and Edmunds has followed in the 'variant' stage and especially the so-called UK or Kent variant known as the 'Variant of Concern' (VOC) B.1.1.7. He said in a co-written report for the Centre for Mathematical modelling of Infectious Diseases at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, with input from the Centre's 'Covid-19' Working Group, that there was 'a realistic

possibility that VOC B.1.1.7 is associated with an increased risk of death compared to non-VOC viruses'. Fear, fear, fear, get the vaccine, fear, fear, fear, get the vaccine. Rosemary Frei reveals that almost all the paper's authors and members of the modelling centre's 'Covid-19' Working Group receive funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and/or the associated Gates-funded Wellcome Trust. The paper was published by e-journal *Medr* ^{xiv} which only publishes papers not peer-reviewed and the journal was established by an organisation headed by Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and his missus. What a small world it is. Frei discovered that Edmunds is on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) which was established by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Klaus Schwab's Davos World Economic Forum and Big Pharma giant Wellcome. CEPI was 'launched in Davos [in 2017] to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics', according to its website. 'Our mission is to accelerate the development of vaccines against emerging infectious diseases and enable equitable access to these vaccines for people during outbreaks.' What kind people they are. Rosemary Frei reveals that Public Health England (PHE) director Susan Hopkins is an author of her organisation's non-peer-reviewed reports on 'new variants'. Hopkins is a professor of infectious diseases at London's Imperial College which is gifted tens of millions of dollars a year by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Gates-funded modelling disaster Neil Ferguson also co-authors Public Health England reports and he spoke in December, 2020, about the potential danger of the B.1.1.7. 'UK variant' promoted by Gates-funded modeller John Edmunds. When I come to the 'Covid vaccines' the 'new variants' will be shown for what they are – bollocks.

Connections, connections

All these people and modellers are lockdown-obsessed or, put another way, they demand what the Cult demands. Edmunds said in January, 2021, that to ease lockdowns too soon would be a disaster and they had to 'vaccinate much, much, much more widely than the

elderly'. Rosemary Frei highlights that Edmunds is married to Jeanne Pimenta who is described in a LinkedIn profile as director of epidemiology at GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and she held shares in the company. Patrick Vallance, co-chair of SAGE and the government's Chief Scientific Adviser, is a former executive of GSK and has a deferred bonus of shares in the company worth £600,000. GSK has serious business connections with Bill Gates and is collaborating with mRNA-'vaccine' company CureVac to make 'vaccines' for the new variants that Edmunds is talking about. GSK is planning a 'Covid vaccine' with drug giant Sanofi. Puppet Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced in the spring of 2021 that up to 60 million vaccine doses were to be made at the GSK facility at Barnard Castle in the English North East. Barnard Castle, with a population of just 6,000, was famously visited in breach of lockdown rules in April, 2020, by Johnson aide Dominic Cummings who said that he drove there 'to test his eyesight' before driving back to London. Cummings would be better advised to test his integrity – not that it would take long. The GSK facility had nothing to do with his visit then although I'm sure Patrick Vallance would have been happy to arrange an introduction and some tea and biscuits. Ruthless psychopath Gates has made yet another fortune from vaccines in collaboration with Big Pharma companies and gushes at the phenomenal profits to be made from vaccines – more than a 20-to-1 return as he told one interviewer. Gates also tweeted in December, 2019, with the foreknowledge of what was coming: 'What's next for our foundation? I'm particularly excited about what the next year could mean for one of the best buys in global health: vaccines.'

Modeller John Edmunds is a big promotor of vaccines as all these people appear to be. He's the dean of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine's Faculty of Epidemiology and Population Health which is primarily funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Gates-established and funded GAVI vaccine alliance which is the Gates vehicle to vaccinate the world. The organisation Doctors Without Borders has described GAVI as being 'aimed more at supporting drug-industry desires to promote new

products than at finding the most efficient and sustainable means for fighting the diseases of poverty'. But then that's why the psychopath Gates created it. John Edmunds said in a video that the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is involved in every aspect of vaccine development including large-scale clinical trials. He contends that mathematical modelling can show that vaccines protect individuals and society. That's on the basis of shit in and shit out, I take it. Edmunds serves on the UK Vaccine Network as does Ferguson and the government's foremost 'Covid' adviser, the grim-faced, dark-eyed Chris Whitty. The Vaccine Network says it works 'to support the government to identify and shortlist targeted investment opportunities for the most promising vaccines and vaccine technologies that will help combat infectious diseases with epidemic potential, and to address structural issues related to the UK's broader vaccine infrastructure'. Ferguson is acting Director of the Imperial College Vaccine Impact Modelling Consortium which has funding from the Bill and Melina Gates Foundation and the Gates-created GAVI 'vaccine alliance'. Anyone wonder why these characters see vaccines as the answer to every problem? Ferguson is wildly enthusiastic in his support for GAVI's campaign to vaccine children en masse in poor countries. You would expect someone like Gates who has constantly talked about the need to reduce the population to want to fund vaccines to keep more people alive. I'm sure that's why he does it. The John Edmunds London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) has a Vaccines Manufacturing Innovation Centre which develops, tests and commercialises vaccines. Rosemary Frei writes:

The vaccines centre also performs affiliated activities like combating 'vaccine hesitancy'. The latter includes the Vaccine Confidence Project. The project's stated purpose is, among other things, 'to provide analysis and guidance for early response and engagement with the public to ensure sustained confidence in vaccines and immunisation'. The Vaccine Confidence Project's director is LSHTM professor Heidi Larson. For more than a decade she's been researching how to combat vaccine hesitancy.

How the bloody hell can blokes like John Edmunds and Neil Ferguson with those connections and financial ties model 'virus' case

and death projections for the government and especially in a way that gives their paymasters like Gates exactly what they want? It's insane, but this is what you find throughout the world.

'Covid' is not dangerous, oops, wait, yes it is

Only days before Ferguson's nightmare scenario made Jackboot Johnson take Britain into a China-style lockdown to save us from a deadly 'virus' the UK government website gov.uk was reporting something very different to Ferguson on a page of official government guidance for 'high consequence infectious diseases (HCID)'. It said this about 'Covid-19':

As of 19 March 2020, COVID-19 *is no longer considered to be a high consequence infectious diseases (HCID) in the UK* [my emphasis]. The 4 nations public health HCID group made an interim recommendation in January 2020 to classify COVID-19 as an HCID. This was based on consideration of the UK HCID criteria about the virus and the disease with information available during the early stages of the outbreak.

Now that more is known about COVID-19, the public health bodies in the UK have reviewed the most up to date information about COVID-19 against the UK HCID criteria. They have determined that several features have now changed; in particular, more information is available about mortality rates (low overall), and there is now greater clinical awareness and a specific and sensitive laboratory test, the availability of which continues to increase. The Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens (ACDP) is also of the opinion that COVID-19 should no longer be classified as an HCID.

Soon after the government had been exposed for downgrading the risk they upgraded it again and everyone was back to singing from the same Cult hymn book. Ferguson and his fellow Gates clones indicated that lockdowns and restrictions would have to continue until a Gates-funded vaccine was developed. Gates said the same because Ferguson and his like were repeating the Gates script which is the Cult script. 'Flatten the curve' became an ongoing nightmare of continuing lockdowns with periods in between of severe restrictions in pursuit of destroying independent incomes and had nothing to do with protecting health about which the Cult gives not a shit. Why wouldn't Ferguson be pushing a vaccine 'solution' when he's owned by vaccine-obsessive Gates who makes a fortune from them and

when Ferguson heads the Vaccine Impact Modelling Consortium at Imperial College funded by the Gates Foundation and GAVI, the ‘vaccine alliance’, created by Gates as his personal vaccine promotion operation? To compound the human catastrophe that Ferguson’s ‘models’ did so much to create he was later exposed for breaking his own lockdown rules by having sexual liaisons with his married girlfriend Antonia Staats at his home while she was living at another location with her husband and children. Staats was a ‘climate’ activist and senior campaigner at the Soros-funded Avaaz which I wouldn’t trust to tell me that grass is green. Ferguson had to resign as a government advisor over this hypocrisy in May, 2020, but after a period of quiet he was back being quoted by the ridiculous media on the need for more lockdowns and a vaccine rollout. Other government-advising ‘scientists’ from Imperial College held the fort in his absence and said lockdown could be indefinite until a vaccine was found. The Cult script was being sung by the payrolled choir. I said there was no intention of going back to ‘normal’ when the ‘vaccine’ came because the ‘vaccine’ is part of a very different agenda that I will discuss in Human 2.0. Why would the Cult want to let the world go back to normal when destroying that normal forever was the whole point of what was happening? House arrest, closing businesses and schools through lockdown, (un)social distancing and masks all followed the Ferguson fantasy models. Again as I predicted (these people are so predictable) when the ‘vaccine’ arrived we were told that house arrest, lockdown, (un)social distancing and masks would still have to continue. I will deal with the masks in the next chapter because they are of fundamental importance.

Where's the 'pandemic'?

Any mildly in-depth assessment of the figures revealed what was really going on. Cult-funded and controlled organisations still have genuine people working within them such is the number involved. So it is with Genevieve Briand, assistant program director of the Applied Economics master’s degree program at Johns Hopkins

University. She analysed the impact that 'Covid-19' had on deaths from *all* causes in the United States using official data from the CDC for the period from early February to early September, 2020. She found that allegedly 'Covid' *related*-deaths exceeded those from heart disease which she found strange with heart disease always the biggest cause of fatalities. Her research became even more significant when she noted the sudden decline in 2020 of *all* non-'Covid' deaths: 'This trend is completely contrary to the pattern observed in all previous years ... the total decrease in deaths by other causes almost exactly equals the increase in deaths by Covid-19.' This was such a game, set and match in terms of what was happening that Johns Hopkins University deleted the article on the grounds that it 'was being used to support false and dangerous inaccuracies about the impact of the pandemic'. No – because it exposed the scam from official CDC figures and this was confirmed when those figures were published in January, 2021. Here we can see the effect of people dying from heart attacks, cancer, road accidents and gunshot wounds – *anything* – having 'Covid-19' on the death certificate along with those diagnosed from 'symptoms' who had even not tested positive with a test not testing for the 'virus'. I am not kidding with the gunshot wounds, by the way. Brenda Bock, coroner in Grand County, Colorado, revealed that two gunshot victims tested positive for the 'virus' within the previous 30 days and were therefore classified as 'Covid deaths'. Bock said: 'These two people had tested positive for Covid, but that's not what killed them. A gunshot wound is what killed them.' She said she had not even finished her investigation when the state listed the gunshot victims as deaths due to the 'virus'. The death and case figures for 'Covid-19' are an absolute joke and yet they are repeated like parrots by the media, politicians and alleged medical 'experts'. The official Cult narrative is the only show in town.

Genevieve Briand found that deaths from all causes were not exceptional in 2020 compared with previous years and a Spanish magazine published figures that said the same about Spain which was a 'Covid' propaganda hotspot at one point. *Discovery Salud*, a

health and medicine magazine, quoted government figures which showed how 17,000 *fewer* people died in Spain in 2020 than in 2019 and more than 26,000 fewer than in 2018. The age-standardised mortality rate for England and Wales when age distribution is taken into account was significantly lower in 2020 than the 1970s, 80s and 90s, and was only the ninth highest since 2000. Where is the ‘pandemic’?

Post mortems and autopsies virtually disappeared for ‘Covid’ deaths amid claims that ‘virus-infected’ bodily fluids posed a risk to those carrying out the autopsy. This was rejected by renowned German pathologist and forensic doctor Klaus Püschel who said that he and his staff had by then done 150 autopsies on ‘Covid’ patients with no problems at all. He said they were needed to know why some ‘Covid’ patients suffered blood clots and not severe respiratory infections. The ‘virus’ is, after all, called SARS or ‘severe acute respiratory syndrome’. I highlighted in the spring of 2020 this phenomenon and quoted New York intensive care doctor Cameron Kyle-Sidell who posted a soon deleted YouTube video to say that they had been told to prepare to treat an infectious disease called ‘Covid-19’, but that was not what they were dealing with. Instead he likened the lung condition of the most severely ill patients to what you would expect with cabin depressurisation in a plane at 30,000 feet or someone dropped on the top of Everest without oxygen or acclimatisation. I have never said this is not happening to a small minority of alleged ‘Covid’ patients – I am saying this is not caused by a phantom ‘contagious virus’. Indeed Kyle-Sidell said that ‘Covid-19’ was not the disease they were told was coming their way. ‘We are operating under a medical paradigm that is untrue,’ he said, and he believed they were treating the wrong disease: ‘These people are being slowly starved of oxygen.’ Patients would take off their oxygen masks in a state of fear and stress and while they were blue in the face on the brink of death. They did not look like patients dying of pneumonia. You can see why they don’t want autopsies when their virus doesn’t exist and there is another condition in some people that they don’t wish to be uncovered. I should add here that

the 5G system of millimetre waves was being rapidly introduced around the world in 2020 and even more so now as they fire 5G at the Earth from satellites. At 60 gigahertz within the 5G range that frequency interacts with the oxygen molecule and stops people breathing in sufficient oxygen to be absorbed into the bloodstream. They are installing 5G in schools and hospitals. The world is not mad or anything. 5G can cause major changes to the lungs and blood as I detail in *The Answer* and these consequences are labelled 'Covid-19', the alleged symptoms of which can be caused by 5G and other electromagnetic frequencies as cells respond to radiation poisoning.

The 'Covid death' scam

Dr Scott Jensen, a Minnesota state senator and medical doctor, exposed 'Covid' Medicare payment incentives to hospitals and death certificate manipulation. He said he was sent a seven-page document by the US Department of Health 'coaching' him on how to fill out death certificates which had never happened before. The document said that he didn't need to have a laboratory test for 'Covid-19' to put that on the death certificate and that shocked him when death certificates are supposed to be about facts. Jensen described how doctors had been 'encouraged, if not pressured' to make a diagnosis of 'Covid-19' if they thought it was probable or '*presumed*'. No positive test was necessary – not that this would have mattered anyway. He said doctors were told to diagnose 'Covid' by symptoms when these were the same as colds, allergies, other respiratory problems, and certainly with influenza which 'disappeared' in the 'Covid' era. A common sniffle was enough to get the dreaded verdict. Ontario authorities decreed that a single care home resident with *one* symptom from a long list must lead to the isolation of the entire home. Other courageous doctors like Jensen made the same point about death figure manipulation and how deaths by other causes were falling while 'Covid-19 deaths' were rising at the same rate due to re-diagnosis. Their videos rarely survive long on YouTube with its Cult-supporting algorithms courtesy of CEO Susan Wojcicki and her bosses at Google. Figure-tampering was so glaring

and ubiquitous that even officials were letting it slip or outright saying it. UK chief scientific adviser Patrick Vallance said on one occasion that ‘Covid’ on the death certificate doesn’t mean ‘Covid’ was the cause of death (so why the hell is it there?) and we had the rare sight of a BBC reporter telling the truth when she said: ‘Someone could be successfully treated for Covid, in say April, discharged, and then in June, get run over by a bus and die ... That person would still be counted as a Covid death in England.’ Yet the BBC and the rest of the world media went on repeating the case and death figures as if they were real. Illinois Public Health Director Dr Ngozi Ezike revealed the deceit while her bosses must have been clenching their buttocks:

If you were in a hospice and given a few weeks to live and you were then found to have Covid that would be counted as a Covid death. [There might be] a clear alternate cause, but it is still listed as a Covid death. So everyone listed as a Covid death doesn’t mean that was the cause of the death, but that they had Covid at the time of death.

Yes, a ‘Covid virus’ never shown to exist and tested for with a test not testing for the ‘virus’. In the first period of the pandemic hoax through the spring of 2020 the process began of designating almost everything a ‘Covid’ death and this has continued ever since. I sat in a restaurant one night listening to a loud conversation on the next table where a family was discussing in bewilderment how a relative who had no symptoms of ‘Covid’, and had died of a long-term problem, could have been diagnosed a death by the ‘virus’. I could understand their bewilderment. If they read this book they will know why this medical fraud has been perpetrated the world over.

Some media truth shock

The media ignored the evidence of death certificate fraud until eventually one columnist did speak out when she saw it first-hand. Bel Mooney is a long-time national newspaper journalist in Britain currently working for the *Daily Mail*. Her article on February 19th, 2021, carried this headline: ‘My dad Ted passed three Covid tests

and died of a chronic illness yet he's officially one of Britain's 120,000 victims of the virus and is far from alone ... so how many more are there?' She told how her 99-year-old father was in a care home with a long-standing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and vascular dementia. Maybe, but he was still aware enough to tell her from the start that there was no 'virus' and he refused the 'vaccine' for that reason. His death was not unexpected given his chronic health problems and Mooney said she was shocked to find that 'Covid-19' was declared the cause of death on his death certificate. She said this was a 'bizarre and unacceptable untruth' for a man with long-time health problems who had tested negative twice at the home for the 'virus'. I was also shocked by this story although not by what she said. I had been highlighting the death certificate manipulation for ten months. It was the confirmation that a professional full-time journalist only realised this was going on when it affected her directly and neither did she know that whether her dad tested positive or negative was irrelevant with the test not testing for the 'virus'. Where had she been? She said she did not believe in 'conspiracy theories' without knowing I'm sure that this and 'conspiracy theorists' were terms put into widespread circulation by the CIA in the 1960s to discredit those who did not accept the ridiculous official story of the Kennedy assassination. A blanket statement of 'I don't believe in conspiracy theories' is always bizarre. The dictionary definition of the term alone means the world is drowning in conspiracies. What she said was even more daft when her dad had just been affected by the 'Covid' conspiracy. Why else does she think that 'Covid-19' was going on the death certificates of people who died of something else?

To be fair once she saw from personal experience what was happening she didn't mince words. Mooney was called by the care home on the morning of February 9th to be told her father had died in his sleep. When she asked for the official cause of death what came back was 'Covid-19'. Mooney challenged this and was told there had been deaths from Covid on the dementia floor (confirmed by a test not testing for the 'virus') so they considered it 'reasonable

to assume'. 'But doctor,' Mooney rightly protested, 'an assumption isn't a diagnosis.' She said she didn't blame the perfectly decent and sympathetic doctor – 'he was just doing his job'. Sorry, but that's *bullshit*. He wasn't doing his job at all. He was putting a false cause of death on the death certificate and that is a criminal offence for which he should be brought to account and the same with the millions of doctors worldwide who have done the same. They were not doing their job they were following orders and that must not wash at new Nuremberg trials any more than it did at the first ones. Mooney's doctor was 'assuming' (presuming) as he was told to, but 'just following orders' makes no difference to his actions. A doctor's job is to serve the patient and the truth, not follow orders, but that's what they have done all over the world and played a central part in making the 'Covid' hoax possible with all its catastrophic consequences for humanity. Shame on them and they must answer for their actions. Mooney said her disquiet worsened when she registered her father's death by telephone and was told by the registrar there had been very many other cases like hers where 'the deceased' had not tested positive for 'Covid' yet it was recorded as the cause of death. The test may not matter, but those involved at their level *think* it matters and it shows a callous disregard for accurate diagnosis. The pressure to do this is coming from the top of the national 'health' pyramids which in turn obey the World Health Organization which obeys Gates and the Cult. Mooney said the registrar agreed that this must distort the national figures adding that 'the strangest thing is that every winter we record countless deaths from flu, and this winter there have been none. Not one!' She asked if the registrar thought deaths from flu were being misdiagnosed and lumped together with 'Covid' deaths. The answer was a 'puzzled yes'. Mooney said that the funeral director said the same about 'Covid' deaths which had nothing to do with 'Covid'. They had lost count of the number of families upset by this and other funeral companies in different countries have had the same experience. Mooney wrote:

The nightly shroud-waving and shocking close-ups of pain imposed on us by the TV news bewildered and terrified the population into eager compliance with lockdowns. We were invited to ‘save the NHS’ and to grieve for strangers – the real-life loved ones behind those shocking death counts. Why would the public imagine what I now fear, namely that the way Covid-19 death statistics are compiled might make the numbers seem greater than they are?

Oh, just a little bit – like 100 percent.

Do the maths

Mooney asked why a country would wish to skew its mortality figures by wrongly certifying deaths? What had been going on? Well, if you don’t believe in conspiracies you will never find the answer which is that *it’s a conspiracy*. She did, however, describe what she had discovered as a ‘national scandal’. In reality it’s a global scandal and happening everywhere. Pillars of this conspiracy were all put into place before the button was pressed with the Drosten PCR protocol and high amplifications to produce the cases and death certificate changes to secure illusory ‘Covid’ deaths.

Mooney notes that normally two doctors were needed to certify a death, with one having to know the patient, and how the rules were changed in the spring of 2020 to allow one doctor to do this. In the same period ‘Covid deaths’ were decreed to be all cases where Covid-19 was put on the death certificate even without a positive test or any symptoms. Mooney asked: ‘How many of the 30,851 (as of January 15) care home resident deaths with Covid-19 on the certificate (32.4 per cent of all deaths so far) were based on an assumption, like that of my father? And what has that done to our national psyche?’ All of them is the answer to the first question and it has devastated and dismantled the national psyche, actually the global psyche, on a colossal scale. In the UK case and death data is compiled by organisations like Public Health England (PHE) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Mooney highlights the insane policy of counting a death from any cause as ‘Covid-19’ if this happens within 28 days of a positive test (with a test not testing for the ‘virus’) and she points out that ONS statistics reflect deaths ‘involving Covid’ ‘or due to Covid’ which meant in practice any

death where ‘Covid-19’ was mentioned on the death certificate. She described the consequences of this fraud:

Most people will accept the narrative they are fed, so panicky governments here and in Europe witnessed the harsh measures enacted in totalitarian China and jumped into lockdown. Headlines about Covid deaths tolled like the knell that would bring doomsday to us all. Fear stalked our empty streets. Politicians parroted the frankly ridiculous aim of ‘zero Covid’ and shut down the economy, while most British people agreed that lockdown was essential and (astonishingly to me, as a patriotic Brit) even wanted more restrictions.

For what? Lies on death certificates? Never mind the grim toll of lives ruined, suicides, schools closed, rising inequality, depression, cancelled hospital treatments, cancer patients in a torture of waiting, poverty, economic devastation, loneliness, families kept apart, and so on. How many lives have been lost as a direct result of lockdown?

She said that we could join in a national chorus of shock and horror at reaching the 120,000 death toll which was surely certain to have been totally skewed all along, but what about the human cost of lockdown justified by these ‘death figures’? *The British Medical Journal* had reported a 1,493 percent increase in cases of children taken to Great Ormond Street Hospital with abusive head injuries alone and then there was the effect on families:

Perhaps the most shocking thing about all this is that families have been kept apart – and obeyed the most irrational, changing rules at the whim of government – because they believed in the statistics. They succumbed to fear, which his generation rejected in that war fought for freedom. Dad (God rest his soul) would be angry. And so am I.

Another theme to watch is that in the winter months when there are more deaths from all causes they focus on ‘Covid’ deaths and in the summer when the British Lung Foundation says respiratory disease plummets by 80 percent they rage on about ‘cases’. Either way fascism on population is always the answer.

Nazi eugenics in the 21st century

Elderly people in care homes have been isolated from their families month after lonely month with no contact with relatives and grandchildren who were banned from seeing them. We were told

that lockdown fascism was to ‘protect the vulnerable’ like elderly people. At the same time Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders were placed on their medical files so that if they needed resuscitation it wasn’t done and ‘Covid-19’ went on their death certificates. Old people were not being ‘protected’ they were being culled – murdered in truth. DNR orders were being decreed for disabled and young people with learning difficulties or psychological problems. The UK Care Quality Commission, a non-departmental body of the Department of Health and Social Care, found that 34 percent of those working in health and social care were pressured into placing ‘do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation’ orders on ‘Covid’ patients who suffered from disabilities and learning difficulties without involving the patient or their families in the decision. UK judges ruled that an elderly woman with dementia should have the DNA-manipulating ‘Covid vaccine’ against her son’s wishes and that a man with severe learning difficulties should have the jab despite his family’s objections. Never mind that many had already died. The judiciary always supports doctors and government in fascist dictatorships. They wouldn’t dare do otherwise. A horrific video was posted showing fascist officers from Los Angeles police forcibly giving the ‘Covid’ shot to women with special needs who were screaming that they didn’t want it. The same fascists are seen giving the jab to a sleeping elderly woman in a care home. This is straight out of the Nazi playbook. Hitler’s Nazis committed mass murder of the mentally ill and physically disabled throughout Germany and occupied territories in the programme that became known as Aktion T4, or just T4. Sabbatian-controlled Hitler and his grotesque crazies set out to kill those they considered useless and unnecessary. The Reich Committee for the Scientific Registering of Hereditary and Congenital Illnesses registered the births of babies identified by physicians to have ‘defects’. By 1941 alone more than 5,000 children were murdered by the state and it is estimated that in total the number of innocent people killed in Aktion T4 was between 275,000 and 300,000. Parents were told their children had been sent away for ‘special treatment’ never to return. It is rather pathetic to see claims about plans for new extermination camps being dismissed today

when the same force behind current events did precisely that 80 years ago. Margaret Sanger was a Cult operative who used 'birth control' to sanitise her programme of eugenics. Organisations she founded became what is now Planned Parenthood. Sanger proposed that 'the whole dysgenic population would have its choice of segregation or sterilization'. These included epileptics, 'feeble-minded', and prostitutes. Sanger opposed charity because it perpetuated 'human waste'. She reveals the Cult mentality and if anyone thinks that extermination camps are a 'conspiracy theory' their naivety is touching if breathtakingly stupid.

If you don't believe that doctors can act with callous disregard for their patients it is worth considering that doctors and medical staff agreed to put government-decreed DNR orders on medical files and do nothing when resuscitation is called for. I don't know what you call such people in your house. In mine they are Nazis from the Josef Mengele School of Medicine. Phenomenal numbers of old people have died worldwide from the effects of lockdown, depression, lack of treatment, the 'vaccine' (more later) and losing the will to live. A common response at the start of the manufactured pandemic was to remove old people from hospital beds and transfer them to nursing homes. The decision would result in a mass cull of elderly people in those homes through lack of treatment – *not* 'Covid'. Care home whistleblowers have told how once the 'Covid' era began doctors would not come to their homes to treat patients and they were begging for drugs like antibiotics that often never came. The most infamous example was ordered by New York governor Andrew Cuomo, brother of a moronic CNN host, who amazingly was given an Emmy Award for his handling of the 'Covid crisis' by the ridiculous Wokers that hand them out. Just how ridiculous could be seen in February, 2021, when a Department of Justice and FBI investigation began into how thousands of old people in New York died in nursing homes after being discharged from hospital to make way for 'Covid' patients on Cuomo's say-so – and how he and his staff covered up these facts. This couldn't have happened to a nicer psychopath. Even then there was a 'Covid' spin. Reports said that

thousands of old people who tested positive for ‘Covid’ in hospital were transferred to nursing homes to both die of ‘Covid’ and transmit it to others. No – they were in hospital because they were ill and the fact that they tested positive with a test not testing for the ‘virus’ is irrelevant. They were ill often with respiratory diseases ubiquitous in old people near the end of their lives. Their transfer out of hospital meant that their treatment stopped and many would go on to die.

They're old. Who gives a damn?

I have exposed in the books for decades the Cult plan to cull the world’s old people and even to introduce at some point what they call a ‘demise pill’ which at a certain age everyone would take and be out of here by law. In March, 2021, Spain legalised euthanasia and assisted suicide following the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Canada on the Tiptoe to the demise pill. Treatment of old people by many ‘care’ homes has been a disgrace in the ‘Covid’ era. There are many, many, caring staff – I know some. There have, however, been legions of stories about callous treatment of old people and their families. Police were called when families came to take their loved ones home in the light of isolation that was killing them. They became prisoners of the state. Care home residents in insane, fascist Ontario, Canada, were not allowed to leave their *room* once the ‘Covid’ hoax began. UK staff have even wheeled elderly people away from windows where family members were talking with them. Oriana Criscuolo from Stockport in the English North West dropped off some things for her 80-year-old father who has Parkinson’s disease and dementia and she wanted to wave to him through a ground-floor window. She was told that was ‘illegal’. When she went anyway they closed the curtains in the middle of the day. Oriana said:

It’s just unbelievable. I cannot understand how care home staff – people who are being paid to care – have become so uncaring. Their behaviour is inhumane and cruel. It’s beyond belief.

She was right and this was not a one-off. What a way to end your life in such loveless circumstances. UK registered nurse Nicky Millen, a proper old school nurse for 40 years, said that when she started her career care was based on dignity, choice, compassion and empathy. Now she said ‘the things that are important to me have gone out of the window.’ She was appalled that people were dying without their loved ones and saying goodbye on iPads. Nicky described how a distressed 89-year-old lady stroked her face and asked her ‘how many paracetamol would it take to finish me off’. Life was no longer worth living while not seeing her family. Nicky said she was humiliated in front of the ward staff and patients for letting the lady stroke her face and giving her a cuddle. Such is the dehumanisation that the ‘Covid’ hoax has brought to the surface. Nicky worked in care homes where patients told her they were being held prisoner. ‘I want to live until I die’, one said to her. ‘I had a lady in tears because she hadn’t seen her great-grandson.’ Nicky was compassionate old school meeting psychopathic New Normal. She also said she had worked on a ‘Covid’ ward with no ‘Covid’ patients. Jewish writer Shai Held wrote an article in March, 2020, which was headlined ‘The Staggering, Heartless Cruelty Toward the Elderly’. What he described was happening from the earliest days of lockdown. He said ‘the elderly’ were considered a group and not unique individuals (the way of the Woke). Shai Held said:

Notice how the all-too-familiar rhetoric of dehumanization works: ‘The elderly’ are bunched together as a faceless mass, all of them considered culprits and thus effectively deserving of the suffering the pandemic will inflict upon them. Lost entirely is the fact that the elderly are individual human beings, each with a distinctive face and voice, each with hopes and dreams, memories and regrets, friendships and marriages, loves lost and loves sustained.

‘The elderly’ have become another dehumanised group for which anything goes and for many that has resulted in cold disregard for their rights and their life. The distinctive face that Held talks about is designed to be deleted by masks until everyone is part of a faceless mass.

'War-zone' hospitals myth

Again and again medical professionals have told me what was really going on and how hospitals 'overrun like war zones' according to the media were virtually empty. The mantra from medical whistleblowers was please don't use my name or my career is over. Citizen journalists around the world sneaked into hospitals to film evidence exposing the 'war-zone' lie. They really *were* largely empty with closed wards and operating theatres. I met a hospital worker in my town on the Isle of Wight during the first lockdown in 2020 who said the only island hospital had never been so quiet. Lockdown was justified by the psychopaths to stop hospitals being overrun. At the same time that the island hospital was near-empty the military arrived here to provide *extra beds*. It was all propaganda to ramp up the fear to ensure compliance with fascism as were never-used temporary hospitals with thousands of beds known as Nightingales and never-used make-shift mortuaries opened by the criminal UK government. A man who helped to install those extra island beds attributed to the army said they were never used and the hospital was empty. Doctors and nurses 'stood around talking or on their phones, wandering down to us to see what we were doing'. There were no masks or social distancing. He accused the useless local island paper, the *County Press*, of 'pumping the fear as if our hospital was overrun and we only have one so it should have been'. He described ambulances parked up with crews outside in deck chairs. When his brother called an ambulance he was told there was a two-hour backlog which he called 'bullshit'. An old lady on the island fell 'and was in a bad way', but a caller who rang for an ambulance was told the situation wasn't urgent enough. Ambulance stations were working under capacity while people would hear ambulances with sirens blaring driving through the streets. When those living near the stations realised what was going on they would follow them as they left, circulated around an urban area with the sirens going, and then came back without stopping. All this was to increase levels of fear and the same goes for the 'ventilator shortage crisis' that cost tens of millions for hastily produced ventilators never to be used.

Ambulance crews that agreed to be exploited in this way for fear propaganda might find themselves a mirror. I wish them well with that. Empty hospitals were the obvious consequence of treatment and diagnoses of non-'Covid' conditions cancelled and those involved handed a death sentence. People have been dying at home from undiagnosed and untreated cancer, heart disease and other life-threatening conditions to allow empty hospitals to deal with a 'pandemic' that wasn't happening.

Death of the innocent

'War-zones' have been laying off nursing staff, even doctors where they can. There was no work for them. Lockdown was justified by saving lives and protecting the vulnerable they were actually killing with DNR orders and preventing empty hospitals being 'overrun'. In Britain the mantra of stay at home to 'save the NHS' was everywhere and across the world the same story was being sold when it was all lies. Two California doctors, Dan Erickson and Artin Massihi at Accelerated Urgent Care in Bakersfield, held a news conference in April, 2020, to say that intensive care units in California were 'empty, essentially', with hospitals shutting floors, not treating patients and laying off doctors. The California health system was working at minimum capacity 'getting rid of doctors because we just don't have the volume'. They said that people with conditions such as heart disease and cancer were not coming to hospital out of fear of 'Covid-19'. Their video was deleted by Susan Wojcicki's Cult-owned YouTube after reaching five million views. Florida governor Ron Desantis, who rejected the severe lockdowns of other states and is being targeted for doing so, said that in March, 2020, every US governor was given models claiming they would run out of hospital beds in days. That was never going to happen and the 'modellers' knew it. Deceit can be found at every level of the system. Urgent children's operations were cancelled including fracture repairs and biopsies to spot cancer. Eric Nicholls, a consultant paediatrician, said 'this is obviously concerning and we need to return to normal operating and to increase capacity as soon as possible'. Psychopaths

in power were rather less concerned *because* they are psychopaths. Deletion of urgent care and diagnosis has been happening all over the world and how many kids and others have died as a result of the actions of these cold and heartless lunatics dictating ‘health’ policy? The number must be stratospheric. Richard Sullivan, professor of cancer and global health at King’s College London, said people feared ‘Covid’ more than cancer such was the campaign of fear. ‘Years of lost life will be quite dramatic’, Sullivan said, with ‘a huge amount of avoidable mortality’. Sarah Woolnough, executive director for policy at Cancer Research UK, said there had been a 75 percent drop in urgent referrals to hospitals by family doctors of people with suspected cancer. Sullivan said that ‘a lot of services have had to scale back – we’ve seen a dramatic decrease in the amount of elective cancer surgery’. Lockdown deaths worldwide has been absolutely fantastic with the *New York Post* reporting how data confirmed that ‘lockdowns end more lives than they save’:

There was a sharp decline in visits to emergency rooms and an increase in fatal heart attacks because patients didn’t receive prompt treatment. Many fewer people were screened for cancer. Social isolation contributed to excess deaths from dementia and Alzheimer’s.

Researchers predicted that the social and economic upheaval would lead to tens of thousands of “deaths of despair” from drug overdoses, alcoholism and suicide. As unemployment surged and mental-health and substance-abuse treatment programs were interrupted, the reported levels of anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts increased dramatically, as did alcohol sales and fatal drug overdoses.

This has been happening while nurses and other staff had so much time on their hands in the ‘war-zones’ that Tic-Tok dancing videos began appearing across the Internet with medical staff dancing around in empty wards and corridors as people died at home from causes that would normally have been treated in hospital.

Mentions in dispatches

One brave and truth-committed whistleblower was Louise Hampton, a call handler with the UK NHS who made a viral Internet video saying she had done ‘fuck all’ during the ‘pandemic’

which was ‘a load of bollocks’. She said that ‘Covid-19’ was rebranded flu and of course she lost her job. This is what happens in the medical and endless other professions now when you tell the truth. Louise filmed inside ‘war-zone’ accident and emergency departments to show they were empty and I mean *empty* as in no one there. The mainstream media could have done the same and blown the gaff on the whole conspiracy. They haven’t to their eternal shame. Not that most ‘journalists’ seem capable of manifesting shame as with the psychopaths they slavishly repeat without question. The relative few who were admitted with serious health problems were left to die alone with no loved ones allowed to see them because of ‘Covid’ rules and they included kids dying without the comfort of mum and dad at their bedside while the evil behind this couldn’t give a damn. It was all good fun to them. A Scottish NHS staff nurse publicly quit in the spring of 2021 saying: ‘I can no longer be part of the lies and the corruption by the government.’ She said hospitals ‘aren’t full, the beds aren’t full, beds have been shut, wards have been shut’. Hospitals were never busy throughout ‘Covid’. The staff nurse said that Nicola Sturgeon, tragically the leader of the Scottish government, was on television saying save the hospitals and the NHS – ‘but the beds are empty’ and ‘we’ve not seen flu, we always see flu every year’. She wrote to government and spoke with her union Unison (the unions are Cult-compromised and *useless*, but nothing changed. Many of her colleagues were scared of losing their jobs if they spoke out as they wanted to. She said nursing staff were being affected by wearing masks all day and ‘my head is splitting every shift from wearing a mask’. The NHS is part of the fascist tyranny and must be dismantled so we can start again with human beings in charge. (Ironically, hospitals were reported to be busier again when official ‘Covid’ cases *fell* in spring/summer of 2021 and many other conditions required treatment at the same time as *the fake vaccine rollout*.)

I will cover the ‘Covid vaccine’ scam in detail later, but it is another indicator of the sickening disregard for human life that I am highlighting here. The DNA-manipulating concoctions do not fulfil

the definition of a ‘vaccine’, have never been used on humans before and were given only emergency approval because trials were not completed and they continued using the unknowing public. The result was what a NHS senior nurse with responsibility for ‘vaccine’ procedure said was ‘genocide’. She said the ‘vaccines’ were not ‘vaccines’. They had not been shown to be safe and claims about their effectiveness by drug companies were ‘poetic licence’. She described what was happening as a ‘horrid act of human annihilation’. The nurse said that management had instigated a policy of not providing a Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) before people were ‘vaccinated’ even though health care professionals are supposed to do this according to protocol. Patients should also be told that they are taking part in an ongoing clinical trial. Her challenges to what is happening had seen her excluded from meetings and ridiculed in others. She said she was told to ‘watch my step … or I would find myself surplus to requirements’. The nurse, who spoke anonymously in fear of her career, said she asked her NHS manager why he/she was content with taking part in genocide against those having the ‘vaccines’. The reply was that everyone had to play their part and to ‘put up, shut up, and get it done’. Government was ‘leaning heavily’ on NHS management which was clearly leaning heavily on staff. This is how the global ‘medical’ hierarchy operates and it starts with the Cult and its World Health Organization.

She told the story of a doctor who had the Pfizer jab and when questioned had no idea what was in it. The doctor had never read the literature. We have to stop treating doctors as intellectual giants when so many are moral and medical pygmies. The doctor did not even know that the ‘vaccines’ were not fully approved or that their trials were ongoing. They were, however, asking their patients if they minded taking part in follow-ups for research purposes – yes, the *ongoing clinical trial*. The nurse said the doctor’s ignorance was not rare and she had spoken to a hospital consultant who had the jab without any idea of the background or that the ‘trials’ had not been completed. Nurses and pharmacists had shown the same ignorance.

'My NHS colleagues have forsaken their duty of care, broken their code of conduct – Hippocratic Oath – and have been brainwashed just the same as the majority of the UK public through propaganda ...' She said she had not been able to recruit a single NHS colleague, doctor, nurse or pharmacist to stand with her and speak out. Her union had refused to help. She said that if the genocide came to light she would not hesitate to give evidence at a Nuremberg-type trial against those in power who could have affected the outcomes but didn't.

And all for what?

To put the nonsense into perspective let's say the 'virus' does exist and let's go completely crazy and accept that the official manipulated figures for cases and deaths are accurate. *Even then* a study by Stanford University epidemiologist Dr John Ioannidis published on the World Health Organization website produced an average infection to fatality rate of ... 0.23 percent! Ioannidis said: 'If one could sample equally from all locations globally, the median infection fatality rate might even be substantially lower than the 0.23% observed in my analysis.' For healthy people under 70 it was ... 0.05 percent! This compares with the 3.4 percent claimed by the Cult-owned World Health Organization when the hoax was first played and maximum fear needed to be generated. An updated Stanford study in April, 2021, put the 'infection' to 'fatality' rate at just 0.15 percent. Another team of scientists led by Megan O'Driscoll and Henrik Salje studied data from 45 countries and published their findings on the Nature website. For children and young people the figure is so small it virtually does not register although authorities will be hyping dangers to the young when they introduce DNA-manipulating 'vaccines' for children. The O'Driscoll study produced an average infection-fatality figure of 0.003 for children from birth to four; 0.001 for 5 to 14; 0.003 for 15 to 19; and it was still only 0.456 up to 64. To claim that children must be 'vaccinated' to protect them from 'Covid' is an obvious lie and so there must be another reason and there is. What's more the average age of a 'Covid' death is akin

to the average age that people die in general. The average age of death in England is about 80 for men and 83 for women. The average age of death from alleged 'Covid' is between 82 and 83. California doctors, Dan Erickson and Artin Massihi, said at their April media conference that projection models of millions of deaths had been 'woefully inaccurate'. They produced detailed figures showing that Californians had a 0.03 chance of dying from 'Covid' based on the number of people who tested positive (with a test not testing for the 'virus'). Erickson said there was a 0.1 percent chance of dying from 'Covid' in the *state* of New York, not just the city, and a 0.05 percent chance in Spain, a centre of 'Covid-19' hysteria at one stage. The Stanford studies supported the doctors' data with fatality rate estimates of 0.23 and 0.15 percent. How close are these figures to my estimate of *zero*? Death-rate figures claimed by the World Health Organization at the start of the hoax were some 15 times higher. The California doctors said there was no justification for lockdowns and the economic devastation they caused. Everything they had ever learned about quarantine was that you quarantine the *sick* and not the healthy. They had never seen this before and it made no medical sense.

Why in the light of all this would governments and medical systems the world over say that billions must go under house arrest; lose their livelihood; in many cases lose their mind, their health and their life; force people to wear masks dangerous to health and psychology; make human interaction and even family interaction a criminal offence; ban travel; close restaurants, bars, watching live sport, concerts, theatre, and any activity involving human togetherness and discourse; and closing schools to isolate children from their friends and cause many to commit suicide in acts of hopelessness and despair? The California doctors said lockdown consequences included increased child abuse, partner abuse, alcoholism, depression, and other impacts they were seeing every day. Who would do that to the entire human race if not mentally-ill psychopaths of almost unimaginable extremes like Bill Gates? We must face the reality of what we are dealing with and come out of

denial. Fascism and tyranny are made possible only by the target population submitting and acquiescing to fascism and tyranny. The whole of human history shows that to be true. Most people naively and unquestioning believed what they were told about a ‘deadly virus’ and meekly and weakly submitted to house arrest. Those who didn’t believe it – at least in total – still submitted in fear of the consequences of not doing so. For the rest who wouldn’t submit draconian fines have been imposed, brutal policing by psychopaths *for* psychopaths, and condemnation from the meek and weak who condemn the Pushbackers on behalf of the very force that has them, too, in its gunsights. ‘Pathetic’ does not even begin to suffice.

Britain’s brainless ‘Health’ Secretary Matt Hancock warned anyone lying to border officials about returning from a list of ‘hotspot’ countries could face a jail sentence of up to ten years which is more than for racially-aggravated assault, incest and attempting to have sex with a child under 13. Hancock is a lunatic, but he has the state apparatus behind him in a Cult-led chain reaction and the same with UK ‘Vaccine Minister’ Nadhim Zahawi, a prominent member of the mega-Cult secret society, Le Cercle, which featured in my earlier books. The Cult enforces its will on governments and medical systems; government and medical systems enforce their will on business and police; business enforces its will on staff who enforce it on customers; police enforce the will of the Cult on the population and play their essential part in creating a world of fascist control that their own children and grandchildren will have to live in their entire lives. It is a hierarchical pyramid of imposition and acquiescence and, yes indeedy, of clinical insanity.

Does anyone bright enough to read this book have to ask what the answer is? I think not, but I will reveal it anyway in the fewest of syllables: Tell the psychos and their moronic lackeys to fuck off and let’s get on with our lives. We are many – They are few.

CHAPTER SEVEN

War on your mind

One believes things because one has been conditioned to believe them

Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

I have described the ‘Covid’ hoax as a ‘Psyop’ and that is true in every sense and on every level in accordance with the definition of that term which is psychological warfare. Break down the ‘Covid pandemic’ to the foundation themes and it is psychological warfare on the human individual and collective mind.

The same can be said for the entire human belief system involving every subject you can imagine. Huxley was right in his contention that people believe what they are conditioned to believe and this comes from the repetition throughout their lives of the same falsehoods. They spew from government, corporations, media and endless streams of ‘experts’ telling you what the Cult wants you to believe and often believing it themselves (although *far* from always). ‘Experts’ are rewarded with ‘prestigious’ jobs and titles and as agents of perceptual programming with regular access to the media. The Cult has to control the narrative – control *information* – or they lose control of the vital, crucial, without-which-they-cannot-prevail public perception of reality. The foundation of that control today is the Internet made possible by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the incredibly sinister technological arm of the Pentagon. The Internet is the result of military technology.

DARPA openly brags about establishing the Internet which has been a long-term project to lasso the minds of the global population. I have said for decades the plan is to control information to such an extreme that eventually no one would see or hear anything that the Cult does not approve. We are closing in on that end with ferocious censorship since the ‘Covid’ hoax began and in my case it started back in the 1990s in terms of books and speaking venues. I had to create my own publishing company in 1995 precisely because no one else would publish my books even then. I think they’re all still running.

Cult Internet

To secure total control of information they needed the Internet in which pre-programmed algorithms can seek out ‘unclean’ content for deletion and even stop it being posted in the first place. The Cult had to dismantle print and non-Internet broadcast media to ensure the transfer of information to the appropriate-named ‘Web’ – a critical expression of the *Cult* web. We’ve seen the ever-quickenning demise of traditional media and control of what is left by a tiny number of corporations operating worldwide. Independent journalism in the mainstream is already dead and never was that more obvious than since the turn of 2020. The Cult wants all information communicated via the Internet to globally censor and allow the plug to be pulled any time. Lockdowns and forced isolation has meant that communication between people has been through electronic means and no longer through face-to-face discourse and discussion. Cult psychopaths have targeted the bars, restaurants, sport, venues and meeting places in general for this reason. None of this is by chance and it’s to stop people gathering in any kind of privacy or number while being able to track and monitor all Internet communications and block them as necessary. Even private messages between individuals have been censored by these fascists that control Cult fronts like Facebook, Twitter, Google and YouTube which are all officially run by Sabbatian place-people and from the background by higher-level Sabbatian place people.

Facebook, Google, Amazon and their like were seed-funded and supported into existence with money-no-object infusions of funds either directly or indirectly from DARPA and CIA technology arm In-Q-Tel. The Cult plays the long game and prepares very carefully for big plays like 'Covid'. Amazon is another front in the psychological war and pretty much controls the global market in book sales and increasingly publishing. Amazon's limitless funds have deleted fantastic numbers of independent publishers to seize global domination on the way to deciding which books can be sold and circulated and which cannot. Moves in that direction are already happening. Amazon's leading light Jeff Bezos is the grandson of Lawrence Preston Gise who worked with DARPA predecessor ARPA. Amazon has big connections to the CIA and the Pentagon. The plan I have long described went like this:

1. Employ military technology to establish the Internet.
2. Sell the Internet as a place where people can freely communicate without censorship and allow that to happen until the Net becomes the central and irreversible pillar of human society. If the Internet had been highly censored from the start many would have rejected it.
3. Fund and manipulate major corporations into being to control the circulation of information on your Internet using cover stories about geeks in garages to explain how they came about. Give them unlimited funds to expand rapidly with no need to make a profit for years while non-Cult companies who need to balance the books cannot compete. You know that in these circumstances your Googles, YouTubes, Facebooks and Amazons are going to secure near monopolies by either crushing or buying up the opposition.
4. Allow freedom of expression on both the Internet and communication platforms to draw people in until the Internet is the central and irreversible pillar of human society and your communication corporations have reached a stage of near monopoly domination.
5. Then unleash your always-planned frenzy of censorship on the basis of 'where else are you going to go?' and continue to expand that until nothing remains that the Cult does not want its human targets to see.

The process was timed to hit the 'Covid' hoax to ensure the best chance possible of controlling the narrative which they knew they had to do at all costs. They were, after all, about to unleash a 'deadly virus' that didn't really exist. If you do that in an environment of free-flowing information and opinion you would be dead in the

water before you could say Gates is a psychopath. The network was in place through which the Cult-created-and-owned World Health Organization could dictate the ‘Covid’ narrative and response policy slavishly supported by Cult-owned Internet communication giants and mainstream media while those telling a different story were censored. Google, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter openly announced that they would do this. What else would we expect from Cult-owned operations like Facebook which former executives have confirmed set out to make the platform more addictive than cigarettes and coldly manipulates emotions of its users to sow division between people and groups and scramble the minds of the young? If Zuckerberg lives out the rest of his life without going to jail for crimes against humanity, and most emphatically against the young, it will be a travesty of justice. Still, no matter, cause and effect will catch up with him eventually and the same with Sergey Brin and Larry Page at Google with its CEO Sundar Pichai who fix the Google search results to promote Cult narratives and hide the opposition. Put the same key words into Google and other search engines like DuckDuckGo and you will see how different results can be. Wikipedia is another intensely biased ‘encyclopaedia’ which skews its content to the Cult agenda. YouTube links to Wikipedia’s version of ‘Covid’ and ‘climate change’ on video pages in which experts in their field offer a different opinion (even that is increasingly rare with Wojcicki censorship). Into this ‘Covid’ silence-them network must be added government media censors, sorry ‘regulators’, such as Ofcom in the UK which imposed tyrannical restrictions on British broadcasters that had the effect of banning me from ever appearing. Just to debate with me about my evidence and views on ‘Covid’ would mean breaking the fascistic impositions of Ofcom and its CEO career government bureaucrat Melanie Dawes. Gutless British broadcasters tremble at the very thought of fascist Ofcom.

Psychos behind ‘Covid’

The reason for the ‘Covid’ catastrophe in all its facets and forms can be seen by whom and what is driving the policies worldwide in such a coordinated way. Decisions are not being made to protect health, but to target psychology. The dominant group guiding and ‘advising’ government policy are not medical professionals. They are psychologists and behavioural scientists. Every major country has its own version of this phenomenon and I’ll use the British example to show how it works. In many ways the British version has been affecting the wider world in the form of the huge behaviour manipulation network in the UK which operates in other countries. The network involves private companies, government, intelligence and military. The Cabinet Office is at the centre of the government ‘Covid’ Psyop and part-owns, with ‘innovation charity’ Nesta, the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) which claims to be independent of government but patently isn’t. The BIT was established in 2010 and its job is to manipulate the psyche of the population to acquiesce to government demands and so much more. It is also known as the ‘Nudge Unit’, a name inspired by the 2009 book by two ultra-Zionists, Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler, called *Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth, and Happiness*. The book, as with the Behavioural Insights Team, seeks to ‘nudge’ behaviour (manipulate it) to make the public follow patterns of action and perception that suit those in authority (the Cult). Sunstein is so skilled at this that he advises the World Health Organization and the UK Behavioural Insights Team and was Administrator of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Obama administration. Biden appointed him to the Department of Homeland Security – another ultra-Zionist in the fold to oversee new immigration laws which is another policy the Cult wants to control. Sunstein is desperate to silence anyone exposing conspiracies and co-authored a 2008 report on the subject in which suggestions were offered to ban ‘conspiracy theorizing’ or impose ‘some kind of tax, financial or otherwise, on those who disseminate such theories’. I guess a psychiatrist’s chair is out of the question?

Sunstein's mate Richard Thaler, an 'academic affiliate' of the UK Behavioural Insights Team, is a proponent of 'behavioural economics' which is defined as the study of 'the effects of psychological, cognitive, emotional, cultural and social factors on the decisions of individuals and institutions'. Study the effects so they can be manipulated to be what you want them to be. Other leading names in the development of behavioural economics are ultra-Zionists Daniel Kahneman and Robert J. Shiller and they, with Thaler, won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for their work in this field. The Behavioural Insights Team is operating at the heart of the UK government and has expanded globally through partnerships with several universities including Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, University College London (UCL) and Pennsylvania. They claim to have 'trained' (reframed) 20,000 civil servants and run more than 750 projects involving 400 randomised controlled trials in dozens of countries' as another version of mind reframers Common Purpose. BIT works from its office in New York with cities and their agencies, as well as other partners, across the United States and Canada – this is a company part-owned by the British government Cabinet Office. An executive order by President Cult-servant Obama established a US Social and Behavioral Sciences Team in 2015. They all have the same reason for being and that's to brainwash the population directly and by brainwashing those in positions of authority.

'Covid' mind game

Another prime aspect of the UK mind-control network is the 'independent' [joke] Scientific Pandemic Insights Group on Behaviours (SPI-B) which 'provides behavioural science advice aimed at anticipating and helping people adhere to interventions that are recommended by medical or epidemiological experts'. That means manipulating public perception and behaviour to do whatever government tells them to do. It's disgusting and if they really want the public to be 'safe' this lot should all be under lock and key. According to the government website SPI-B consists of

'behavioural scientists, health and social psychologists, anthropologists and historians' and advises the Whitty-Vallance-led Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) which in turn advises the government on 'the science' (it doesn't) and 'Covid' policy. When politicians say they are being guided by 'the science' this is the rabble in each country they are talking about and that 'science' is dominated by behaviour manipulators to enforce government fascism through public compliance. The Behaviour Insight Team is headed by psychologist David Solomon Halpern, a visiting professor at King's College London, and connects with a national and global web of other civilian and military organisations as the Cult moves towards its goal of fusing them into one fascistic whole in every country through its 'Fusion Doctrine'. The behaviour manipulation network involves, but is not confined to, the Foreign Office; National Security Council; government communications headquarters (GCHQ); MI5; MI6; the Cabinet Office-based Media Monitoring Unit; and the Rapid Response Unit which 'monitors digital trends to spot emerging issues; including misinformation and disinformation; and identifies the best way to respond'.

There is also the 77th Brigade of the UK military which operates like the notorious Israeli military's Unit 8200 in manipulating information and discussion on the Internet by posing as members of the public to promote the narrative and discredit those who challenge it. Here we have the military seeking to manipulate *domestic* public opinion while the Nazis in government are fine with that. Conservative Member of Parliament Tobias Ellwood, an advocate of lockdown and control through 'vaccine passports', is a Lieutenant Colonel reservist in the 77th Brigade which connects with the military operation jHub, the 'innovation centre' for the Ministry of Defence and Strategic Command. jHub has also been involved with the civilian National Health Service (NHS) in 'symptom tracing' the population. The NHS is a key part of this mind control network and produced a document in December, 2020, explaining to staff how to use psychological manipulation with different groups and ages to get them to have the DNA-manipulating 'Covid vaccine'

that's designed to cumulatively rewrite human genetics. The document, called 'Optimising Vaccination Roll Out – Do's and Dont's for all messaging, documents and "communications" in the widest sense', was published by NHS England and the NHS Improvement *Behaviour Change Unit* in partnership with Public Health England and Warwick Business School. I hear the mantra about 'save the NHS' and 'protect the NHS' when we need to scrap the NHS and start again. The current version is far too corrupt, far too anti-human and totally compromised by Cult operatives and their assets. UK government broadcast media censor Ofcom will connect into this web – as will the BBC with its tremendous Ofcom influence – to control what the public see and hear and dictate mass perception. Nuremberg trials must include personnel from all these organisations.

The fear factor

The 'Covid' hoax has led to the creation of the UK Cabinet Office-connected Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) which is officially described as providing 'expert advice on pandemics' using its independent [all Cult operations are 'independent'] analytical function to provide real-time analysis about infection outbreaks to identify and respond to outbreaks of Covid-19'. Another role is to advise the government on a response to spikes in infections – 'for example by closing schools or workplaces in local areas where infection levels have risen'. Put another way, promoting the Cult agenda. The Joint Biosecurity Centre is modelled on the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre which analyses intelligence to set 'terrorism threat levels' and here again you see the fusion of civilian and military operations and intelligence that has led to military intelligence producing documents about 'vaccine hesitancy' and how it can be combated. Domestic civilian matters and opinions should not be the business of the military. The Joint Biosecurity Centre is headed by Tom Hurd, director general of the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism from the establishment-to-its-fingertips Hurd family. His father is former Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. How coincidental that Tom

Hurd went to the elite Eton College and Oxford University with Boris Johnson. Imperial College with its ridiculous computer modeller Neil Ferguson will connect with this gigantic web that will itself interconnect with similar set-ups in other major and not so major countries. Compared with this Cult network the politicians, be they Boris Johnson, Donald Trump or Joe Biden, are bit-part players ‘following the science’. The network of psychologists was on the ‘Covid’ case from the start with the aim of generating maximum fear of the ‘virus’ to ensure compliance by the population. A government behavioural science group known as SPI-B produced a paper in March, 2020, for discussion by the main government science advisory group known as SAGE. It was headed ‘Options for increasing adherence to social distancing measures’ and it said the following in a section headed ‘Persuasion’:

- A substantial number of people still do not feel sufficiently personally threatened; it could be that they are reassured by the low death rate in their demographic group, although levels of concern may be rising. Having a good understanding of the risk has been found to be positively associated with adoption of COVID-19 social distancing measures in Hong Kong.
- The perceived level of personal threat needs to be increased among those who are complacent, using hard-hitting evaluation of options for increasing social distancing emotional messaging. To be effective this must also empower people by making clear the actions they can take to reduce the threat.
- Responsibility to others: There seems to be insufficient understanding of, or feelings of responsibility about, people’s role in transmitting the infection to others ... Messaging about actions need to be framed positively in terms of protecting oneself and the community, and increase confidence that they will be effective.
- Some people will be more persuaded by appeals to play by the rules, some by duty to the community, and some to personal risk.

All these different approaches are needed. The messaging also needs to take account of the realities of different people's lives. Messaging needs to take account of the different motivational levers and circumstances of different people.

All this could be achieved the SPI-B psychologists said by *using the media to increase the sense of personal threat* which translates as terrify the shit out of the population, including children, so they all do what we want. That's not happened has it? Those excuses for 'journalists' who wouldn't know journalism if it bit them on the arse (the great majority) have played their crucial part in serving this Cult-government Psyop to enslave their own kids and grandkids. How they live with themselves I have no idea. The psychological war has been underpinned by constant government 'Covid' propaganda in almost every television and radio ad break, plus the Internet and print media, which has pounded out the fear with taxpayers footing the bill for their own programming. The result has been people terrified of a 'virus' that doesn't exist or one with a tiny fatality rate even if you believe it does. People walk down the street and around the shops wearing face-nappies damaging their health and psychology while others report those who refuse to be that naïve to the police who turn up in their own face-nappies. I had a cameraman come to my flat and he was so frightened of 'Covid' he came in wearing a mask and refused to shake my hand in case he caught something. He had – naïveitis – and the thought that he worked in the mainstream media was both depressing and made his behaviour perfectly explainable. The fear which has gripped the minds of so many and frozen them into compliance has been carefully cultivated by these psychologists who are really psychopaths. If lives get destroyed and a lot of young people commit suicide it shows our plan is working. SPI-B then turned to compulsion on the public to comply. 'With adequate preparation, rapid change can be achieved', it said. Some countries had introduced mandatory self-isolation on a wide scale without evidence of major public unrest and a large majority of the UK's population appeared to be supportive of more coercive measures with 64 percent of adults saying they would

support putting London under a lockdown (watch the ‘polls’ which are designed to make people believe that public opinion is in favour or against whatever the subject in hand).

For ‘aggressive protective measures’ to be effective, the SPI-B paper said, special attention should be devoted to those population groups that are more at risk. Translated from the Orwellian this means making the rest of population feel guilty for not protecting the ‘vulnerable’ such as old people which the Cult and its agencies were about to kill on an industrial scale with lockdown, lack of treatment and the Gates ‘vaccine’. Psychopath psychologists sold their guilt-trip so comprehensively that Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis reported that children were apologising (from a distance) to their parents and grandparents for bringing ‘Covid’ into their homes and getting them sick. ‘... These apologies are just some of the last words that loved ones will ever hear as they die alone,’ she said. Gut-wrenchingly Solis then used this childhood tragedy to tell children to stay at home and ‘keep your loved ones alive’. Imagine heaping such potentially life-long guilt on a kid when it has absolutely nothing to do with them. These people are deeply disturbed and the psychologists behind this even more so.

Uncivil war – divide and rule

Professional mind-controllers at SPI-B wanted the media to increase a sense of responsibility to others (do as you’re told) and promote ‘positive messaging’ for those actions while in contrast to invoke ‘social disapproval’ by the unquestioning, obedient, community of anyone with a mind of their own. Again the compliant Goebbels-like media obliged. This is an old, old, trick employed by tyrannies the world over throughout human history. You get the target population to keep the target population in line – *your* line. SPI-B said this could ‘play an important role in preventing anti-social behaviour or discouraging failure to enact pro-social behaviour’. For ‘anti-social’ in the Orwellian parlance of SPI-B see any behaviour that government doesn’t approve. SPI-B recommendations said that ‘social disapproval’ should be accompanied by clear messaging and

promotion of strong collective identity – hence the government and celebrity mantra of ‘we’re all in this together’. Sure we are. The mind doctors have such contempt for their targets that they think some clueless comedian, actor or singer telling them to do what the government wants will be enough to win them over. We have had UK comedian Lenny Henry, actor Michael Caine and singer Elton John wheeled out to serve the propagandists by urging people to have the DNA-manipulating ‘Covid’ non-‘vaccine’. The role of Henry and fellow black celebrities in seeking to coax a ‘vaccine’ reluctant black community into doing the government’s will was especially stomach-turning. An emotion-manipulating script and carefully edited video featuring these black ‘celebs’ was such an insult to the intelligence of black people and where’s the self-respect of those involved selling their souls to a fascist government agenda? Henry said he heard black people’s ‘legitimate worries and concerns’, but people must ‘trust the facts’ when they were doing exactly that by not having the ‘vaccine’. They had to include the obligatory reference to Black Lives Matter with the line ... ‘Don’t let coronavirus cost even more black lives – because we matter’. My god, it was pathetic. ‘I know the vaccine is safe and what it does.’ How? ‘I’m a comedian and it says so in my script.’

SPI-B said social disapproval needed to be carefully managed to avoid victimisation, scapegoating and misdirected criticism, but they knew that their ‘recommendations’ would lead to exactly that and the media were specifically used to stir-up the divide-and-conquer hostility. Those who conform like good little baa, baas, are praised while those who have seen through the tidal wave of lies are ‘Covidiots’. The awake have been abused by the fast asleep for not conforming to fascism and impositions that the awake know are designed to endanger their health, dehumanise them, and tear asunder the very fabric of human society. We have had the curtain-twitchers and morons reporting neighbours and others to the face-nappied police for breaking ‘Covid rules’ with fascist police delighting in posting links and phone numbers where this could be done. The Cult cannot impose its will without a compliant police

and military or a compliant population willing to play their part in enslaving themselves and their kids. The words of a pastor in Nazi Germany are so appropriate today:

First they came for the socialists and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak for me.

Those who don't learn from history are destined to repeat it and so many are.

'Covid' rules: Rewiring the mind

With the background laid out to this gigantic national and global web of psychological manipulation we can put 'Covid' rules into a clear and sinister perspective. Forget the claims about protecting health. 'Covid' rules are about dismantling the human mind, breaking the human spirit, destroying self-respect, and then putting Humpty Dumpty together again as a servile, submissive slave. Social isolation through lockdown and distancing have devastating effects on the human psyche as the psychological psychopaths well know and that's the real reason for them. Humans need contact with each other, discourse, closeness and touch, or they eventually, and literally, go crazy. Masks, which I will address at some length, fundamentally add to the effects of isolation and the Cult agenda to dehumanise and de-individualise the population. To do this while knowing – in fact *seeking* – this outcome is the very epitome of evil and psychologists involved in this *are* the epitome of evil. They must like all the rest of the Cult demons and their assets stand trial for crimes against humanity on a scale that defies the imagination. Psychopaths in uniform use isolation to break enemy troops and agents and make them subservient and submissive to tell what they know. The technique is rightly considered a form of torture and

torture is most certainly what has been imposed on the human population.

Clinically-insane American psychologist Harry Harlow became famous for his isolation experiments in the 1950s in which he separated baby monkeys from their mothers and imprisoned them for months on end in a metal container or ‘pit of despair’. They soon began to show mental distress and depression as any idiot could have predicted. Harlow put other monkeys in steel chambers for three, six or twelve months while denying them any contact with animals or humans. He said that the effects of total social isolation for six months were ‘so devastating and debilitating that we had assumed initially that twelve months of isolation would not produce any additional decrement’; but twelve months of isolation ‘almost obliterated the animals socially’. This is what the Cult and its psychopaths are doing to you and your children. Even monkeys in partial isolation in which they were not allowed to form relationships with other monkeys became ‘aggressive and hostile, not only to others, but also towards their own bodies’. We have seen this in the young as a consequence of lockdown. UK government psychopaths launched a public relations campaign telling people not to hug each other even after they received the ‘Covid-19 vaccine’ which we were told with more lies would allow a return to ‘normal life’. A government source told *The Telegraph*: ‘It will be along the lines that it is great that you have been vaccinated, but if you are going to visit your family and hug your grandchildren there is a chance you are going to infect people you love.’ The source was apparently speaking from a secure psychiatric facility. Janet Lord, director of Birmingham University’s Institute of Inflammation and Ageing, said that parents and grandparents should avoid hugging their children. Well, how can I put it, Ms Lord? Fuck off. Yep, that’ll do.

Destroying the kids – where are the parents?

Observe what has happened to people enslaved and isolated by lockdown as suicide and self-harm has soared worldwide,

particularly among the young denied the freedom to associate with their friends. A study of 49,000 people in English-speaking countries concluded that almost half of young adults are at clinical risk of mental health disorders. A national survey in America of 1,000 currently enrolled high school and college students found that 5 percent reported attempting suicide during the pandemic. Data from the US CDC's National Syndromic Surveillance Program from January 1st to October 17th, 2020, revealed a 31 percent increase in mental health issues among adolescents aged 12 to 17 compared with 2019. The CDC reported that America in general suffered the biggest drop in life expectancy since World War Two as it fell by a year in the first half of 2020 as a result of 'deaths of despair' – overdoses and suicides. Deaths of despair have leapt by more than 20 percent during lockdown and include the highest number of fatal overdoses ever recorded in a single year – 81,000. Internet addiction is another consequence of being isolated at home which lowers interest in physical activities as kids fall into inertia and what's the point? Children and young people are losing hope and giving up on life, sometimes literally. A 14-year-old boy killed himself in Maryland because he had 'given up' when his school district didn't reopen; an 11-year-old boy shot himself during a zoom class; a teenager in Maine succumbed to the isolation of the 'pandemic' when he ended his life after experiencing a disrupted senior year at school. Children as young as nine have taken their life and all these stories can be repeated around the world. Careers are being destroyed before they start and that includes those in sport in which promising youngsters have not been able to take part. The plan of the psycho-psychologists is working all right. Researchers at Cambridge University found that lockdowns cause significant harm to children's mental health. Their study was published in the *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, and followed 168 children aged between 7 and 11. The researchers concluded:

During the UK lockdown, children's depression symptoms have increased substantially, relative to before lockdown. The scale of this effect has direct relevance for the continuation of different elements of lockdown policy, such as complete or partial school closures ...

... Specifically, we observed a statistically significant increase in ratings of depression, with a medium-to-large effect size. Our findings emphasise the need to incorporate the potential impact of lockdown on child mental health in planning the ongoing response to the global pandemic and the recovery from it.

Not a chance when the Cult's psycho-psychologists were getting exactly what they wanted. The UK's Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has urged parents to look for signs of eating disorders in children and young people after a three to four fold increase. Specialists say the 'pandemic' is a major reason behind the rise. You don't say. The College said isolation from friends during school closures, exam cancellations, loss of extra-curricular activities like sport, and an increased use of social media were all contributory factors along with fears about the virus (psycho-psychologists again), family finances, and students being forced to quarantine. Doctors said young people were becoming severely ill by the time they were seen with 'Covid' regulations reducing face-to-face consultations. Nor is it only the young that have been devastated by the psychopaths. Like all bullies and cowards the Cult is targeting the young, elderly, weak and infirm. A typical story was told by a British lady called Lynn Parker who was not allowed to visit her husband in 2020 for the last ten and half months of his life 'when he needed me most' between March 20th and when he died on December 19th. This vacates the criminal and enters the territory of evil. The emotional impact on the immune system alone is immense as are the number of people of all ages worldwide who have died as a result of Cult-demanded, Gates-demanded, lockdowns.

Isolation is torture

The experience of imposing solitary confinement on millions of prisoners around the world has shown how a large percentage become 'actively psychotic and/or acutely suicidal'. Social isolation has been found to trigger 'a specific psychiatric syndrome, characterized by hallucinations; panic attacks; overt paranoia; diminished impulse control; hypersensitivity to external stimuli; and difficulties with thinking, concentration and memory'. Juan Mendez,

a United Nations rapporteur (investigator), said that isolation is a form of torture. Research has shown that even after isolation prisoners find it far more difficult to make social connections and I remember chatting to a shop assistant after one lockdown who told me that when her young son met another child again he had no idea how to act or what to do. Hannah Flanagan, Director of Emergency Services at Journey Mental Health Center in Dane County, Wisconsin, said: ‘The specificity about Covid social distancing and isolation that we’ve come across as contributing factors to the suicides are really new to us this year.’ But they are not new to those that devised them. They are getting the effect they want as the population is psychologically dismantled to be rebuilt in a totally different way. Children and the young are particularly targeted. They will be the adults when the full-on fascist AI-controlled technocracy is planned to be imposed and they are being prepared to meekly submit. At the same time older people who still have a memory of what life was like before – and how fascist the new normal really is – are being deleted. You are going to see efforts to turn the young against the old to support this geriatric genocide. Hannah Flanagan said the big increase in suicide in her county proved that social isolation is not only harmful, but deadly. Studies have shown that isolation from others is one of the main risk factors in suicide and even more so with women. Warnings that lockdown could create a ‘perfect storm’ for suicide were ignored. After all this was one of the *reasons* for lockdown. Suicide, however, is only the most extreme of isolation consequences. There are many others. Dr Dhruv Khullar, assistant professor of healthcare policy at Weill Cornell Medical College, said in a *New York Times* article in 2016 long before the fake ‘pandemic’:

A wave of new research suggests social separation is bad for us. Individuals with less social connection have disrupted sleep patterns, altered immune systems, more inflammation and higher levels of stress hormones. One recent study found that isolation increases the risk of heart disease by 29 percent and stroke by 32 percent. Another analysis that pooled data from 70 studies and 3.4 million people found that socially isolated individuals had a 30 percent higher risk of dying in the next seven years, and that this effect was largest in middle age.

Loneliness can accelerate cognitive decline in older adults, and isolated individuals are twice as likely to die prematurely as those with more robust social interactions. These effects start early: Socially isolated children have significantly poorer health 20 years later, even after controlling for other factors. All told, loneliness is as important a risk factor for early death as obesity and smoking.

There you have proof from that one article alone four years before 2020 that those who have enforced lockdown, social distancing and isolation knew what the effect would be and that is even more so with professional psychologists that have been driving the policy across the globe. We can go back even further to the years 2000 and 2003 and the start of a major study on the effects of isolation on health by Dr Janine Gronewold and Professor Dirk M. Hermann at the University Hospital in Essen, Germany, who analysed data on 4,316 people with an average age of 59 who were recruited for the long-term research project. They found that socially isolated people are more than 40 percent more likely to have a heart attack, stroke, or other major cardiovascular event and nearly 50 percent more likely to die from any cause. Given the financial Armageddon unleashed by lockdown we should note that the study found a relationship between increased cardiovascular risk and lack of financial support. After excluding other factors social isolation was still connected to a 44 percent increased risk of cardiovascular problems and a 47 percent increased risk of death by any cause. Lack of financial support was associated with a 30 percent increase in the risk of cardiovascular health events. Dr Gronewold said it had been known for some time that feeling lonely or lacking contact with close friends and family can have an impact on physical health and the study had shown that having strong social relationships is of high importance for heart health. Gronewold said they didn't understand yet why people who are socially isolated have such poor health outcomes, but this was obviously a worrying finding, particularly during these times of prolonged social distancing. Well, it can be explained on many levels. You only have to identify the point in the body where people feel loneliness and missing people they are parted from – it's in the centre of the chest where they feel the ache of loneliness and the ache of missing people. 'My heart aches for

you' ... 'My heart aches for some company.' I will explain this more in the chapter Escaping Wetiko, but when you realise that the body is the mind – they are expressions of each other – the reason why state of the mind dictates state of the body becomes clear.

American psychologist Ranjit Powar was highlighting the effects of lockdown isolation as early as April, 2020. She said humans have evolved to be social creatures and are wired to live in interactive groups. Being isolated from family, friends and colleagues could be unbalancing and traumatic for most people and could result in short or even long-term psychological and physical health problems. An increase in levels of anxiety, aggression, depression, forgetfulness and hallucinations were possible psychological effects of isolation. 'Mental conditions may be precipitated for those with underlying pre-existing susceptibilities and show up in many others without any pre-condition.' Powar said personal relationships helped us cope with stress and if we lost this outlet for letting off steam the result can be a big emotional void which, for an average person, was difficult to deal with. 'Just a few days of isolation can cause increased levels of anxiety and depression' – so what the hell has been the effect on the global population of *18 months* of this at the time of writing? Powar said: 'Add to it the looming threat of a dreadful disease being repeatedly hammered in through the media and you have a recipe for many shades of mental and physical distress.' For those with a house and a garden it is easy to forget that billions have had to endure lockdown isolation in tiny overcrowded flats and apartments with nowhere to go outside. The psychological and physical consequences of this are unimaginable and with lunatic and abusive partners and parents the consequences have led to tremendous increases in domestic and child abuse and alcoholism as people seek to shut out the horror. Ranjit Powar said:

Staying in a confined space with family is not all a rosy picture for everyone. It can be extremely oppressive and claustrophobic for large low-income families huddled together in small single-room houses. Children here are not lucky enough to have many board/electronic games or books to keep them occupied.

Add to it the deep insecurity of running out of funds for food and basic necessities. On the other hand, there are people with dysfunctional family dynamics, such as domineering, abusive or alcoholic partners, siblings or parents which makes staying home a period of trial. Incidence of suicide and physical abuse against women has shown a worldwide increase. Heightened anxiety and depression also affect a person's immune system, making them more susceptible to illness.

To think that Powar's article was published on April 11th, 2020.

Six-feet fantasy

Social (unsocial) distancing demanded that people stay six feet or two metres apart. UK government advisor Robert Dingwall from the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group said in a radio interview that the two-metre rule was 'conjured up out of nowhere' and was not based on science. No, it was not based on *medical* science, but it didn't come out of nowhere. The distance related to *psychological* science. Six feet/two metres was adopted in many countries and we were told by people like the criminal Anthony Fauci and his ilk that it was founded on science. Many schools could not reopen because they did not have the space for six-feet distancing. Then in March, 2021, after a year of six-feet 'science', a study published in the *Journal of Infectious Diseases* involving more than 500,000 students and almost 100,000 staff over 16 weeks revealed no significant difference in 'Covid' cases between six feet and three feet and Fauci changed his tune. Now three feet was okay. There is no difference between six feet and three *inches* when there is no 'virus' and they got away with six feet for psychological reasons for as long as they could. I hear journalists and others talk about 'unintended consequences' of lockdown. They are not *unintended* at all; they have been coldly-calculated for a specific outcome of human control and that's why super-psychopaths like Gates have called for them so vehemently. Super-psychopath psychologists have demanded them and psychopathic or clueless, spineless, politicians have gone along with them by 'following the science'. But it's not science at all. 'Science' is not what is; it's only what people can be manipulated to believe it is. The whole 'Covid' catastrophe is

founded on mind control. Three word or three statement mantras issued by the UK government are a well-known mind control technique and so we've had 'Stay home/protect the NHS/save lives', 'Stay alert/control the virus/save lives' and 'hands/face/space'. One of the most vocal proponents of extreme 'Covid' rules in the UK has been Professor Susan Michie, a member of the British Communist Party, who is not a medical professional. Michie is the director of the Centre for Behaviour Change at University College London. She is a *behavioural psychologist* and another filthy rich 'Marxist' who praised China's draconian lockdown. She was known by fellow students at Oxford University as 'Stalin's nanny' for her extreme Marxism. Michie is an influential member of the UK government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) and behavioural manipulation groups which have dominated 'Covid' policy. She is a consultant adviser to the World Health Organization on 'Covid-19' and behaviour. Why the hell are lockdowns anything to do with her when they are claimed to be about health? Why does a behavioural psychologist from a group charged with changing the behaviour of the public want lockdown, human isolation and mandatory masks? Does that question really need an answer? Michie *absolutely* has to explain herself before a Nuremberg court when humanity takes back its world again and even more so when you see the consequences of masks that she demands are compulsory. This is a Michie classic:

The benefits of getting primary school children to wear masks is that regardless of what little degree of transmission is occurring in those age groups it could help normalise the practice. Young children wearing masks may be more likely to get their families to accept masks.

Those words alone should carry a prison sentence when you ponder on the callous disregard for children involved and what a statement it makes about the mind and motivations of Susan Michie. What a lovely lady and what she said there encapsulates the mentality of the psychopaths behind the 'Covid' horror. Let us compare what Michie said with a countrywide study in Germany published at [researchsquare.com](https://www.researchsquare.com) involving 25,000 school children and 17,854 health complaints submitted by parents. Researchers

found that masks are harming children physically, psychologically, and behaviourally with 24 health issues associated with mask wearing. They include: shortness of breath (29.7%); dizziness (26.4%); increased headaches (53%); difficulty concentrating (50%); drowsiness or fatigue (37%); and malaise (42%). Nearly a third of children experienced more sleep issues than before and a quarter developed new fears. Researchers found health issues and other impairments in 68 percent of masked children covering their faces for an average of 4.5 hours a day. Hundreds of those taking part experienced accelerated respiration, tightness in the chest, weakness, and short-term impairment of consciousness. A reminder of what Michie said again:

The benefits of getting primary school children to wear masks is that regardless of what little degree of transmission is occurring in those age groups it could help normalise the practice. Young children wearing masks may be more likely to get their families to accept masks.

Psychopaths in government and psychology now have children and young people – plus all the adults – wearing masks for hours on end while clueless teachers impose the will of the psychopaths on the young they should be protecting. What the hell are parents doing?

Cult lab rats

We have some schools already imposing on students microchipped buzzers that activate when they get ‘too close’ to their pals in the way they do with lab rats. How apt. To the Cult and its brain-dead servants our children *are* lab rats being conditioned to be unquestioning, dehumanised slaves for the rest of their lives. Children and young people are being weaned and frightened away from the most natural human instincts including closeness and touch. I have tracked in the books over the years how schools were banning pupils from greeting each other with a hug and the whole Cult-induced Me Too movement has terrified men and boys from a relaxed and natural interaction with female friends and work colleagues to the point where many men try never to be in a room

alone with a woman that's not their partner. Airhead celebrities have as always played their virtue-signalling part in making this happen with their gross exaggeration. For every monster like Harvey Weinstein there are at least tens of thousands of men that don't treat women like that; but everyone must be branded the same and policy changed for them as well as the monster. I am going to be using the word 'dehumanise' many times in this chapter because that is what the Cult is seeking to do and it goes very deep as we shall see. Don't let them kid you that social distancing is planned to end one day. That's not the idea. We are seeing more governments and companies funding and producing wearable gadgets to keep people apart and they would not be doing that if this was meant to be short-term. A tech start-up company backed by GCHQ, the British Intelligence and military surveillance headquarters, has created a social distancing wrist sensor that alerts people when they get too close to others. The CIA has also supported tech companies developing similar devices. The wearable sensor was developed by Tended, one of a number of start-up companies supported by GCHQ (see the CIA and DARPA). The device can be worn on the wrist or as a tag on the waistband and will vibrate whenever someone wearing the device breaches social distancing and gets anywhere near natural human contact. The company had a lucky break in that it was developing a distancing sensor when the 'Covid' hoax arrived which immediately provided a potentially enormous market. How fortunate. The government in big-time Cult-controlled Ontario in Canada is investing \$2.5 million in wearable contact tracing technology that 'will alert users if they may have been exposed to the Covid-19 in the workplace and will beep or vibrate if they are within six feet of another person'. Facedrive Inc., the technology company behind this, was founded in 2016 with funding from the Ontario Together Fund and obviously they, too, had a prophet on the board of directors. The human surveillance and control technology is called TraceSCAN and would be worn by the human cyborgs in places such as airports, workplaces, construction sites, care homes and ... schools.

I emphasise schools with children and young people the prime targets. You know what is planned for society as a whole if you keep your eyes on the schools. They have always been places where the state program the next generation of slaves to be its compliant worker-ants – or Woker-ants these days; but in the mist of the ‘Covid’ madness they have been transformed into mind laboratories on a scale never seen before. Teachers and head teachers are just as programmed as the kids – often more so. Children are kept apart from human interaction by walk lanes, classroom distancing, staggered meal times, masks, and the rolling-out of buzzer systems. Schools are now physically laid out as a laboratory maze for lab-rats. Lunatics at a school in Anchorage, Alaska, who should be prosecuted for child abuse, took away desks and forced children to kneel (know your place) on a mat for five hours a day while wearing a mask and using their chairs as a desk. How this was supposed to impact on a ‘virus’ only these clinically insane people can tell you and even then it would be clap-trap. The school banned recess (interaction), art classes (creativity), and physical exercise (getting body and mind moving out of inertia). Everyone behind this outrage should be in jail or better still a mental institution. The behavioural manipulators are all for this dystopian approach to schools.

Professor Susan Michie, the mind-doctor and British Communist Party member, said it was wrong to say that schools were safe. They had to be made so by ‘distancing’, masks and ventilation (sitting all day in the cold). I must ask this lady round for dinner on a night I know I am going to be out and not back for weeks. She probably wouldn’t be able to make it, anyway, with all the visits to her own psychologist she must have block-booked.

Masking identity

I know how shocking it must be for you that a behaviour manipulator like Michie wants everyone to wear masks which have long been a feature of mind-control programs like the infamous MKUltra in the United States, but, there we are. We live and learn. I spent many years from 1996 to right across the millennium

researching mind control in detail on both sides of the Atlantic and elsewhere. I met a large number of mind-control survivors and many had been held captive in body and mind by MKUltra. MK stands for mind-control, but employs the German spelling in deference to the Nazis spirited out of Germany at the end of World War Two by Operation Paperclip in which the US authorities, with help from the Vatican, transported Nazi mind-controllers and engineers to America to continue their work. Many of them were behind the creation of NASA and they included Nazi scientist and SS officer Wernher von Braun who swapped designing V-2 rockets to bombard London with designing the Saturn V rockets that powered the NASA moon programme's Apollo craft. I think I may have mentioned that the Cult has no borders. Among Paperclip escapees was Josef Mengele, the Angel of Death in the Nazi concentration camps where he conducted mind and genetic experiments on children often using twins to provide a control twin to measure the impact of his 'work' on the other. If you want to observe the Cult mentality in all its extremes of evil then look into the life of Mengele. I have met many people who suffered mercilessly under Mengele in the United States where he operated under the name Dr Greene and became a stalwart of MKUltra programming and torture. Among his locations was the underground facility in the Mojave Desert in California called the China Lake Naval Weapons Station which is almost entirely below the surface. My books *The Biggest Secret*, *Children of the Matrix* and *The Perception Deception* have the detailed background to MKUltra.

The best-known MKUltra survivor is American Cathy O'Brien. I first met her and her late partner Mark Phillips at a conference in Colorado in 1996. Mark helped her escape and deprogram from decades of captivity in an offshoot of MKUltra known as Project Monarch in which 'sex slaves' were provided for the rich and famous including Father George Bush, Dick Cheney and the Clintons. Read Cathy and Mark's book *Trance-Formation of America* and if you are new to this you will be shocked to the core. I read it in 1996 shortly before, with the usual synchronicity of my life, I found

myself given a book table at the conference right next to hers. MKUltra never ended despite being very publicly exposed (only a small part of it) in the 1970s and continues in other guises. I am still in touch with Cathy. She contacted me during 2020 after masks became compulsory in many countries to tell me how they were used as part of MKUltra programming. I had been observing 'Covid regulations' and the relationship between authority and public for months. I saw techniques that I knew were employed on individuals in MKUltra being used on the global population. I had read many books and manuals on mind control including one called *Silent Weapons for Quiet Wars* which came to light in the 1980s and was a guide on how to perceptually program on a mass scale. 'Silent Weapons' refers to mind-control. I remembered a line from the manual as governments, medical authorities and law enforcement agencies have so obviously talked to – or rather at – the adult population since the 'Covid' hoax began as if they are children. The document said:

If a person is spoken to by a T.V. advertiser as if he were a twelve-year-old, then, due to suggestibility, he will, with a certain probability, respond or react to that suggestion with the uncritical response of a twelve-year-old and will reach in to his economic reservoir and deliver its energy to buy that product on impulse when he passes it in the store.

That's why authority has spoken to adults like children since all this began.

Why did Michael Jackson wear masks?

Every aspect of the 'Covid' narrative has mind-control as its central theme. Cathy O'Brien wrote an article for davidicke.com about the connection between masks and mind control. Her daughter Kelly who I first met in the 1990s was born while Cathy was still held captive in MKUltra. Kelly was forced to wear a mask as part of her programming from the age of *two* to dehumanise her, target her sense of individuality and reduce the amount of oxygen her brain and body received. *Bingo*. This is the real reason for compulsory

masks, why they have been enforced en masse, and why they seek to increase the number they demand you wear. First one, then two, with one disgraceful alleged ‘doctor’ recommending four which is nothing less than a death sentence. Where and how often they must be worn is being expanded for the purpose of mass mind control and damaging respiratory health which they can call ‘Covid-19’. Canada’s government headed by the man-child Justin Trudeau, says it’s fine for children of two and older to wear masks. An insane ‘study’ in Italy involving just 47 children concluded there was no problem for babies as young as *four months* wearing them. Even after people were ‘vaccinated’ they were still told to wear masks by the criminal that is Anthony Fauci. Cathy wrote that mandating masks is allowing the authorities literally to control the air we breathe which is what was done in MKUltra. You might recall how the singer Michael Jackson wore masks and there is a reason for that. He was subjected to MKUltra mind control through Project Monarch and his psyche was scrambled by these simpletons. Cathy wrote:

In MKUltra Project Monarch mind control, Michael Jackson had to wear a mask to silence his voice so he could not reach out for help. Remember how he developed that whisper voice when he wasn’t singing? Masks control the mind from the outside in, like the redefining of words is doing. By controlling what we can and cannot say for fear of being labeled racist or beaten, for example, it ultimately controls thought that drives our words and ultimately actions (or lack thereof).

Likewise, a mask muffles our speech so that we are not heard, which controls voice ... words ... mind. This is Mind Control. Masks are an obvious mind control device, and I am disturbed so many people are complying on a global scale. Masks depersonalize while making a person feel as though they have no voice. It is a barrier to others. People who would never choose to comply but are forced to wear a mask in order to keep their job, and ultimately their family fed, are compromised. They often feel shame and are subdued. People have stopped talking with each other while media controls the narrative.

The ‘no voice’ theme has often become literal with train passengers told not to speak to each other in case they pass on the ‘virus’, singing banned for the same reason and bonkers California officials telling people riding roller coasters that they cannot shout and scream. Cathy said she heard every day from healed MKUltra survivors who cannot wear a mask without flashing back on ways

their breathing was controlled – ‘from ball gags and penises to water boarding’. She said that through the years when she saw images of people in China wearing masks ‘due to pollution’ that it was really to control their oxygen levels. ‘I knew it was as much of a population control mechanism of depersonalisation as are burkas’, she said. Masks are another Chinese communist/fascist method of control that has been swept across the West as the West becomes China at lightning speed since we entered 2020.

Mask-19

There are other reasons for mandatory masks and these include destroying respiratory health to call it ‘Covid-19’ and stunting brain development of children and the young. Dr Margarite Griesz-Brisson MD, PhD, is a Consultant Neurologist and Neurophysiologist and the Founder and Medical Director of the London Neurology and Pain Clinic. Her CV goes down the street and round the corner. She is clearly someone who cares about people and won’t parrot the propaganda. Griesz-Brisson has a PhD in pharmacology, with special interest in neurotoxicology, environmental medicine, neuroregeneration and neuroplasticity (the way the brain can change in the light of information received). She went public in October, 2020, with a passionate warning about the effects of mask-wearing laws:

The reinhalation of our exhaled air will without a doubt create oxygen deficiency and a flooding of carbon dioxide. We know that the human brain is very sensitive to oxygen deprivation. There are nerve cells for example in the hippocampus that can’t be longer than 3 minutes without oxygen – they cannot survive. The acute warning symptoms are headaches, drowsiness, dizziness, issues in concentration, slowing down of reaction time – reactions of the cognitive system.

Oh, I know, let’s tell bus, truck and taxi drivers to wear them and people working machinery. How about pilots, doctors and police? Griesz-Brisson makes the important point that while the symptoms she mentions may fade as the body readjusts this does not alter the fact that people continue to operate in oxygen deficit with long list of

potential consequences. She said it was well known that neurodegenerative diseases take years or decades to develop. 'If today you forget your phone number, the breakdown in your brain would have already started 20 or 30 years ago.' She said degenerative processes in your brain are getting amplified as your oxygen deprivation continues through wearing a mask. Nerve cells in the brain are unable to divide themselves normally in these circumstances and lost nerve cells will no longer be regenerated. 'What is gone is gone.' Now consider that people like shop workers and *schoolchildren* are wearing masks for hours every day. What in the name of sanity is going to be happening to them? 'I do not wear a mask, I need my brain to think', Griesz-Brisson said, 'I want to have a clear head when I deal with my patients and not be in a carbon dioxide-induced anaesthesia'. If you are told to wear a mask anywhere ask the organisation, police, store, whatever, for their risk assessment on the dangers and negative effects on mind and body of enforcing mask-wearing. They won't have one because it has never been done not even by government. All of them must be subject to class-action lawsuits as the consequences come to light. They don't do mask risk assessments for an obvious reason. They know what the conclusions would be and independent scientific studies that *have* been done tell a horror story of consequences.

'Masks are criminal'

Dr Griesz-Brisson said that for children and adolescents, masks are an absolute no-no. They had an extremely active and adaptive immune system and their brain was incredibly active with so much to learn. 'The child's brain, or the youth's brain, is thirsting for oxygen.' The more metabolically active an organ was, the more oxygen it required; and in children and adolescents every organ was metabolically active. Griesz-Brisson said that to deprive a child's or adolescent's brain of oxygen, or to restrict it in any way, was not only dangerous to their health, it was absolutely criminal. 'Oxygen deficiency inhibits the development of the brain, and the damage that has taken place as a result CANNOT be reversed.' Mind

manipulators of MKUltra put masks on two-year-olds they wanted to neurologically rewire and you can see why. Griesz-Brisson said a child needs the brain to learn and the brain needs oxygen to function. 'We don't need a clinical study for that. This is simple, indisputable physiology.' Consciously and purposely induced oxygen deficiency was an absolutely deliberate health hazard, and an absolute medical contraindication which means that 'this drug, this therapy, this method or measure should not be used, and is not allowed to be used'. To coerce an entire population to use an absolute medical contraindication by force, she said, there had to be definite and serious reasons and the reasons must be presented to competent interdisciplinary and independent bodies to be verified and authorised. She had this warning of the consequences that were coming if mask wearing continued:

When, in ten years, dementia is going to increase exponentially, and the younger generations couldn't reach their god-given potential, it won't help to say 'we didn't need the masks'. I know how damaging oxygen deprivation is for the brain, cardiologists know how damaging it is for the heart, pulmonologists know how damaging it is for the lungs. Oxygen deprivation damages every single organ. Where are our health departments, our health insurance, our medical associations? It would have been their duty to be vehemently against the lockdown and to stop it and stop it from the very beginning.

Why do the medical boards issue punishments to doctors who give people exemptions? Does the person or the doctor seriously have to prove that oxygen deprivation harms people? What kind of medicine are our doctors and medical associations representing? Who is responsible for this crime? The ones who want to enforce it? The ones who let it happen and play along, or the ones who don't prevent it?

All of the organisations and people she mentions there either answer directly to the Cult or do whatever hierarchical levels above them tell them to do. The outcome of both is the same. 'It's not about masks, it's not about viruses, it's certainly not about your health', Griesz-Brisson said. 'It is about much, much more. I am not participating. I am not afraid.' They were taking our air to breathe and there was no unfounded medical exemption from face masks. Oxygen deprivation was dangerous for every single brain. It had to be the free decision of every human being whether they want to

wear a mask that was absolutely ineffective to protect themselves from a virus. She ended by rightly identifying where the responsibility lies for all this:

The imperative of the hour is personal responsibility. We are responsible for what we think, not the media. We are responsible for what we do, not our superiors. We are responsible for our health, not the World Health Organization. And we are responsible for what happens in our country, not the government.

Halle-bloody-lujah.

But surgeons wear masks, right?

Independent studies of mask-wearing have produced a long list of reports detailing mental, emotional and physical dangers. What a definition of insanity to see police officers imposing mask-wearing on the public which will cumulatively damage their health while the police themselves wear masks that will cumulatively damage *their* health. It's utter madness and both public and police do this because 'the government says so' – yes a government of brain-donor idiots like UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock reading the 'follow the science' scripts of psychopathic, lunatic psychologists. The response you get from Stockholm syndrome sufferers defending the very authorities that are destroying them and their families is that 'surgeons wear masks'. This is considered the game, set and match that they must work and don't cause oxygen deficit. Well, actually, scientific studies have shown that they *do* and oxygen levels are monitored in operating theatres to compensate. Surgeons wear masks to stop spittle and such like dropping into open wounds – not to stop 'viral particles' which are so minuscule they can only be seen through an electron microscope. Holes in the masks are significantly bigger than 'viral particles' and if you sneeze or cough they will breach the mask. I watched an incredibly disingenuous 'experiment' that claimed to prove that masks work in catching 'virus' material from the mouth and nose. They did this with a slow motion camera and the mask did block big stuff which stayed inside the mask and

against the face to be breathed in or cause infections on the face as we have seen with many children. ‘Viral particles’, however, would never have been picked up by the camera as they came through the mask when they are far too small to be seen. The ‘experiment’ was therefore disingenuous *and* useless.

Studies have concluded that wearing masks in operating theatres (and thus elsewhere) make no difference to preventing infection while the opposite is true with toxic shite building up in the mask and this had led to an explosion in tooth decay and gum disease dubbed by dentists ‘mask mouth’. You might have seen the Internet video of a furious American doctor urging people to take off their masks after a four-year-old patient had been rushed to hospital the night before and nearly died with a lung infection that doctors sourced to mask wearing. A study in the journal *Cancer Discovery* found that inhalation of harmful microbes can contribute to advanced stage lung cancer in adults and long-term use of masks can help breed dangerous pathogens. Microbiologists have said frequent mask wearing creates a moist environment in which microbes can grow and proliferate before entering the lungs. The Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health, or CADTH, a Canadian national organisation that provides research and analysis to healthcare decision-makers, said this as long ago as 2013 in a report entitled ‘Use of Surgical Masks in the Operating Room: A Review of the Clinical Effectiveness and Guidelines’. It said:

- No evidence was found to support the use of surgical face masks to reduce the frequency of surgical site infections
- No evidence was found on the effectiveness of wearing surgical face masks to protect staff from infectious material in the operating room.
- Guidelines recommend the use of surgical face masks by staff in the operating room to protect both operating room staff and patients (despite the lack of evidence).

We were told that the world could go back to ‘normal’ with the arrival of the ‘vaccines’. When they came, fraudulent as they are, the story changed as I knew that it would. We are in the midst of transforming ‘normal’, not going back to it. Mary Ramsay, head of immunisation at Public Health England, echoed the words of US criminal Anthony Fauci who said masks and other regulations must stay no matter if people are vaccinated. The Fauci idiot continued to wear two masks – different colours so both could be clearly seen – after he *claimed* to have been vaccinated. Senator Rand Paul told Fauci in one exchange that his double-masks were ‘theatre’ and he was right. It’s all theatre. Mary Ramsay back-tracked on the vaccine-return-to-normal theme when she said the public may need to wear masks and social-distance for years despite the jabs. ‘People have got used to those lower-level restrictions now, and [they] can live with them’, she said telling us what the idea has been all along. ‘The vaccine does not give you a pass, even if you have had it, you must continue to follow all the guidelines’ said a Public Health England statement which reneged on what we had been told before and made having the ‘vaccine’ irrelevant to ‘normality’ even by the official story. Spain’s fascist government trumped everyone by passing a law mandating the wearing of masks on the beach and even when swimming in the sea. The move would have devastated what’s left of the Spanish tourist industry, posed potential breathing dangers to swimmers and had Northern European sunbathers walking around with their forehead brown and the rest of their face white as a sheet. The ruling was so crazy that it had to be retracted after pressure from public and tourist industry, but it confirmed where the Cult wants to go with masks and how clinically insane authority has become. The determination to make masks permanent and hide the serious dangers to body and mind can be seen in the censorship of scientist Professor Denis Rancourt by Bill Gates-funded academic publishing website ResearchGate over his papers exposing the dangers and uselessness of masks. Rancourt said:

ResearchGate today has permanently locked my account, which I have had since 2015. Their reasons graphically show the nature of their attack against democracy, and their corruption of

science ... By their obscene non-logic, a scientific review of science articles reporting on harms caused by face masks has a 'potential to cause harm'. No criticism of the psychological device (face masks) is tolerated, if the said criticism shows potential to influence public policy.

This is what happens in a fascist world.

Where are the 'greens' (again)?

Other dangers of wearing masks especially regularly relate to the inhalation of minute plastic fibres into the lungs and the deluge of discarded masks in the environment and oceans. Estimates predicted that more than 1.5 billion disposable masks will end up in the world's oceans every year polluting the water with tons of plastic and endangering marine wildlife. Studies project that humans are using 129 billion face masks each month worldwide – about three million a minute. Most are disposable and made from plastic, non-biodegradable microfibers that break down into smaller plastic particles that become widespread in ecosystems. They are littering cities, clogging sewage channels and turning up in bodies of water. I have written in other books about the immense amounts of microplastics from endless sources now being absorbed into the body. Rolf Halden, director of the Arizona State University (ASU) Biodesign Center for Environmental Health Engineering, was the senior researcher in a 2020 study that analysed 47 human tissue samples and found microplastics in all of them. 'We have detected these chemicals of plastics in every single organ that we have investigated', he said. I wrote in *The Answer* about the world being deluged with microplastics. A study by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) found that people are consuming on average every week some 2,000 tiny pieces of plastic mostly through water and also through marine life and the air. Every year humans are ingesting enough microplastics to fill a heaped dinner plate and in a life-time of 79 years it is enough to fill two large waste bins. Marco Lambertini, WWF International director general said: 'Not only are plastics polluting our oceans and waterways and killing marine life – it's in all of us and we can't escape consuming plastics,' American

geologists found tiny plastic fibres, beads and shards in rainwater samples collected from the remote slopes of the Rocky Mountain National Park near Denver, Colorado. Their report was headed: 'It is raining plastic.' Rachel Adams, senior lecturer in Biomedical Science at Cardiff Metropolitan University, said that among health consequences are internal inflammation and immune responses to a 'foreign body'. She further pointed out that microplastics become carriers of toxins including mercury, pesticides and dioxins (a known cause of cancer and reproductive and developmental problems). These toxins accumulate in the fatty tissues once they enter the body through microplastics. Now this is being compounded massively by people putting plastic on their face and throwing it away.

Workers exposed to polypropylene plastic fibres known as 'flock' have developed 'flock worker's lung' from inhaling small pieces of the flock fibres which can damage lung tissue, reduce breathing capacity and exacerbate other respiratory problems. Now ... commonly used surgical masks have three layers of melt-blown textiles made of ... polypropylene. We have billions of people putting these microplastics against their mouth, nose and face for hours at a time day after day in the form of masks. How does anyone think that will work out? I mean – what could possibly go wrong? We posted a number of scientific studies on this at davidicke.com, but when I went back to them as I was writing this book the links to the science research website where they were hosted were dead. Anything that challenges the official narrative in any way is either censored or vilified. The official narrative is so unsupportable by the evidence that only deleting the truth can protect it. A study by Chinese scientists still survived – with the usual twist which it why it was still active, I guess. Yes, they found that virtually all the masks they tested increased the daily intake of microplastic fibres, but people should still wear them because the danger from the 'virus' was worse said the crazy 'team' from the Institute of Hydrobiology in Wuhan. Scientists first discovered microplastics in lung tissue of some patients who died of lung cancer

in the 1990s. Subsequent studies have confirmed the potential health damage with the plastic degrading slowly and remaining in the lungs to accumulate in volume. Wuhan researchers used a machine simulating human breathing to establish that masks shed up to nearly 4,000 microplastic fibres in a month with reused masks producing more. Scientists said some masks are laced with toxic chemicals and a variety of compounds seriously restricted for both health and environmental reasons. They include cobalt (used in blue dye) and formaldehyde known to cause watery eyes, burning sensations in the eyes, nose, and throat, plus coughing, wheezing and nausea. No – that must be 'Covid-19'.

Mask 'worms'

There is another and potentially even more sinister content of masks. Mostly new masks of different makes filmed under a microscope around the world have been found to contain strange black fibres or 'worms' that appear to move or 'crawl' by themselves and react to heat and water. The nearest I have seen to them are the self-replicating fibres that are pulled out through the skin of those suffering from Morgellons disease which has been connected to the phenomena of 'chemtrails' which I will bring into the story later on. Morgellons fibres continue to grow outside the body and have a form of artificial intelligence. Black 'worm' fibres in masks have that kind of feel to them and there is a nanotechnology technique called 'worm micelles' which carry and release drugs or anything else you want to deliver to the body. For sure the suppression of humanity by mind altering drugs is the Cult agenda big time and the more excuses they can find to gain access to the body the more opportunities there are to make that happen whether through 'vaccines' or masks pushed against the mouth and nose for hours on end.

So let us summarise the pros and cons of masks:

Against masks: Breathing in your own carbon dioxide; depriving the body and brain of sufficient oxygen; build-up of toxins in the mask that can be breathed into the lungs and cause rashes on the face and ‘mask-mouth’; breathing microplastic fibres and toxic chemicals into the lungs; dehumanisation and deleting individualisation by literally making people faceless; destroying human emotional interaction through facial expression and deleting parental connection with their babies which look for guidance to their facial expression.

For masks: They don’t protect you from a ‘virus’ that doesn’t exist and even if it did ‘viral’ particles are so minute they are smaller than the holes in the mask.

Governments, police, supermarkets, businesses, transport companies, and all the rest who seek to impose masks have done no risk assessment on their consequences for health and psychology and are now open to group lawsuits when the impact becomes clear with a cumulative epidemic of respiratory and other disease. Authorities will try to exploit these effects and hide the real cause by dubbing them ‘Covid-19’. Can you imagine setting out to force the population to wear health-destroying masks without doing any assessment of the risks? It is criminal and it is evil, but then how many people targeted in this way, who see their children told to wear them all day at school, have asked for a risk assessment? Billions can’t be imposed upon by the few unless the billions allow it. Oh, yes, with just a tinge of irony, 85 percent of all masks made worldwide come from *China*.

Wash your hands in toxic shite

‘Covid’ rules include the use of toxic sanitisers and again the health consequences of constantly applying toxins to be absorbed through the skin is obvious to any level of Renegade Mind. America’s Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said that sanitisers are drugs and issued a warning about 75 dangerous brands which contain

methanol used in antifreeze and can cause death, kidney damage and blindness. The FDA circulated the following warning even for those brands that it claims to be safe:

Store hand sanitizer out of the reach of pets and children, and children should use it only with adult supervision. Do not drink hand sanitizer. This is particularly important for young children, especially toddlers, who may be attracted by the pleasant smell or brightly colored bottles of hand sanitizer.

Drinking even a small amount of hand sanitizer can cause alcohol poisoning in children. (However, there is no need to be concerned if your children eat with or lick their hands after using hand sanitizer.) During this coronavirus pandemic, poison control centers have had an increase in calls about accidental ingestion of hand sanitizer, so it is important that adults monitor young children's use.

Do not allow pets to swallow hand sanitizer. If you think your pet has eaten something potentially dangerous, call your veterinarian or a pet poison control center right away. Hand sanitizer is flammable and should be stored away from heat and flames. When using hand sanitizer, rub your hands until they feel completely dry before performing activities that may involve heat, sparks, static electricity, or open flames.

There you go, perfectly safe, then, and that's without even a mention of the toxins absorbed through the skin. Come on kids – sanitise your hands everywhere you go. It will save you from the 'virus'. Put all these elements together of the 'Covid' normal and see how much health and psychology is being cumulatively damaged, even devastated, to 'protect your health'. Makes sense, right? They are only imposing these things because they care, right? *Right?*

Submitting to insanity

Psychological reframing of the population goes very deep and is done in many less obvious ways. I hear people say how contradictory and crazy 'Covid' rules are and how they are ever changing. This is explained away by dismissing those involved as idiots. It is a big mistake. The Cult is delighted if its cold calculation is perceived as incompetence and idiocy when it is anything but. Oh, yes, there are idiots within the system – lots of them – but they are *administering* the Cult agenda, mostly unknowingly. They are not deciding and dictating it. The bulwark against tyranny is self-

respect, always has been, always will be. It is self-respect that has broken every tyranny in history. By its very nature self-respect will not bow to oppression and its perpetrators. There is so little self-respect that it's always the few that overturn dictators. Many may eventually follow, but the few with the iron spines (self-respect) kick it off and generate the momentum. The Cult targets self-respect in the knowledge that once this has gone only submission remains. Crazy, contradictory, ever-changing 'Covid' rules are systematically applied by psychologists to delete self-respect. They *want* you to see that the rules make no sense. It is one thing to decide to do something when *you* have made the choice based on evidence and logic. You still retain your self-respect. It is quite another when you can see what you are being told to do is insane, ridiculous and makes no sense, and *yet you still do it*. Your self-respect is extinguished and this has been happening as ever more obviously stupid and nonsensical things have been demanded and the great majority have complied even when they can see they are stupid and nonsensical.

People walk around in face-nappies knowing they are damaging their health and make no difference to a 'virus'. They do it in fear of not doing it. I know it's daft, but I'll do it anyway. When that happens something dies inside of you and submissive reframing has begun. Next there's a need to hide from yourself that you have conceded your self-respect and you convince yourself that you have not really submitted to fear and intimidation. You begin to believe that you are complying with craziness because it's the right thing to do. When first you concede your self-respect of $2+2 = 4$ to $2+2 = 5$ you *know* you are compromising your self-respect. Gradually to avoid facing that fact you begin to *believe* that $2+2=5$. You have been reframed and I have been watching this process happening in the human psyche on an industrial scale. The Cult is working to break your spirit and one of its major tools in that war is humiliation. I read how former American soldier Bradley Manning (later Chelsea Manning after a sex-change) was treated after being jailed for supplying WikiLeaks with documents exposing the enormity of

government and elite mendacity. Manning was isolated in solitary confinement for eight months, put under 24-hour surveillance, forced to hand over clothing before going to bed, and stand naked for every roll call. This is systematic humiliation. The introduction of anal swab 'Covid' tests in China has been done for the same reason to delete self-respect and induce compliant submission. Anal swabs are mandatory for incoming passengers in parts of China and American diplomats have said they were forced to undergo the indignity which would have been calculated humiliation by the Cult-owned Chinese government that has America in its sights.

Government-people: An abusive relationship

Spirit-breaking psychological techniques include giving people hope and apparent respite from tyranny only to take it away again. This happened in the UK during Christmas, 2020, when the psycho-psychologists and their political lackeys announced an easing of restrictions over the holiday only to reimpose them almost immediately on the basis of yet another lie. There is a big psychological difference between getting used to oppression and being given hope of relief only to have that dashed. Psychologists know this and we have seen the technique used repeatedly. Then there is traumatising people before you introduce more extreme regulations that require compliance. A perfect case was the announcement by the dark and sinister Whitty and Vallance in the UK that 'new data' predicted that 4,000 could die every day over the winter of 2020/2021 if we did not lockdown again. I think they call it lying and after traumatising people with that claim out came Jackboot Johnson the next day with new curbs on human freedom. Psychologists know that a frightened and traumatised mind becomes suggestable to submission and behaviour reframing. Underpinning all this has been to make people fearful and suspicious of each other and see themselves as a potential danger to others. In league with deleted self-respect you have the perfect psychological recipe for self-loathing. The relationship between authority and public is now demonstrably the same as that of

subservience to an abusive partner. These are signs of an abusive relationship explained by psychologist Leslie Becker-Phelps:

Psychological and emotional abuse: Undermining a partner's self-worth with verbal attacks, name-calling, and belittling. Humiliating the partner in public, unjustly accusing them of having an affair, or interrogating them about their every behavior. Keeping partner confused or off balance by saying they were just kidding or blaming the partner for 'making' them act this way ... Feigning in public that they care while turning against them in private. This leads to victims frequently feeling confused, incompetent, unworthy, hopeless, and chronically self-doubting. [Apply these techniques to how governments have treated the population since New Year, 2020, and the parallels are obvious.]

Physical abuse: The abuser might physically harm their partner in a range of ways, such as grabbing, hitting, punching, or shoving them. They might throw objects at them or harm them with a weapon. [Observe the physical harm imposed by masks, lockdown, and so on.]

Threats and intimidation: One way abusers keep their partners in line is by instilling fear. They might be verbally threatening, or give threatening looks or gestures. Abusers often make it known that they are tracking their partner's every move. They might destroy their partner's possessions, threaten to harm them, or threaten to harm their family members. Not surprisingly, victims of this abuse often feel anxiety, fear, and panic. [No words necessary.]

Isolation: Abusers often limit their partner's activities, forbidding them to talk or interact with friends or family. They might limit access to a car or even turn off their phone. All of this might be done by physically holding them against their will, but is often accomplished through psychological abuse and intimidation. The more isolated a person feels, the fewer resources they have to help gain perspective on their situation and to escape from it. [No words necessary.]

Economic abuse: Abusers often make their partners beholden to them for money by controlling access to funds of any kind. They might prevent their partner from getting a job or withhold access to money they earn from a job. This creates financial dependency that makes leaving the relationship very difficult. [See destruction of livelihoods and the proposed meagre 'guaranteed income' so long as you do whatever you are told.]

Using children: An abuser might disparage their partner's parenting skills, tell their children lies about their partner, threaten to take custody of their children, or threaten to harm their children. These tactics instil fear and often elicit compliance. [See reframed social service mafia and how children are being mercilessly abused by the state over 'Covid' while their parents look on too frightened to do anything.]

A further recurring trait in an abusive relationship is the abused blaming themselves for their abuse and making excuses for the abuser. We have the public blaming each other for lockdown abuse by government and many making excuses for the government while attacking those who challenge the government. How often we have heard authorities say that rules are being imposed or reimposed only because people have refused to 'behave' and follow the rules. We don't want to do it – it's *you*.

Renegade Minds are an antidote to all of these things. They will never concede their self-respect no matter what the circumstances. Even when apparent humiliation is heaped upon them they laugh in its face and reflect back the humiliation on the abuser where it belongs. Renegade Minds will never wear masks they know are only imposed to humiliate, suppress and damage both physically and psychologically. Consequences will take care of themselves and they will never break their spirit or cause them to concede to tyranny. UK newspaper columnist Peter Hitchens was one of the few in the mainstream media to speak out against lockdowns and forced vaccinations. He then announced he had taken the jab. He wanted to see family members abroad and he believed vaccine passports were inevitable even though they had not yet been introduced. Hitchens

has a questioning and critical mind, but not a Renegade one. If he had no amount of pressure would have made him concede. Hitchens excused his action by saying that the battle has been lost. Renegade Minds never accept defeat when freedom is at stake and even if they are the last one standing the self-respect of not submitting to tyranny is more important than any outcome or any consequence.

That's why Renegade Minds are the only minds that ever changed anything worth changing.

CHAPTER EIGHT

'Reframing' insanity

Insanity is relative. It depends on who has who locked in what cage

Ray Bradbury

'Reframing' a mind means simply to change its perception and behaviour. This can be done subconsciously to such an extent that subjects have no idea they have been 'reframed' while to any observer changes in behaviour and attitudes are obvious.

Human society is being reframed on a ginormous scale since the start of 2020 and here we have the reason why psychologists rather than doctors have been calling the shots. Ask most people who have succumbed to 'Covid' reframing if they have changed and most will say 'no'; but they *have* and fundamentally. The Cult's long-game has been preparing for these times since way back and crucial to that has been to prepare both population and officialdom mentally and emotionally. To use the mind-control parlance they had to reframe the population with a mentality that would submit to fascism and reframe those in government and law enforcement to impose fascism or at least go along with it. The result has been the fact-deleted mindlessness of 'Wokeness' and officialdom that has either enthusiastically or unquestioningly imposed global tyranny demanded by reframed politicians on behalf of psychopathic and deeply evil cultists. 'Cognitive reframing' identifies and challenges the way someone sees the world in the form of situations, experiences and emotions and then restructures those perceptions to view the same set of circumstances in a different way. This can have

benefits if the attitudes are personally destructive while on the other side it has the potential for individual and collective mind control which the subject has no idea has even happened.

Cognitive therapy was developed in the 1960s by Aaron T. Beck who was born in Rhode Island in 1921 as the son of Jewish immigrants from the Ukraine. He became interested in the techniques as a treatment for depression. Beck's daughter Judith S. Beck is prominent in the same field and they founded the Beck Institute for Cognitive Behavior Therapy in Philadelphia in 1994. Cognitive reframing, however, began to be used worldwide by those with a very dark agenda. The Cult reframes politicians to change their attitudes and actions until they are completely at odds with what they once appeared to stand for. The same has been happening to government administrators at all levels, law enforcement, military and the human population. Cultists love mind control for two main reasons: It allows them to control what people think, do and say to secure agenda advancement and, by definition, it calms their legendary insecurity and fear of the unexpected. I have studied mind control since the time I travelled America in 1996. I may have been talking to next to no one in terms of an audience in those years, but my goodness did I gather a phenomenal amount of information and knowledge about so many things including the techniques of mind control. I have described this in detail in other books going back to *The Biggest Secret* in 1998. I met a very large number of people recovering from MKUltra and its offshoots and successors and I began to see how these same techniques were being used on the population in general. This was never more obvious than since the 'Covid' hoax began.

Reframing the enforcers

I have observed over the last two decades and more the very clear transformation in the dynamic between the police, officialdom and the public. I tracked this in the books as the relationship mutated from one of serving the public to seeing them as almost the enemy and certainly a lower caste. There has always been a class divide

based on income and always been some psychopathic, corrupt, and big-I-am police officers. This was different. Wholesale change was unfolding in the collective dynamic; it was less about money and far more about position and perceived power. An us-and-them was emerging. Noses were lifted skyward by government administration and law enforcement and their attitude to the public they were *supposed* to be serving changed to one of increasing contempt, superiority and control. The transformation was so clear and widespread that it had to be planned. Collective attitudes and dynamics do not change naturally and organically that quickly on that scale. I then came across an organisation in Britain called Common Purpose created in the late 1980s by Julia Middleton who would work in the office of Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott during the long and disastrous premiership of war criminal Tony Blair. When Blair speaks the Cult is speaking and the man should have been in jail a long time ago. Common Purpose proclaims itself to be one of the biggest 'leadership development' organisations in the world while functioning as a *charity* with all the financial benefits which come from that. It hosts 'leadership development' courses and programmes all over the world and claims to have 'brought together' what it calls 'leaders' from more than 100 countries on six continents. The modus operandi of Common Purpose can be compared with the work of the UK government's reframing network that includes the Behavioural Insights Team 'nudge unit' and 'Covid' reframing specialists at SPI-B. WikiLeaks described Common Purpose long ago as 'a hidden virus in our government and schools' which is unknown to the general public: 'It recruits and trains "leaders" to be loyal to the directives of Common Purpose and the EU, instead of to their own departments, which they then undermine or subvert, the NHS [National Health Service] being an example.' This is a vital point to understand the 'Covid' hoax. The NHS, and its equivalent around the world, has been utterly reframed in terms of administrators and much of the medical personnel with the transformation underpinned by recruitment policies. The outcome has been the criminal and psychopathic behaviour of the

NHS over ‘Covid’ and we have seen the same in every other major country. WikiLeaks said Common Purpose trainees are ‘learning to rule without regard to democracy’ and to usher in a police state (current events explained). Common Purpose operated like a ‘glue’ and had members in the NHS, BBC, police, legal profession, church, many of Britain’s 7,000 quangos, local councils, the Civil Service, government ministries and Parliament, and controlled many RDA’s (Regional Development Agencies). Here we have one answer for how and why British institutions and their like in other countries have changed so negatively in relation to the public. This further explains how and why the beyond-disgraceful reframed BBC has become a propaganda arm of ‘Covid’ fascism. They are all part of a network pursuing the same goal.

By 2019 Common Purpose was quoting a figure of 85,000 ‘leaders’ that had attended its programmes. These ‘students’ of all ages are known as Common Purpose ‘graduates’ and they consist of government, state and local government officials and administrators, police chiefs and officers, and a whole range of others operating within the national, local and global establishment. Cressida Dick, Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police, is the Common Purpose graduate who was the ‘Gold Commander’ that oversaw what can only be described as the murder of Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes in 2005. He was held down by psychopathic police and shot seven times in the head by a psychopathic lunatic after being mistaken for a terrorist when he was just a bloke going about his day. Dick authorised officers to pursue and keep surveillance on de Menezes and ordered that he be stopped from entering the underground train system. Police psychopaths took her at her word clearly. She was ‘disciplined’ for this outrage by being *promoted* – eventually to the top of the ‘Met’ police where she has been a disaster. Many Chief Constables controlling the police in different parts of the UK are and have been Common Purpose graduates. I have heard the ‘graduate’ network described as a sort of Mafia or secret society operating within the fabric of government at all levels pursuing a collective policy

ingrained at Common Purpose training events. Founder Julia Middleton herself has said:

Locally and internationally, Common Purpose graduates will be 'lighting small fires' to create change in their organisations and communities ... The Common Purpose effect is best illustrated by the many stories of small changes brought about by leaders, who themselves have changed.

A Common Purpose mission statement declared:

Common Purpose aims to improve the way society works by expanding the vision, decision-making ability and influence of all kinds of leaders. The organisation runs a variety of educational programmes for leaders of all ages, backgrounds and sectors, in order to provide them with the inspirational, information and opportunities they need to change the world.

Yes, but into what? Since 2020 the answer has become clear.

NLP and the Delphi technique

Common Purpose would seem to be a perfect name or would common programming be better? One of the foundation methods of reaching 'consensus' (group think) is by setting the agenda theme and then encouraging, cajoling or pressuring everyone to agree a 'consensus' in line with the core theme promoted by Common Purpose. The methodology involves the 'Delphi technique', or an adaption of it, in which opinions are expressed that are summarised by a 'facilitator or change agent' at each stage. Participants are 'encouraged' to modify their views in the light of what others have said. Stage by stage the former individual opinions are merged into group consensus which just happens to be what Common Purpose wants them to believe. A key part of this is to marginalise anyone refusing to concede to group think and turn the group against them to apply pressure to conform. We are seeing this very technique used on the general population to make 'Covid' group-thinkers hostile to those who have seen through the bullshit. People can be reframed by using perception manipulation methods such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) in which you change perception with the use of

carefully constructed language. An NLP website described the technique this way:

... A method of influencing brain behaviour (the 'neuro' part of the phrase) through the use of language (the 'linguistic' part) and other types of communication to enable a person to 'recode' the way the brain responds to stimuli (that's the 'programming') and manifest new and better behaviours. Neuro-Linguistic Programming often incorporates hypnosis and self-hypnosis to help achieve the change (or 'programming') that is wanted.

British alternative media operation UKColumn has done very detailed research into Common Purpose over a long period. I quoted co-founder and former naval officer Brian Gerrish in my book *Remember Who You Are*, published in 2011, as saying the following years before current times:

It is interesting that many of the mothers who have had children taken by the State speak of the Social Services people being icily cool, emotionless and, as two ladies said in slightly different words, '... like little robots'. We know that NLP is cumulative, so people can be given small imperceptible doses of NLP in a course here, another in a few months, next year etc. In this way, major changes are accrued in their personality, but the day by day change is almost unnoticeable.

In these and other ways 'graduates' have had their perceptions uniformly reframed and they return to their roles in the institutions of government, law enforcement, legal profession, military, 'education', the UK National Health Service and the whole swathe of the establishment structure to pursue a common agenda preparing for the 'post-industrial', 'post-democratic' society. I say 'preparing' but we are now there. 'Post-industrial' is code for the Great Reset and 'post-democratic' is 'Covid' fascism. UKColumn has spoken to partners of those who have attended Common Purpose 'training'. They have described how personalities and attitudes of 'graduates' changed very noticeably for the worse by the time they had completed the course. They had been 'reframed' and told they are the 'leaders' – the special ones – who know better than the population. There has also been the very demonstrable recruitment of psychopaths and narcissists into government administration at all

levels and law enforcement. If you want psychopathy hire psychopaths and you get a simple cause and effect. If you want administrators, police officers and 'leaders' to perceive the public as lesser beings who don't matter then employ narcissists. These personalities are identified using 'psychometrics' that identifies knowledge, abilities, attitudes and personality traits, mostly through carefully-designed questionnaires and tests. As this policy has passed through the decades we have had power-crazy, power-trippers appointed into law enforcement, security and government administration in preparation for current times and the dynamic between public and law enforcement/officialdom has been transformed. UKColumn's Brian Gerrish said of the narcissistic personality:

Their love of themselves and power automatically means that they will crush others who get in their way. I received a major piece of the puzzle when a friend pointed out that when they made public officials re-apply for their own jobs several years ago they were also required to do psychometric tests. This was undoubtedly the start of the screening process to get 'their' sort of people in post.

How obvious that has been since 2020 although it was clear what was happening long before if people paid attention to the changing public-establishment dynamic.

Change agents

At the centre of events in 'Covid' Britain is the National Health Service (NHS) which has behaved disgracefully in slavishly following the Cult agenda. The NHS management structure is awash with Common Purpose graduates or 'change agents' working to a common cause. Helen Bevan, a Chief of Service Transformation at the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, co-authored a document called 'Towards a million change agents, a review of the social movements literature: implications for large scale change in the NHS'. The document compared a project management approach to that of change and social movements where 'people change

themselves and each other – peer to peer’. Two definitions given for a ‘social movement’ were:

A group of people who consciously attempt to build a radically new social order; involves people of a broad range of social backgrounds; and deploys politically confrontational and socially disruptive tactics – Cyrus Zirakzadeh 1997

Collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities – Sidney Tarrow 1994

Helen Bevan wrote another NHS document in which she defined ‘framing’ as ‘the process by which leaders construct, articulate and put across their message in a powerful and compelling way in order to win people to their cause and call them to action’. I think I could come up with another definition that would be rather more accurate. The National Health Service and institutions of Britain and the wider world have been taken over by reframed ‘change agents’ and that includes everything from the United Nations to national governments, local councils and social services which have been kidnapping children from loving parents on an extraordinary and gathering scale on the road to the end of parenthood altogether. Children from loving homes are stolen and kidnapped by the state and put into the ‘care’ (inversion) of the local authority through council homes, foster parents and forced adoption. At the same time children are allowed to be abused without response while many are under council ‘care’. UKColumn highlighted the Common Purpose connection between South Yorkshire Police and Rotherham council officers in the case of the scandal in that area of the sexual exploitation of children to which the authorities turned not one blind eye, but both:

We were alarmed to discover that the Chief Executive, the Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, the Manager for the Local Strategic Partnership, the Community Cohesion Manager, the Cabinet Member for Cohesion, the Chief Constable and his predecessor had all attended Leadership training courses provided by the pseudo-charity Common Purpose.

Once 'change agents' have secured positions of hire and fire within any organisation things start to move very quickly. Personnel are then hired and fired on the basis of whether they will work towards the agenda the change agent represents. If they do they are rapidly promoted even though they may be incompetent. Those more qualified and skilled who are pre-Common Purpose 'old school' see their careers stall and even disappear. This has been happening for decades in every institution of state, police, 'health' and social services and all of them have been transformed as a result in their attitudes to their jobs and the public. Medical professions, including nursing, which were once vocations for the caring now employ many cold, callous and couldn't give a shit personality types. The UKColumn investigation concluded:

By blurring the boundaries between people, professions, public and private sectors, responsibility and accountability, Common Purpose encourages 'graduates' to believe that as new selected leaders, they can work together, outside of the established political and social structures, to achieve a paradigm shift or CHANGE – so called 'Leading Beyond Authority'. In doing so, the allegiance of the individual becomes 'reframed' on CP colleagues and their NETWORK.

Reframing the Face-Nappies

Nowhere has this process been more obvious than in the police where recruitment of psychopaths and development of unquestioning mind-controlled group-thinkers have transformed law enforcement into a politically-correct 'Woke' joke and a travesty of what should be public service. Today they wear their face-nappies like good little gofers and enforce 'Covid' rules which are fascism under another name. Alongside the specifically-recruited psychopaths we have software minds incapable of free thought. Brian Gerrish again:

An example is the policeman who would not get on a bike for a press photo because he had not done the cycling proficiency course. Normal people say this is political correctness gone mad. Nothing could be further from the truth. The policeman has been reframed, and in his reality it is perfect common sense not to get on the bike ‘because he hasn’t done the cycling course’.

Another example of this is where the police would not rescue a boy from a pond until they had taken advice from above on the ‘risk assessment’. A normal person would have arrived, perhaps thought of the risk for a moment, and dived in. To the police now ‘reframed’, they followed ‘normal’ procedure.

There are shocking cases of reframed ambulance crews doing the same. Sheer unthinking stupidity of London Face-Nappies headed by Common Purpose graduate Cressida Dick can be seen in their behaviour at a vigil in March, 2021, for a murdered woman, Sarah Everard. A police officer had been charged with the crime. Anyone with a brain would have left the vigil alone in the circumstances. Instead they ‘manhandled’ women to stop them breaking ‘Covid rules’ to betray classic reframing. Minds in the thrall of perception control have no capacity for seeing a situation on its merits and acting accordingly. ‘Rules is rules’ is their only mind-set. My father used to say that rules and regulations are for the guidance of the intelligent and the blind obedience of the idiot. Most of the intelligent, decent, coppers have gone leaving only the other kind and a few old school for whom the job must be a daily nightmare. The combination of psychopaths and rule-book software minds has been clearly on public display in the ‘Covid’ era with automaton robots in uniform imposing fascistic ‘Covid’ regulations on the population without any personal initiative or judging situations on their merits. There are thousands of examples around the world, but I’ll make my point with the infamous Derbyshire police in the English East Midlands – the ones who think pouring dye into beauty spots and using drones to track people walking in the countryside away from anyone is called ‘policing’. To them there are rules decreed by the government which they have to enforce and in their bewildered state a group gathering in a closed space and someone walking alone in the countryside are the same thing. It is beyond idiocy and enters the realm of clinical insanity.

Police officers in Derbyshire said they were ‘horrified’ – *horrified* – to find 15 to 20 ‘irresponsible’ kids playing a football match at a closed leisure centre ‘in breach of coronavirus restrictions’. When they saw the police the kids ran away leaving their belongings behind and the reframed men and women of Derbyshire police were seeking to establish their identities with a view to fining their parents. The most natural thing for youngsters to do – kicking a ball about – is turned into a criminal activity and enforced by the moronic software programs of Derbyshire police. You find the same mentality in every country. These barely conscious ‘horrified’ officers said they had to take action because ‘we need to ensure these rules are being followed’ and ‘it is of the utmost importance that you ensure your children are following the rules and regulations for Covid-19’. Had any of them done ten seconds of research to see if this parroting of their masters’ script could be supported by any evidence? Nope. Reframed people don’t think – others think for them and that’s the whole idea of reframing. I have seen police officers one after the other repeating without question word for word what officialdom tells them just as I have seen great swathes of the public doing the same. Ask either for ‘their’ opinion and out spews what they have been told to think by the official narrative. Police and public may seem to be in different groups, but their mentality is the same. Most people do whatever they are told in fear not doing so or because they believe what officialdom tells them; almost the entirety of the police do what they are told for the same reason. Ultimately it’s the tiny inner core of the global Cult that’s telling both what to do.

So Derbyshire police were ‘horrified’. Oh, really? Why did they think those kids were playing football? It was to relieve the psychological consequences of lockdown and being denied human contact with their friends and interaction, touch and discourse vital to human psychological health. Being denied this month after month has dismantled the psyche of many children and young people as depression and suicide have exploded. Were Derbyshire police *horrified by that?* Are you kidding? Reframed people don’t have those

mental and emotional processes that can see how the impact on the psychological health of youngsters is far more dangerous than any 'virus' even if you take the mendacious official figures to be true. The reframed are told (programmed) how to act and so they do. The Derbyshire Chief Constable in the first period of lockdown when the black dye and drones nonsense was going on was Peter Goodman. He was the man who severed the connection between his force and the Derbyshire Constabulary *Male Voice* Choir when he decided that it was not inclusive enough to allow women to join. The fact it was a male voice choir making a particular sound produced by male voices seemed to elude a guy who terrifyingly ran policing in Derbyshire. He retired weeks after his force was condemned as disgraceful by former Supreme Court Justice Jonathan Sumption for their behaviour over extreme lockdown impositions. Goodman was replaced by his deputy Rachel Swann who was in charge when her officers were 'horrified'. The police statement over the boys committing the hanging-offence of playing football included the line about the youngsters being 'irresponsible in the times we are all living through' missing the point that the real relevance of the 'times we are all living through' is the imposition of fascism enforced by psychopaths and reframed minds of police officers playing such a vital part in establishing the fascist tyranny that their own children and grandchildren will have to live in their entire lives. As a definition of insanity that is hard to beat although it might be run close by imposing masks on people that can have a serious effect on their health while wearing a face nappy all day themselves. Once again public and police do it for the same reason – the authorities tell them to and who are they to have the self-respect to say no?

Wokers in uniform

How reframed do you have to be to arrest a *six-year-old* and take him to court for *picking a flower* while waiting for a bus? Brain dead police and officialdom did just that in North Carolina where criminal proceedings happen regularly for children under nine. Attorney Julie Boyer gave the six-year-old crayons and a colouring book

during the ‘flower’ hearing while the ‘adults’ decided his fate. County Chief District Court Judge Jay Corpening asked: ‘Should a child that believes in Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny and the tooth fairy be making life-altering decisions?’ Well, of course not, but common sense has no meaning when you have a common purpose and a reframed mind. Treating children in this way, and police operating in American schools, is all part of the psychological preparation for children to accept a police state as normal all their adult lives. The same goes for all the cameras and biometric tracking technology in schools. Police training is focused on reframing them as snowflake Wokers and this is happening in the military. Pentagon top brass said that ‘training sessions on extremism’ were needed for troops who asked why they were so focused on the Capitol Building riot when Black Lives Matter riots were ignored. What’s the difference between them some apparently and rightly asked. Actually, there is a difference. Five people died in the Capitol riot, only one through violence, and that was a police officer shooting an unarmed protestor. BLM riots killed at least 25 people and cost billions. Asking the question prompted the psychopaths and reframed minds that run the Pentagon to say that more ‘education’ (programming) was needed. Troop training is all based on psychological programming to make them fodder for the Cult – ‘Military men are just dumb, stupid animals to be used as pawns in foreign policy’ as Cult-to-his-DNA former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger famously said. Governments see the police in similar terms and it’s time for those among them who can see this to defend the people and stop being enforcers of the Cult agenda upon the people.

The US military, like the country itself, is being targeted for destruction through a long list of Woke impositions. Cult-owned gaga ‘President’ Biden signed an executive order when he took office to allow taxpayer money to pay for transgender surgery for active military personnel and veterans. Are you a man soldier? No, I’m a LGBTQIA+ with a hint of Skoliosexual and Spectrasexual. Oh, good man. Bad choice of words you bigot. The Pentagon announced in March, 2021, the appointment of the first ‘diversity and inclusion

officer' for US Special Forces. Richard Torres-Estrada arrived with the publication of a 'D&I Strategic Plan which will guide the enterprise-wide effort to institutionalize and sustain D&I'. If you think a Special Forces 'Strategic Plan' should have something to do with defending America you haven't been paying attention.

Defending Woke is now the military's new role. Torres-Estrada has posted images comparing Donald Trump with Adolf Hitler and we can expect no bias from him as a representative of the supposedly non-political Pentagon. Cable news host Tucker Carlson said: 'The Pentagon is now the Yale faculty lounge but with cruise missiles.' Meanwhile Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, a board member of weapons-maker Raytheon with stock and compensation interests in October, 2020, worth \$1.4 million, said he was purging the military of the 'enemy within' – anyone who isn't Woke and supports Donald Trump. Austin refers to his targets as 'racist extremists' while in true Woke fashion being himself a racist extremist. Pentagon documents pledge to 'eradicate, eliminate and conquer all forms of racism, sexism and homophobia'. The definitions of these are decided by 'diversity and inclusion committees' peopled by those who see racism, sexism and homophobia in every situation and opinion. Woke (the Cult) is dismantling the US military and purging testosterone as China expands its military and gives its troops 'masculinity training'. How do we think that is going to end when this is all Cult coordinated? The US military, like the British military, is controlled by Woke and spineless top brass who just go along with it out of personal career interests.

'Woke' means fast asleep

Mind control and perception manipulation techniques used on individuals to create group-think have been unleashed on the global population in general. As a result many have no capacity to see the obvious fascist agenda being installed all around them or what 'Covid' is really all about. Their brains are firewalled like a computer system not to process certain concepts, thoughts and realisations that are bad for the Cult. The young are most targeted as the adults they

will be when the whole fascist global state is planned to be fully implemented. They need to be prepared for total compliance to eliminate all pushback from entire generations. The Cult has been pouring billions into taking complete control of 'education' from schools to universities via its operatives and corporations and not least Bill Gates as always. The plan has been to transform 'education' institutions into programming centres for the mentality of 'Woke'. James McConnell, professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, wrote in *Psychology Today* in 1970:

The day has come when we can combine sensory deprivation with drugs, hypnosis, and astute manipulation of reward and punishment, to gain almost absolute control over an individual's behaviour. It should then be possible to achieve a very rapid and highly effective type of brainwashing that would allow us to make dramatic changes in a person's behaviour and personality ...

... We should reshape society so that we all would be trained from birth to want to do what society wants us to do. We have the techniques to do it... no-one owns his own personality you acquired, and there's no reason to believe you should have the right to refuse to acquire a new personality if your old one is anti-social.

This was the potential for mass brainwashing in 1970 and the mentality there displayed captures the arrogant psychopathy that drives it forward. I emphasise that not all young people have succumbed to Woke programming and those that haven't are incredibly impressive people given that today's young are the most perceptually-targeted generations in history with all the technology now involved. Vast swathes of the young generations, however, have fallen into the spell – and that's what it is – of Woke. The Woke mentality and perceptual program is founded on *inversion* and you will appreciate later why that is so significant. Everything with Woke is inverted and the opposite of what it is claimed to be. Woke was a term used in African-American culture from the 1900s and referred to an awareness of social and racial justice. This is not the meaning of the modern version or 'New Woke' as I call it in *The Answer*. Oh, no, Woke today means something very different no matter how much Wokers may seek to hide that and insist Old Woke and New

Woke are the same. See if you find any 'awareness of social justice' here in the modern variety:

- Woke demands 'inclusivity' while excluding anyone with a different opinion and calls for mass censorship to silence other views.
- Woke claims to stand against oppression when imposing oppression is the foundation of all that it does. It is the driver of political correctness which is nothing more than a Cult invention to manipulate the population to silence itself.
- Woke believes itself to be 'liberal' while pursuing a global society that can only be described as fascist (see 'anti-fascist' fascist Antifa).
- Woke calls for 'social justice' while spreading injustice wherever it goes against the common 'enemy' which can be easily identified as a differing view.
- Woke is supposed to be a metaphor for 'awake' when it is solid-gold asleep and deep in a Cult-induced coma that meets the criteria for 'off with the fairies'.

I state these points as obvious facts if people only care to look. I don't do this with a sense of condemnation. We need to appreciate that the onslaught of perceptual programming on the young has been incessant and merciless. I can understand why so many have been reframed, or, given their youth, framed from the start to see the world as the Cult demands. The Cult has had access to their minds day after day in its 'education' system for their entire formative years. Perception is formed from information received and the Cult-created system is a life-long download of information delivered to elicit a particular perception, thus behaviour. The more this has expanded into still new extremes in recent decades and ever-increasing censorship has deleted other opinions and information why wouldn't that lead to a perceptual reframing on a mass scale? I

have described already cradle-to-grave programming and in more recent times the targeting of young minds from birth to adulthood has entered the stratosphere. This has taken the form of skewing what is ‘taught’ to fit the Cult agenda and the omnipresent techniques of group-think to isolate non-believers and pressure them into line. There has always been a tendency to follow the herd, but we really are in a new world now in relation to that. We have parents who can see the ‘Covid’ hoax told by their children not to stop them wearing masks at school, being ‘Covid’ tested or having the ‘vaccine’ in fear of the peer-pressure consequences of being different. What is ‘peer-pressure’ if not pressure to conform to group-think? Renegade Minds never group-think and always retain a set of perceptions that are unique to them. Group-think is always underpinned by consequences for not group-thinking. Abuse now aimed at those refusing DNA-manipulating ‘Covid vaccines’ are a potent example of this. The biggest pressure to conform comes from the very group which is itself being manipulated. ‘I am programmed to be part of a hive mind and so you must be.’

Woke control structures in ‘education’ now apply to every mainstream organisation. Those at the top of the ‘education’ hierarchy (the Cult) decide the policy. This is imposed on governments through the Cult network; governments impose it on schools, colleges and universities; their leadership impose the policy on teachers and academics and they impose it on children and students. At any level where there is resistance, perhaps from a teacher or university lecturer, they are targeted by the authorities and often fired. Students themselves regularly demand the dismissal of academics (increasingly few) at odds with the narrative that the students have been programmed to believe in. It is quite a thought that students who are being targeted by the Cult become so consumed by programmed group-think that they launch protests and demand the removal of those who are trying to push back against those targeting the students. Such is the scale of perceptual inversion. We see this with ‘Covid’ programming as the Cult imposes the rules via psycho-psychologists and governments on

shops, transport companies and businesses which impose them on their staff who impose them on their customers who pressure Pushbackers to conform to the will of the Cult which is in the process of destroying them and their families. Scan all aspects of society and you will see the same sequence every time.

Fact free Woke and hijacking the 'left'

There is no more potent example of this than 'Woke', a mentality only made possible by the deletion of factual evidence by an 'education' system seeking to produce an ever more uniform society. Why would you bother with facts when you don't know any? Deletion of credible history both in volume and type is highly relevant. Orwell said: 'Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.' They who control the perception of the past control the perception of the future and they who control the present control the perception of the past through the writing and deleting of history. Why would you oppose the imposition of Marxism in the name of Wokeism when you don't know that Marxism cost at least 100 million lives in the 20th century alone? Watch videos and read reports in which Woker generations are asked basic historical questions – it's mind-blowing. A survey of 2,000 people found that six percent of millennials (born approximately early 1980s to early 2000s) believed the Second World War (1939-1945) broke out with the assassination of President Kennedy (in 1963) and one in ten thought Margaret Thatcher was British Prime Minister at the time. She was in office between 1979 and 1990. We are in a post-fact society. Provable facts are no defence against the fascism of political correctness or Silicon Valley censorship. Facts don't matter anymore as we have witnessed with the 'Covid' hoax. Sacrificing uniqueness to the Woke group-think religion is all you are required to do and that means thinking for yourself is the biggest Woke no, no. All religions are an expression of group-think and censorship and Woke is just another religion with an orthodoxy defended by group-think and censorship. Burned at

the stake becomes burned on Twitter which leads back eventually to burned at the stake as Woke humanity regresses to ages past.

The biggest Woke inversion of all is its creators and funders. I grew up in a traditional left of centre political household on a council estate in Leicester in the 1950s and 60s – you know, the left that challenged the power of wealth-hoarding elites and threats to freedom of speech and opinion. In those days students went on marches defending freedom of speech while today's Wokers march for its deletion. What on earth could have happened? Those very elites (collectively the Cult) that we opposed in my youth and early life have funded into existence the antithesis of that former left and hijacked the 'brand' while inverting everything it ever stood for. We have a mentality that calls itself 'liberal' and 'progressive' while acting like fascists. Cult billionaires and their corporations have funded themselves into control of 'education' to ensure that Woke programming is unceasing throughout the formative years of children and young people and that non-Wokers are isolated (that word again) whether they be students, teachers or college professors. The Cult has funded into existence the now colossal global network of Woke organisations that have spawned and promoted all the 'causes' on the Cult wish-list for global transformation and turned Wokers into demanders of them. Does anyone really think it's a coincidence that the Cult agenda for humanity is a carbon (sorry) copy of the societal transformations desired by Woke?? These are only some of them:

Political correctness: The means by which the Cult deletes all public debates that it knows it cannot win if we had the free-flow of information and evidence.

Human-caused 'climate change': The means by which the Cult seeks to transform society into a globally-controlled dictatorship imposing its will over the fine detail of everyone's lives 'to save the planet' which doesn't actually need saving.

Transgender obsession: Preparing collective perception to accept the ‘new human’ which would not have genders because it would be created technologically and not through procreation. I’ll have much more on this in Human 2.0.

Race obsession: The means by which the Cult seeks to divide and rule the population by triggering racial division through the perception that society is more racist than ever when the opposite is the case. Is it perfect in that regard? No. But to compare today with the racism of apartheid and segregation brought to an end by the civil rights movement in the 1960s is to insult the memory of that movement and inspirations like Martin Luther King. Why is the ‘anti-racism’ industry (which it is) so dominated by privileged white people?

White supremacy: This is a label used by privileged white people to demonise poor and deprived white people pushing back on tyranny to marginalise and destroy them. White people are being especially targeted as the dominant race by number within Western society which the Cult seeks to transform in its image. If you want to change a society you must weaken and undermine its biggest group and once you have done that by using the other groups you next turn on them to do the same ... ‘Then they came for the Jews and I was not a Jew so I did nothing.’

Mass migration: The mass movement of people from the Middle East, Africa and Asia into Europe, from the south into the United States and from Asia into Australia are another way the Cult seeks to dilute the racial, cultural and political influence of white people on Western society. White people ask why their governments appear to be working against them while being politically and culturally biased towards incoming cultures. Well, here’s your answer. In the same way sexually ‘straight’ people, men and women, ask why the

authorities are biased against them in favour of other sexualities. The answer is the same – that's the way the Cult wants it to be for very sinister motives.

These are all central parts of the Cult agenda and central parts of the Woke agenda and Woke was created and continues to be funded to an immense degree by Cult billionaires and corporations. If anyone begins to say 'coincidence' the syllables should stick in their throat.

Billionaire 'social justice warriors'

Joe Biden is a 100 percent-owned asset of the Cult and the Wokers' man in the White House whenever he can remember his name and for however long he lasts with his rapidly diminishing cognitive function. Even walking up the steps of an aircraft without falling on his arse would appear to be a challenge. He's not an empty-shell puppet or anything. From the minute Biden took office (or the Cult did) he began his executive orders promoting the Woke wish-list. You will see the Woke agenda imposed ever more severely because it's really the *Cult* agenda. Woke organisations and activist networks spawned by the Cult are funded to the extreme so long as they promote what the Cult wants to happen. Woke is funded to promote 'social justice' by billionaires who become billionaires by destroying social justice. The social justice mantra is only a cover for dismantling social justice and funded by billionaires that couldn't give a damn about social justice. Everything makes sense when you see that. One of Woke's premier funders is Cult billionaire financier George Soros who said: 'I am basically there to make money, I cannot and do not look at the social consequences of what I do.' This is the same Soros who has given more than \$32 billion to his Open Society Foundations global Woke network and funded Black Lives Matter, mass immigration into Europe and the United States, transgender activism, climate change activism, political correctness and groups targeting 'white supremacy' in the form of privileged white thugs that dominate Antifa. What a scam it all is and when

you are dealing with the unquestioning fact-free zone of Woke scamming them is child's play. All you need to pull it off in all these organisations are a few in-the-know agents of the Cult and an army of naïve, reframed, uninformed, narcissistic, know-nothings convinced of their own self-righteousness, self-purity and virtue.

Soros and fellow billionaires and billionaire corporations have poured hundreds of millions into Black Lives Matter and connected groups and promoted them to a global audience. None of this is motivated by caring about black people. These are the billionaires that have controlled and exploited a system that leaves millions of black people in abject poverty and deprivation which they do absolutely nothing to address. The same Cult networks funding BLM were behind the *slave trade!* Black Lives Matter hijacked a phrase that few would challenge and they have turned this laudable concept into a political weapon to divide society. You know that BLM is a fraud when it claims that *All Lives Matter*, the most inclusive statement of all, is 'racist'. BLM and its Cult masters don't want to end racism. To them it's a means to an end to control all of humanity never mind the colour, creed, culture or background. What has destroying the nuclear family got to do with ending racism? Nothing – but that is one of the goals of BLM and also happens to be a goal of the Cult as I have been exposing in my books for decades. Stealing children from loving parents and giving schools ever more power to override parents is part of that same agenda. BLM is a Marxist organisation and why would that not be the case when the Cult created Marxism *and* BLM? Patrisse Cullors, a BLM co-founder, said in a 2015 video that she and her fellow organisers, including co-founder Alicia Garza, are 'trained Marxists'. The lady known after marriage as Patrisse Khan-Cullors bought a \$1.4 million home in 2021 in one of the whitest areas of California with a black population of just 1.6 per cent and has so far bought *four* high-end homes for a total of \$3.2 million. How very Marxist. There must be a bit of spare in the BLM coffers, however, when Cult corporations and billionaires have handed over the best part of \$100 million. Many black people can see that Black Lives Matter is not

working for them, but against them, and this is still more confirmation. Black journalist Jason Whitlock, who had his account suspended by Twitter for simply linking to the story about the ‘Marxist’s’ home buying spree, said that BLM leaders are ‘making millions of dollars off the backs of these dead black men who they wouldn’t spit on if they were on fire and alive’.

Black Lies Matter

Cult assets and agencies came together to promote BLM in the wake of the death of career criminal George Floyd who had been jailed a number of times including for forcing his way into the home of a black woman with others in a raid in which a gun was pointed at her stomach. Floyd was filmed being held in a Minneapolis street in 2020 with the knee of a police officer on his neck and he subsequently died. It was an appalling thing for the officer to do, but the same technique has been used by police on peaceful protestors of lockdown without any outcry from the Woke brigade. As unquestioning supporters of the Cult agenda Wokers have supported lockdown and all the ‘Covid’ claptrap while attacking anyone standing up to the tyranny imposed in its name. Court documents would later include details of an autopsy on Floyd by County Medical Examiner Dr Andrew Baker who concluded that Floyd had taken a fatal level of the drug fentanyl. None of this mattered to fact-free, question-free, Woke. Floyd’s death was followed by worldwide protests against police brutality amid calls to defund the police. Throwing babies out with the bathwater is a Woke speciality. In the wake of the murder of British woman Sarah Everard a Green Party member of the House of Lords, Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (Nincompoopia would have been better), called for a 6pm curfew for all men. This would be in breach of the Geneva Conventions on war crimes which ban collective punishment, but that would never have crossed the black and white Woke mind of Baroness Nincompoopia who would have been far too convinced of her own self-righteousness to compute such details. Many American cities did defund the police in the face of Floyd riots

and after \$15 million was deleted from the police budget in Washington DC under useless Woke mayor Muriel Bowser car-jacking alone rose by 300 percent and within six months the US capital recorded its highest murder rate in 15 years. The same happened in Chicago and other cities in line with the Cult/Soros plan to bring fear to streets and neighbourhoods by reducing the police, releasing violent criminals and not prosecuting crime. This is the mob-rule agenda that I have warned in the books was coming for so long. Shootings in the area of Minneapolis where Floyd was arrested increased by 2,500 percent compared with the year before. Defunding the police over George Floyd has led to a big increase in dead people with many of them black. Police protection for politicians making these decisions stayed the same or increased as you would expect from professional hypocrites. The Cult doesn't actually want to abolish the police. It wants to abolish local control over the police and hand it to federal government as the psychopaths advance the Hunger Games Society. Many George Floyd protests turned into violent riots with black stores and businesses destroyed by fire and looting across America fuelled by Black Lives Matter. Woke doesn't do irony. If you want civil rights you must loot the liquor store and the supermarket and make off with a smart TV. It's the only way.

It's not a race war – it's a class war

Black people are patronised by privileged blacks and whites alike and told they are victims of white supremacy. I find it extraordinary to watch privileged blacks supporting the very system and bloodline networks behind the slave trade and parroting the same Cult-serving manipulative crap of their privileged white, often billionaire, associates. It is indeed not a race war but a class war and colour is just a diversion. Black Senator Cory Booker and black Congresswoman Maxine Waters, more residents of Nincompoopia, personify this. Once you tell people they are victims of someone else you devalue both their own responsibility for their plight and the power they have to impact on their reality and experience. Instead

we have: 'You are only in your situation because of whitey – turn on them and everything will change.' It won't change. Nothing changes in our lives unless *we* change it. Crucial to that is never seeing yourself as a victim and always as the creator of your reality. Life is a simple sequence of choice and consequence. Make different choices and you create different consequences. *You* have to make those choices – not Black Lives Matter, the Woke Mafia and anyone else that seeks to dictate your life. Who are they these Wokers, an emotional and psychological road traffic accident, to tell you what to do? Personal empowerment is the last thing the Cult and its Black Lives Matter want black people or anyone else to have. They claim to be defending the underdog while *creating* and perpetuating the underdog. The Cult's worst nightmare is human unity and if they are going to keep blacks, whites and every other race under economic servitude and control then the focus must be diverted from what they have in common to what they can be manipulated to believe divides them. Blacks have to be told that their poverty and plight is the fault of the white bloke living on the street in the same poverty and with the same plight they are experiencing. The difference is that your plight black people is due to him, a white supremacist with 'white privilege' living on the street. Don't unite as one human family against your mutual oppressors and suppressors – fight the oppressor with the white face who is as financially deprived as you are. The Cult knows that as its 'Covid' agenda moves into still new levels of extremism people are going to respond and it has been spreading the seeds of disunity everywhere to stop a united response to the evil that targets *all of us*.

Racist attacks on 'whiteness' are getting ever more outrageous and especially through the American Democratic Party which has an appalling history for anti-black racism. Barack Obama, Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and Nancy Pelosi all eulogised about Senator Robert Byrd at his funeral in 2010 after a nearly 60-year career in Congress. Byrd was a brutal Ku Klux Klan racist and a violent abuser of Cathy O'Brien in MKUltra. He said he would never fight in the military 'with a negro by my side' and 'rather I should die a thousand times,

and see Old Glory trampled in the dirt never to rise again, than to see this beloved land of ours become degraded by race mongrels, a throwback to the blackest specimen from the wilds'. Biden called Byrd a 'very close friend and mentor'. These 'Woke' hypocrites are not anti-racist they are anti-poor and anti-people not of their perceived class. Here is an illustration of the scale of anti-white racism to which we have now descended. Seriously Woke and moronic *New York Times* contributor Damon Young described whiteness as a 'virus' that 'like other viruses will not die until there are no bodies left for it to infect'. He went on: '... the only way to stop it is to locate it, isolate it, extract it, and kill it.' Young can say that as a black man with no consequences when a white man saying the same in reverse would be facing a jail sentence. *That's* racism. We had super-Woke numbskull senators Tammy Duckworth and Mazie Hirono saying they would object to future Biden Cabinet appointments if he did not nominate more Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Never mind the ability of the candidate what do they look like? Duckworth said: 'I will vote for racial minorities and I will vote for LGBTQ, but anyone else I'm not voting for.' Appointing people on the grounds of race is illegal, but that was not a problem for this ludicrous pair. They were on-message and that's a free pass in any situation.

Critical race racism

White children are told at school they are intrinsically racist as they are taught the divisive 'critical race theory'. This claims that the law and legal institutions are inherently racist and that race is a socially constructed concept used by white people to further their economic and political interests at the expense of people of colour. White is a 'virus' as we've seen. Racial inequality results from 'social, economic, and legal differences that white people create between races to maintain white interests which leads to poverty and criminality in minority communities'. I must tell that to the white guy sleeping on the street. The principal of East Side Community School in New York sent white parents a manifesto that called on

them to become ‘white traitors’ and advocate for full ‘white abolition’. These people are teaching your kids when they urgently need a psychiatrist. The ‘school’ included a chart with ‘eight white identities’ that ranged from ‘white supremacist’ to ‘white abolition’ and defined the behaviour white people must follow to end ‘the regime of whiteness’. Woke blacks and their privileged white associates are acting exactly like the slave owners of old and Ku Klux Klan racists like Robert Byrd. They are too full of their own self-purity to see that, but it’s true. Racism is not a body type; it’s a state of mind that can manifest through any colour, creed or culture.

Another racial fraud is ‘*equity*’. Not equality of treatment and opportunity – equity. It’s a term spun as equality when it means something very different. Equality in its true sense is a raising up while ‘*equity*’ is a race to the bottom. Everyone in the same level of poverty is ‘*equity*’. Keep everyone down – that’s equity. The Cult doesn’t want anyone in the human family to be empowered and BLM leaders, like all these ‘anti-racist’ organisations, continue their privileged, pampered existence by perpetuating the perception of gathering racism. When is the last time you heard an ‘anti-racist’ or ‘anti-Semitism’ organisation say that acts of racism and discrimination have *fallen*? It’s not in the interests of their fund-raising and power to influence and the same goes for the professional soccer anti-racism operation, Kick It Out. Two things confirmed that the Black Lives Matter riots in the summer of 2020 were Cult creations. One was that while anti-lockdown protests were condemned in this same period for ‘transmitting ‘Covid’ the authorities supported mass gatherings of Black Lives Matter supporters. I even saw self-deluding people claiming to be doctors say the two types of protest were not the same. No – the non-existent ‘Covid’ was in favour of lockdowns and attacked those that protested against them while ‘Covid’ supported Black Lives Matter and kept well away from its protests. The whole thing was a joke and as lockdown protestors were arrested, often brutally, by reframed Face-Nappies we had the grotesque sight of police officers taking the knee to Black Lives Matter, a Cult-funded Marxist

organisation that supports violent riots and wants to destroy the nuclear family and white people.

He's not white? Shucks!

Woke obsession with race was on display again when ten people were shot dead in Boulder, Colorado, in March, 2021. Cult-owned Woke TV channels like CNN said the shooter appeared to be a white man and Wokers were on Twitter condemning 'violent white men' with the usual mantras. Then the shooter's name was released as Ahmad Al Aliwi Alissa, an anti-Trump Arab-American, and the sigh of disappointment could be heard five miles away. Never mind that ten people were dead and what that meant for their families. Race baiting was all that mattered to these sick Cult-serving people like Barack Obama who exploited the deaths to further divide America on racial grounds which is his job for the Cult. This is the man that 'racist' white Americans made the first black president of the United States and then gave him a second term. Not-very-bright Obama has become filthy rich on the back of that and today appears to have a big influence on the Biden administration. Even so he's still a downtrodden black man and a victim of white supremacy. This disingenuous fraud reveals the contempt he has for black people when he puts on a Deep South Alabama accent whenever he talks to them, no, *at* them.

Another BLM red flag was how the now fully-Woke (fully-Cult) and fully-virtue-signalled professional soccer authorities had their teams taking the knee before every match in support of Marxist Black Lives Matter. Soccer authorities and clubs displayed 'Black Lives Matter' on the players' shirts and flashed the name on electronic billboards around the pitch. Any fans that condemned what is a Freemasonic taking-the-knee ritual were widely condemned as you would expect from the Woke virtue-signallers of professional sport and the now fully-Woke media. We have reverse racism in which you are banned from criticising any race or culture except for white people for whom anything goes – say what you like, no problem. What has this got to do with racial harmony and

equality? We've had black supremacists from Black Lives Matter telling white people to fall to their knees in the street and apologise for their white supremacy. Black supremacists acting like white supremacist slave owners of the past couldn't breach their self-obsessed, race-obsessed sense of self-purity. Joe Biden appointed a race-obsessed black supremacist Kristen Clarke to head the Justice Department Civil Rights Division. Clarke claimed that blacks are endowed with 'greater mental, physical and spiritual abilities' than whites. If anyone reversed that statement they would be vilified. Clarke is on-message so no problem. She's never seen a black-white situation in which the black figure is anything but a virtuous victim and she heads the Civil Rights Division which should treat everyone the same or it isn't civil rights. Another perception of the Renegade Mind: If something or someone is part of the Cult agenda they will be supported by Woke governments and media no matter what. If they're not, they will be condemned and censored. It really is that simple and so racist Clarke prospers despite (make that because of) her racism.

The end of culture

Biden's administration is full of such racial, cultural and economic bias as the Cult requires the human family to be divided into warring factions. We are now seeing racially-segregated graduations and everything, but everything, is defined through the lens of perceived 'racism. We have 'racist' mathematics, 'racist' food and even 'racist' *plants*. World famous Kew Gardens in London said it was changing labels on plants and flowers to tell its pre-'Covid' more than two million visitors a year how racist they are. Kew director Richard Deverell said this was part of an effort to 'move quickly to decolonise collections' after they were approached by one Ajay Chhabra 'an actor with an insight into how sugar cane was linked to slavery'. They are *plants* you idiots. 'Decolonisation' in the Woke manual really means colonisation of society with its mentality and by extension colonisation by the Cult. We are witnessing a new Chinese-style 'Cultural Revolution' so essential to the success of all

Marxist takeovers. Our cultural past and traditions have to be swept away to allow a new culture to be built-back-better. Woke targeting of long-standing Western cultural pillars including historical monuments and cancelling of historical figures is what happened in the Mao revolution in China which ‘purged remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society’ and installed Maoism as the dominant ideology’. For China see the Western world today and for ‘dominant ideology’ see Woke. Better still see Marxism or Maoism. The ‘Covid’ hoax has specifically sought to destroy the arts and all elements of Western culture from people meeting in a pub or restaurant to closing theatres, music venues, sports stadiums, places of worship and even banning *singing*. Destruction of Western society is also why criticism of any religion is banned except for Christianity which again is the dominant religion as white is the numerically-dominant race. Christianity may be fading rapidly, but its history and traditions are weaved through the fabric of Western society. Delete the pillars and other structures will follow until the whole thing collapses. I am not a Christian defending that religion when I say that. I have no religion. It’s just a fact. To this end Christianity has itself been turned Woke to usher its own downfall and its ranks are awash with ‘change agents’ – knowing and unknowing – at every level including Pope Francis (*definitely* knowing) and the clueless Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby (possibly not, but who can be sure?). Woke seeks to coordinate attacks on Western culture, traditions, and ways of life through ‘intersectionality’ defined as ‘the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalised individuals or groups’. Wade through the Orwellian Woke-speak and this means coordinating disparate groups in a common cause to overthrow freedom and liberal values.

The entire structure of public institutions has been infested with Woke – government at all levels, political parties, police, military, schools, universities, advertising, media and trade unions. This abomination has been achieved through the Cult web by appointing

Wokers to positions of power and battering non-Wokers into line through intimidation, isolation and threats to their job. Many have been fired in the wake of the empathy-deleted, vicious hostility of 'social justice' Wokers and the desire of gutless, spineless employers to virtue-signal their Wokeness. Corporations are filled with Wokers today, most notably those in Silicon Valley. Ironically at the top they are not Woke at all. They are only exploiting the mentality their Cult masters have created and funded to censor and enslave while the Wokers cheer them on until it's their turn. Thus the Woke 'liberal left' is an inversion of the traditional liberal left. Campaigning for justice on the grounds of power and wealth distribution has been replaced by campaigning for identity politics. The genuine traditional left would never have taken money from today's billionaire abusers of fairness and justice and nor would the billionaires have wanted to fund that genuine left. It would not have been in their interests to do so. The division of opinion in those days was between the haves and have nots. This all changed with Cult manipulated and funded identity politics. The division of opinion today is between Wokers and non-Wokers and not income brackets. Cult corporations and their billionaires may have taken wealth disparity to cataclysmic levels of injustice, but as long as they speak the language of Woke, hand out the dosh to the Woke network and censor the enemy they are 'one of us'. Billionaires who don't give a damn about injustice are laughing at them till their bellies hurt. Wokers are not even close to self-aware enough to see that. The transformed 'left' dynamic means that Wokers who drone on about 'social justice' are funded by billionaires that have destroyed social justice the world over. It's *why* they are billionaires.

The climate con

Nothing encapsulates what I have said more comprehensively than the hoax of human-caused global warming. I have detailed in my books over the years how Cult operatives and organisations were the pump-primers from the start of the climate con. A purpose-built vehicle for this is the Club of Rome established by the Cult in 1968

with the Rockefellers and Rothschilds centrally involved all along. Their gofer frontman Maurice Strong, a Canadian oil millionaire, hosted the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 where the global ‘green movement’ really expanded in earnest under the guiding hand of the Cult. The Earth Summit established Agenda 21 through the Cult-created-and-owned United Nations to use the illusion of human-caused climate change to justify the transformation of global society to save the world from climate disaster. It is a No-Problem-Reaction-Solution sold through governments, media, schools and universities as whole generations have been terrified into believing that the world was going to end in their lifetimes unless what old people had inflicted upon them was stopped by a complete restructuring of how everything is done. Chill, kids, it’s all a hoax. Such restructuring is precisely what the Cult agenda demands (purely by coincidence of course). Today this has been given the codename of the Great Reset which is only an updated term for Agenda 21 and its associated Agenda 2030. The latter, too, is administered through the UN and was voted into being by the General Assembly in 2015. Both 21 and 2030 seek centralised control of all resources and food right down to the raindrops falling on your own land. These are some of the demands of Agenda 21 established in 1992. See if you recognise this society emerging today:

- End national sovereignty
- State planning and management of all land resources, ecosystems, deserts, forests, mountains, oceans and fresh water; agriculture; rural development; biotechnology; and ensuring ‘*equity*’
- The state to ‘define the role’ of business and financial resources
- Abolition of private property
- ‘Restructuring’ the family unit (see BLM)
- Children raised by the state
- People told what their job will be
- Major restrictions on movement
- Creation of ‘human settlement zones’

- Mass resettlement as people are forced to vacate land where they live
- Dumbing down education
- Mass global depopulation in pursuit of all the above

The United Nations was created as a Trojan horse for world government. With the climate con of critical importance to promoting that outcome you would expect the UN to be involved. Oh, it's involved all right. The UN is promoting Agenda 21 and Agenda 2030 justified by 'climate change' while also driving the climate hoax through its Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), one of the world's most corrupt organisations. The IPCC has been lying ferociously and constantly since the day it opened its doors with the global media hanging unquestioningly on its every mendacious word. The Green movement is entirely Woke and has long lost its original environmental focus since it was co-opted by the Cult. An obsession with 'global warming' has deleted its values and scrambled its head. I experienced a small example of what I mean on a beautiful country walk that I have enjoyed several times a week for many years. The path merged into the fields and forests and you felt at one with the natural world. Then a 'Green' organisation, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, took over part of the land and proceeded to cut down a large number of trees, including mature ones, to install a horrible big, bright steel 'this-is-ours-stay-out' fence that destroyed the whole atmosphere of this beautiful place. No one with a feel for nature would do that. Day after day I walked to the sound of chainsaws and a magnificent mature weeping willow tree that I so admired was cut down at the base of the trunk. When I challenged a Woke young girl in a green shirt (of course) about this vandalism she replied: 'It's a weeping willow – it will grow back.' This is what people are paying for when they donate to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and many other 'green' organisations today. It is not the environmental movement that I knew and instead has become a support-system – as with Extinction Rebellion – for a very dark agenda.

Private jets for climate justice

The Cult-owned, Gates-funded, World Economic Forum and its founder Klaus Schwab were behind the emergence of Greta Thunberg to harness the young behind the climate agenda and she was invited to speak to the world at ... the UN. Schwab published a book, *Covid-19: The Great Reset* in 2020 in which he used the 'Covid' hoax and the climate hoax to lay out a new society straight out of Agenda 21 and Agenda 2030. Bill Gates followed in early 2021 when he took time out from destroying the world to produce a book in his name about the way to save it. Gates flies across the world in private jets and admitted that 'I probably have one of the highest greenhouse gas footprints of anyone on the planet ... my personal flying alone is gigantic.' He has also bid for the planet's biggest private jet operator. Other climate change saviours who fly in private jets include John Kerry, the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, and actor Leonardo DiCaprio, a 'UN Messenger of Peace with special focus on climate change'. These people are so full of bullshit they could corner the market in manure. We mustn't be sceptical, though, because the Gates book, *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need*, is a genuine attempt to protect the world and not an obvious pile of excrement attributed to a mega-psychopath aimed at selling his masters' plans for humanity. The Gates book and the other shite-pile by Klaus Schwab could have been written by the same person and may well have been. Both use 'climate change' and 'Covid' as the excuses for their new society and by coincidence the Cult's World Economic Forum and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation promote the climate hoax and hosted Event 201 which pre-empted with a 'simulation' the very 'coronavirus' hoax that would be simulated for real on humanity within weeks. The British 'royal' family is promoting the 'Reset' as you would expect through Prince 'climate change caused the war in Syria' Charles and his hapless son Prince William who said that we must 'reset our relationship with nature and our trajectory as a species' to avoid a climate disaster. Amazing how many promoters of the 'Covid' and 'climate change' control

systems are connected to Gates and the World Economic Forum. A ‘study’ in early 2021 claimed that carbon dioxide emissions must fall by the equivalent of a global lockdown roughly every two years for the next decade to save the planet. The ‘study’ appeared in the same period that the Schwab mob claimed in a video that lockdowns destroying the lives of billions are good because they make the earth ‘quieter’ with less ‘ambient noise’. They took down the video amid a public backlash for such arrogant, empathy-deleted stupidity You see, however, where they are going with this. Corinne Le Quéré, a professor at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, University of East Anglia, was lead author of the climate lockdown study, and she writes for ... the World Economic Forum. Gates calls in ‘his’ book for changing ‘every aspect of the economy’ (long-time Cult agenda) and for humans to eat synthetic ‘meat’ (predicted in my books) while cows and other farm animals are eliminated.

Australian TV host and commentator Alan Jones described what carbon emission targets would mean for farm animals in Australia alone if emissions were reduced as demanded by 35 percent by 2030 and zero by 2050:

Well, let’s take agriculture, the total emissions from agriculture are about 75 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, equivalent. Now reduce that by 35 percent and you have to come down to 50 million tonnes, I’ve done the maths. So if you take for example 1.5 million cows, you’re going to have to reduce the herd by 525,000 [by] 2030, nine years, that’s 58,000 cows a year. The beef herd’s 30 million, reduce that by 35 percent, that’s 10.5 million, which means 1.2 million cattle have to go every year between now and 2030. This is insanity!

There are 75 million sheep. Reduce that by 35 percent, that’s 26 million sheep, that’s almost 3 million a year. So under the Paris Agreement over 30 million beasts. dairy cows, cattle, pigs and sheep would go. More than 8,000 every minute of every hour for the next decade, do these people know what they’re talking about?

Clearly they don’t at the level of campaigners, politicians and administrators. The Cult *does* know; that’s the outcome it wants. We are faced with not just a war on humanity. Animals and the natural world are being targeted and I have been saying since the ‘Covid’ hoax began that the plan eventually was to claim that the ‘deadly virus’ is able to jump from animals, including farm animals and

domestic pets, to humans. Just before this book went into production came this story: 'Russia registers world's first Covid-19 vaccine for cats & dogs as makers of Sputnik V warn pets & farm animals could spread virus'. The report said 'top scientists warned that the deadly pathogen could soon begin spreading through homes and farms' and 'the next stage is the infection of farm and domestic animals'. Know the outcome and you'll see the journey. Think what that would mean for animals and keep your eye on a term called zoonosis or zoonotic diseases which transmit between animals and humans. The Cult wants to break the connection between animals and people as it does between people and people. Farm animals fit with the Cult agenda to transform food from natural to synthetic.

The gas of life is killing us

There can be few greater examples of Cult inversion than the condemnation of carbon dioxide as a dangerous pollutant when it is the gas of life. Without it the natural world would be dead and so we would all be dead. We breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide while plants produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide. It is a perfect symbiotic relationship that the Cult wants to dismantle for reasons I will come to in the final two chapters. Gates, Schwab, other Cult operatives and mindless repeaters, want the world to be 'carbon neutral' by at least 2050 and the earlier the better. 'Zero carbon' is the cry echoed by lunatics calling for 'Zero Covid' when we already have it. These carbon emission targets will deindustrialise the world in accordance with Cult plans – the post-industrial, post-democratic society – and with so-called renewables like solar and wind not coming even close to meeting human energy needs blackouts and cold are inevitable. Texans got the picture in the winter of 2021 when a snow storm stopped wind turbines and solar panels from working and the lights went down along with water which relies on electricity for its supply system. Gates wants everything to be powered by electricity to ensure that his masters have the kill switch to stop all human activity, movement, cooking, water and warmth any time they like. The climate lie is so

stupendously inverted that it claims we must urgently reduce carbon dioxide when we *don't have enough*.

Co₂ in the atmosphere is a little above 400 parts per million when the optimum for plant growth is 2,000 ppm and when it falls anywhere near 150 ppm the natural world starts to die and so do we. It fell to as low as 280 ppm in an 1880 measurement in Hawaii and rose to 413 ppm in 2019 with industrialisation which is why the planet has become *greener* in the industrial period. How insane then that psychopathic madman Gates is not satisfied only with blocking the rise of Co₂. He's funding technology to suck it out of the atmosphere. The reason why will become clear. The industrial era is not destroying the world through Co₂ and has instead turned around a potentially disastrous ongoing fall in Co₂. Greenpeace co-founder and scientist Patrick Moore walked away from Greenpeace in 1986 and has exposed the green movement for fear-mongering and lies. He said that 500 million years ago there was *17 times* more Co₂ in the atmosphere than we have today and levels have been falling for hundreds of millions of years. In the last 150 million years Co₂ levels in Earth's atmosphere had reduced by *90 percent*. Moore said that by the time humanity began to unlock carbon dioxide from fossil fuels we were at '38 seconds to midnight' and in that sense: 'Humans are [the Earth's] salvation.' Moore made the point that only half the Co₂ emitted by fossil fuels stays in the atmosphere and we should remember that all pollution pouring from chimneys that we are told is carbon dioxide is in fact nothing of the kind. It's pollution. Carbon dioxide is an invisible gas.

William Happer, Professor of Physics at Princeton University and long-time government adviser on climate, has emphasised the Co₂ deficiency for maximum growth and food production. Greenhouse growers don't add carbon dioxide for a bit of fun. He said that most of the warming in the last 100 years, after the earth emerged from the super-cold period of the 'Little Ice Age' into a natural warming cycle, was over by 1940. Happer said that a peak year for warming in 1988 can be explained by a 'monster El Nino' which is a natural and cyclical warming of the Pacific that has nothing to do with 'climate

change'. He said the effect of Co2 could be compared to painting a wall with red paint in that once two or three coats have been applied it didn't matter how much more you slapped on because the wall will not get much redder. Almost all the effect of the rise in Co2 has already happened, he said, and the volume in the atmosphere would now have to *double* to increase temperature by a single degree. Climate hoaxers know this and they have invented the most ridiculously complicated series of 'feedback' loops to try to overcome this rather devastating fact. You hear puppet Greta going on cluelessly about feedback loops and this is why.

The Sun affects temperature? No you *climate denier*

Some other nonsense to contemplate: Climate graphs show that rises in temperature do not follow rises in Co2 – *it's the other way round* with a lag between the two of some 800 years. If we go back 800 years from present time we hit the Medieval Warm Period when temperatures were higher than now without any industrialisation and this was followed by the Little Ice Age when temperatures plummeted. The world was still emerging from these centuries of serious cold when many climate records began which makes the ever-repeated line of the 'hottest year since records began' meaningless when you are not comparing like with like. The coldest period of the Little Ice Age corresponded with the lowest period of sunspot activity when the Sun was at its least active. Proper scientists will not be at all surprised by this when it confirms the obvious fact that earth temperature is affected by the scale of Sun activity and the energetic power that it subsequently emits; but when is the last time you heard a climate hoaxter talking about the Sun as a source of earth temperature?? Everything has to be focussed on Co2 which makes up just 0.117 percent of so-called greenhouse gases and only a fraction of even that is generated by human activity. The rest is natural. More than 90 percent of those greenhouse gases are water vapour and clouds ([Fig 9](#)). Ban moisture I say. Have you noticed that the climate hoaxers no longer use the polar bear as their promotion image? That's because far from becoming extinct polar

bear communities are stable or thriving. Joe Bastardi, American meteorologist, weather forecaster and outspoken critic of the climate lie, documents in his book *The Climate Chronicles* how weather patterns and events claimed to be evidence of climate change have been happening since long before industrialisation: 'What happened before naturally is happening again, as is to be expected given the cyclical nature of the climate due to the design of the planet.' If you read the detailed background to the climate hoax in my other books you will shake your head and wonder how anyone could believe the crap which has spawned a multi-trillion dollar industry based on absolute garbage (see HIV causes AIDS and Sars-Cov-2 causes 'Covid-19'). Climate and 'Covid' have much in common given they have the same source. They both have the contradictory *everything* factor in which everything is explained by reference to them. It's hot – 'it's climate change'. It's cold – 'it's climate change'. I got a sniffle – 'it's Covid'. I haven't got a sniffle – 'it's Covid'. Not having a sniffle has to be a symptom of 'Covid'. Everything is and not having a sniffle is especially dangerous if you are a slow walker. For sheer audacity I offer you a Cambridge University 'study' that actually linked 'Covid' to 'climate change'. It had to happen eventually. They concluded that climate change played a role in 'Covid-19' spreading from animals to humans because ... wait for it ... I kid you not ... *the two groups were forced closer together as populations grow.* Er, that's it. The whole foundation on which this depended was that 'Bats are the likely zoonotic origin of SARS-CoV-1 and SARS-CoV-2'. Well, they are not. They are nothing to do with it. Apart from bats not being the origin and therefore 'climate change' effects on bats being irrelevant I am in awe of their academic insight. Where would we be without them? Not where we are that's for sure.

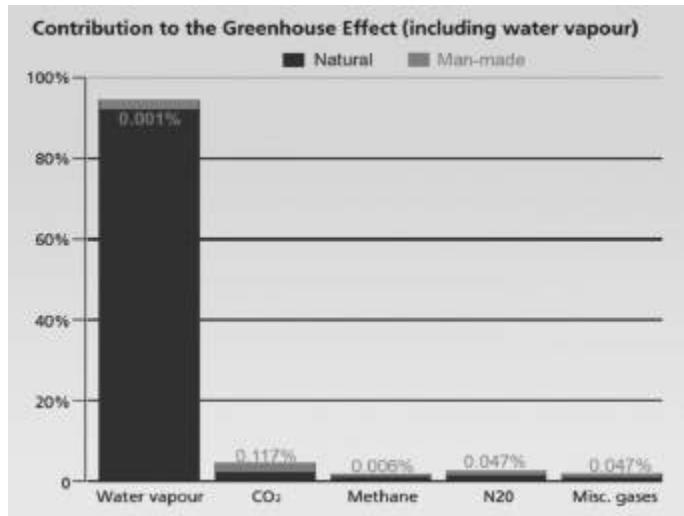


Figure 9: The idea that the gas of life is disastrously changing the climate is an insult to brain cell activity.

One other point about the weather is that climate modification is now well advanced and not every major weather event is natural – or earthquake come to that. I cover this subject at some length in other books. China is openly planning a rapid expansion of its weather modification programme which includes changing the climate in an area more than one and a half times the size of India. China used weather manipulation to ensure clear skies during the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. I have quoted from US military documents detailing how to employ weather manipulation as a weapon of war and they did that in the 1960s and 70s during the conflict in Vietnam with Operation Popeye manipulating monsoon rains for military purposes. Why would there be international treaties on weather modification if it wasn't possible? Of course it is. Weather is energetic information and it can be changed.

How was the climate hoax pulled off? See 'Covid'

If you can get billions to believe in a 'virus' that doesn't exist you can get them to believe in human-caused climate change that doesn't exist. Both are being used by the Cult to transform global society in the way it has long planned. Both hoaxes have been achieved in pretty much the same way. First you declare a lie is a fact. There's a

'virus' you call SARS-Cov-2 or humans are warming the planet with their behaviour. Next this becomes, via Cult networks, the foundation of government, academic and science policy and belief. Those who parrot the mantra are given big grants to produce research that confirms the narrative is true and ever more 'symptoms' are added to make the 'virus'/'climate change' sound even more scary. Scientists and researchers who challenge the narrative have their grants withdrawn and their careers destroyed. The media promote the lie as the unquestionable truth and censor those with an alternative view or evidence. A great percentage of the population believe what they are told as the lie becomes an everybody-knows-that and the believing-masses turn on those with a mind of their own. The technique has been used endlessly throughout human history. Wokers are the biggest promotorrs of the climate lie *and* 'Covid' fascism because their minds are owned by the Cult; their sense of self-righteous self-purity knows no bounds; and they exist in a bubble of reality in which facts are irrelevant and only get in the way of looking without seeing.

Running through all of this like veins in a blue cheese is control of information, which means control of perception, which means control of behaviour, which collectively means control of human society. The Cult owns the global media and Silicon Valley fascists for the simple reason that it *has* to. Without control of information it can't control perception and through that human society. Examine every facet of the Cult agenda and you will see that anything supporting its introduction is never censored while anything pushing back is always censored. I say again: Psychopaths that know why they are doing this must go before Nuremberg trials and those that follow their orders must trot along behind them into the same dock. 'I was just following orders' didn't work the first time and it must not work now. Nuremberg trials must be held all over the world before public juries for politicians, government officials, police, compliant doctors, scientists and virologists, and all Cult operatives such as Gates, Tedros, Fauci, Vallance, Whitty, Ferguson, Zuckerberg, Wojcicki, Brin, Page, Dorsey, the whole damn lot of

them – including, no *especially*, the psychopath psychologists. Without them and the brainless, gutless excuses for journalists that have repeated their lies, none of this could be happening. Nobody can be allowed to escape justice for the psychological and economic Armageddon they are all responsible for visiting upon the human race.

As for the compliant, unquestioning, swathes of humanity, and the self-obsessed, all-knowing ignorance of the Wokers ... don't start me. God help their kids. God help their grandkids. God *help them*.

CHAPTER NINE

We must have it? So what is it?

Well I won't back down. No, I won't back down. You can stand me up at the Gates of Hell. But I won't back down

Tom Petty

I will now focus on the genetically-manipulating ‘Covid vaccines’ which do not meet this official definition of a vaccine by the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC): ‘A product that stimulates a person’s immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease.’ On that basis ‘Covid vaccines’ are not a vaccine in that the makers don’t even claim they stop infection or transmission.

They are instead part of a multi-levelled conspiracy to change the nature of the human body and what it means to be ‘human’ and to depopulate an enormous swathe of humanity. What I shall call Human 1.0 is on the cusp of becoming Human 2.0 and for very sinister reasons. Before I get to the ‘Covid vaccine’ in detail here’s some background to vaccines in general. Government regulators do not test vaccines – the makers do – and the makers control which data is revealed and which isn’t. Children in America are given 50 vaccine doses by age six and 69 by age 19 and the effect of the whole combined schedule has never been tested. Autoimmune diseases when the immune system attacks its own body have soared in the mass vaccine era and so has disease in general in children and the young. Why wouldn’t this be the case when vaccines target the *immune system*? The US government gave Big Pharma drug

companies immunity from prosecution for vaccine death and injury in the 1986 National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act (NCVIA) and since then the government (taxpayer) has been funding compensation for the consequences of Big Pharma vaccines. The criminal and satanic drug giants can't lose and the vaccine schedule has increased dramatically since 1986 for this reason. There is no incentive to make vaccines safe and a big incentive to make money by introducing ever more. Even against a ridiculously high bar to prove vaccine liability, and with the government controlling the hearing in which it is being challenged for compensation, the vaccine court has so far paid out more than \$4 billion. These are the vaccines we are told are safe and psychopaths like Zuckerberg censor posts saying otherwise. The immunity law was even justified by a ruling that vaccines by their nature were 'unavoidably unsafe'.

Check out the ingredients of vaccines and you will be shocked if you are new to this. *They put that in children's bodies?? What??* Try aluminium, a brain toxin connected to dementia, aborted foetal tissue and formaldehyde which is used to embalm corpses. World-renowned aluminium expert Christopher Exley had his research into the health effect of aluminium in vaccines shut down by Keele University in the UK when it began taking funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Research when diseases 'eradicated' by vaccines began to decline and you will find the fall began long *before* the vaccine was introduced. Sometimes the fall even plateaued after the vaccine. Diseases like scarlet fever for which there was no vaccine declined in the same way because of environmental and other factors. A perfect case in point is the polio vaccine. Polio began when lead arsenate was first sprayed as an insecticide and residues remained in food products. Spraying started in 1892 and the first US polio epidemic came in Vermont in 1894. The simple answer was to stop spraying, but Rockefeller-created Big Pharma had a better idea. Polio was decreed to be caused by the *poliovirus* which 'spreads from person to person and can infect a person's spinal cord'. Lead arsenate was replaced by the lethal DDT which had the same effect of causing paralysis by damaging the brain and central nervous

system. Polio plummeted when DDT was reduced and then banned, but the vaccine is still given the credit for something it didn't do. Today by far the biggest cause of polio is the vaccines promoted by Bill Gates. Vaccine justice campaigner Robert Kennedy Jr, son of assassinated (by the Cult) US Attorney General Robert Kennedy, wrote:

In 2017, the World Health Organization (WHO) reluctantly admitted that the global explosion in polio is predominantly vaccine strain. The most frightening epidemics in Congo, Afghanistan, and the Philippines, are all linked to vaccines. In fact, by 2018, 70% of global polio cases were vaccine strain.

Vaccines make fortunes for Cult-owned Gates and Big Pharma while undermining the health and immune systems of the population. We had a glimpse of the mentality behind the Big Pharma cartel with a report on WION (World is One News), an international English language TV station based in India, which exposed the extraordinary behaviour of US drug company Pfizer over its 'Covid vaccine'. The WION report told how Pfizer had made fantastic demands of Argentina, Brazil and other countries in return for its 'vaccine'. These included immunity from prosecution, even for Pfizer negligence, government insurance to protect Pfizer from law suits and handing over as collateral sovereign assets of the country to include Argentina's bank reserves, military bases and embassy buildings. Pfizer demanded the same of Brazil in the form of waiving sovereignty of its assets abroad; exempting Pfizer from Brazilian laws; and giving Pfizer immunity from all civil liability. This is a 'vaccine' developed with government funding. Big Pharma is evil incarnate as a creation of the Cult and all must be handed tickets to Nuremberg.

Phantom 'vaccine' for a phantom 'disease'

I'll expose the 'Covid vaccine' fraud and then go on to the wider background of why the Cult has set out to 'vaccinate' every man, woman and child on the planet for an alleged 'new disease' with a survival rate of 99.77 percent (or more) even by the grotesquely-

manipulated figures of the World Health Organization and Johns Hopkins University. The ‘infection’ to ‘death’ ratio is 0.23 to 0.15 percent according to Stanford epidemiologist Dr John Ioannidis and while estimates vary the danger remains tiny. I say that if the truth be told the fake infection to fake death ratio is zero. Never mind all the evidence I have presented here and in *The Answer* that there is no ‘virus’ let us just focus for a moment on that death-rate figure of say 0.23 percent. The figure includes all those worldwide who have tested positive with a test not testing for the ‘virus’ and then died within 28 days or even longer of any other cause – *any other cause*. Now subtract all those illusory ‘Covid’ deaths on the global data sheets from the 0.23 percent. What do you think you would be left with? *Zero*. A vaccination has never been successfully developed for a so-called coronavirus. They have all failed at the animal testing stage when they caused hypersensitivity to what they were claiming to protect against and made the impact of a disease far worse. Cult-owned vaccine corporations got around that problem this time by bypassing animal trials, going straight to humans and making the length of the ‘trials’ before the public rollout as short as they could get away with. Normally it takes five to ten years or more to develop vaccines that still cause demonstrable harm to many people and that’s without including the long-term effects that are never officially connected to the vaccination. ‘Covid’ non-vaccines have been officially produced and approved in a matter of months from a standing start and part of the reason is that (a) they were developed before the ‘Covid’ hoax began and (b) they are based on computer programs and not natural sources. Official non-trials were so short that government agencies gave *emergency*, not full, approval. ‘Trials’ were not even completed and full approval cannot be secured until they are. Public ‘Covid vaccination’ is actually a *continuation of the trial*. Drug company ‘trials’ are not scheduled to end until 2023 by which time a lot of people are going to be dead. Data on which government agencies gave this emergency approval was supplied by the Big Pharma corporations themselves in the form of Pfizer/BioNTech, AstraZeneca, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and

others, and this is the case with all vaccines. By its very nature *emergency* approval means drug companies do not have to prove that the ‘vaccine’ is ‘safe and effective’. How could they with trials way short of complete? Government regulators only have to *believe* that they *could* be safe and effective. It is criminal manipulation to get products in circulation with no testing worth the name. Agencies giving that approval are infested with Big Pharma-connected place-people and they act in the interests of Big Pharma (the Cult) and not the public about whom they do not give a damn.

More human lab rats

‘Covid vaccines’ produced in record time by Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna employ a technique *never approved before for use on humans*. They are known as mRNA ‘vaccines’ and inject a synthetic version of ‘viral’ mRNA or ‘messenger RNA’. The key is in the term ‘messenger’. The body works, or doesn’t, on the basis of information messaging. Communications are constantly passing between and within the genetic system and the brain. Change those messages and you change the state of the body and even its very nature and you can change psychology and behaviour by the way the brain processes information. I think you are going to see significant changes in personality and perception of many people who have had the ‘Covid vaccine’ synthetic potions. Insider Aldous Huxley predicted the following in 1961 and mRNA ‘vaccines’ can be included in the term ‘pharmacological methods’:

There will be, in the next generation or so, a pharmacological method of making people love their servitude, and producing dictatorship without tears, so to speak, producing a kind of painless concentration camp for entire societies, so that people will in fact have their own liberties taken away from them, but rather enjoy it, because they will be distracted from any desire to rebel by propaganda or brainwashing, or brainwashing enhanced by pharmacological methods. And this seems to be the final revolution.

Apologists claim that mRNA synthetic ‘vaccines’ don’t change the DNA genetic blueprint because RNA does not affect DNA only the other way round. This is so disingenuous. A process called ‘reverse

'transcription' can convert RNA into DNA and be integrated into DNA in the cell nucleus. This was highlighted in December, 2020, by scientists at Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Geneticists report that more than 40 percent of mammalian genomes results from reverse transcription. On the most basic level if messaging changes then that sequence must lead to changes in DNA which is receiving and transmitting those communications. How can introducing synthetic material into cells not change the cells where DNA is located? The process is known as transfection which is defined as 'a technique to insert foreign nucleic acid (DNA or RNA) into a cell, typically with the intention of altering the properties of the cell'. Researchers at the Sloan Kettering Institute in New York found that changes in messenger RNA can deactivate tumour-suppressing proteins and thereby promote cancer. This is what happens when you mess with messaging. 'Covid vaccine' maker Moderna was founded in 2010 by Canadian stem cell biologist Derrick J. Rossi after his breakthrough discovery in the field of transforming and reprogramming stem cells. These are neutral cells that can be programmed to become any cell including sperm cells. Moderna was therefore founded on the principle of genetic manipulation and has never produced any vaccine or drug before its genetically-manipulating synthetic 'Covid' shite. Look at the name – Mode-RNA or Modify-RNA. Another important point is that the US Supreme Court has ruled that genetically-modified DNA, or complementary DNA (cDNA) synthesized in the laboratory from messenger RNA, can be patented and owned. These psychopaths are doing this to the human body.

Cells replicate synthetic mRNA in the 'Covid vaccines' and in theory the body is tricked into making antigens which trigger antibodies to target the 'virus spike proteins' which as Dr Tom Cowan said have *never been seen*. Cut the crap and these 'vaccines' deliver *self-replicating* synthetic material to the cells with the effect of changing human DNA. The more of them you have the more that process is compounded while synthetic material is all the time self-replicating. 'Vaccine'-maker Moderna describes mRNA as 'like

software for the cell' and so they are messing with the body's software. What happens when you change the software in a computer? Everything changes. For this reason the Cult is preparing a production line of mRNA 'Covid vaccines' and a long list of excuses to use them as with all the 'variants' of a 'virus' never shown to exist. The plan is further to transfer the mRNA technique to other vaccines mostly given to children and young people. The cumulative consequences will be a transformation of human DNA through a constant infusion of synthetic genetic material which will kill many and change the rest. Now consider that governments that have given emergency approval for a vaccine that's not a vaccine; never been approved for humans before; had no testing worth the name; and the makers have been given immunity from prosecution for any deaths or adverse effects suffered by the public. The UK government awarded *permanent legal indemnity* to itself and its employees for harm done when a patient is being treated for 'Covid-19' or 'suspected Covid-19'. That is quite a thought when these are possible 'side-effects' from the 'vaccine' (they are not 'side', they are effects) listed by the US Food and Drug Administration:

Guillain-Barre syndrome; acute disseminated encephalomyelitis; transverse myelitis; encephalitis; myelitis; encephalomyelitis; meningoencephalitis; meningitis; encephalopathy; convulsions; seizures; stroke; narcolepsy; cataplexy; anaphylaxis; acute myocardial infarction (heart attack); myocarditis; pericarditis; autoimmune disease; death; implications for pregnancy, and birth outcomes; other acute demyelinating diseases; non anaphylactic allergy reactions; thrombocytopenia ; disseminated intravascular coagulation; venous thromboembolism; arthritis; arthralgia; joint pain; Kawasaki disease; multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children; vaccine enhanced disease. The latter is the way the 'vaccine' has the potential to make diseases far worse than they would otherwise be.

UK doctor and freedom campaigner Vernon Coleman described the conditions in this list as 'all unpleasant, most of them very serious, and you can't get more serious than death'. The thought that anyone at all has had the 'vaccine' in these circumstances is testament to the potential that humanity has for clueless, unquestioning, stupidity and for many that programmed stupidity has already been terminal.

An insider speaks

Dr Michael Yeadon is a former Vice President, head of research and Chief Scientific Adviser at vaccine giant Pfizer. Yeadon worked on the inside of Big Pharma, but that did not stop him becoming a vocal critic of 'Covid vaccines' and their potential for multiple harms, including infertility in women. By the spring of 2021 he went much further and even used the no, no, term 'conspiracy'. When you begin to see what is going on it is impossible not to do so. Yeadon spoke out in an interview with freedom campaigner James Delingpole and I mentioned earlier how he said that no one had samples of 'the virus'. He explained that the mRNA technique originated in the anti-cancer field and ways to turn on and off certain genes which could be advantageous if you wanted to stop cancer growing out of control. 'That's the origin of them. They are a very unusual application, really.' Yeadon said that treating a cancer patient with an aggressive procedure might be understandable if the alternative was dying, but it was quite another thing to use the same technique as a public health measure. Most people involved wouldn't catch the infectious agent you were vaccinating against and if they did they probably wouldn't die:

If you are really using it as a public health measure you really want to as close as you can get to zero side-effects ... I find it odd that they chose techniques that were really cutting their teeth in the field of oncology and I'm worried that in using gene-based vaccines that have to be injected in the body and spread around the body, get taken up into some cells, and the regulators haven't quite told us which cells they get taken up into ... you are going to be generating a wide range of responses ... with multiple steps each of which could go well or badly.

I doubt the Cult intends it to go well. Yeadon said that you can put any gene you like into the body through the 'vaccine'. 'You can certainly give them a gene that would do them some harm if you wanted.' I was intrigued when he said that when used in the cancer field the technique could turn genes on and off. I explore this process in *The Answer* and with different genes having different functions you could create mayhem – physically and psychologically – if you turned the wrong ones on and the right ones off. I read reports of an experiment by researchers at the University of Washington's school of computer science and engineering in which they encoded DNA to infect computers. The body is itself a biological computer and if human DNA can inflict damage on a computer why can't the computer via synthetic material mess with the human body? It can. The Washington research team said it was possible to insert malicious malware into 'physical DNA strands' and corrupt the computer system of a gene sequencing machine as it 'reads gene letters and stores them as binary digits 0 and 1'. They concluded that hackers could one day use blood or spit samples to access computer systems and obtain sensitive data from police forensics labs or infect genome files. It is at this level of digital interaction that synthetic 'vaccines' need to be seen to get the full picture and that will become very clear later on. Michael Yeadon said it made no sense to give the 'vaccine' to younger people who were in no danger from the 'virus'. What was the benefit? It was all downside with potential effects:

The fact that my government in what I thought was a civilised, rational country, is raining [the 'vaccine'] on people in their 30s and 40s, even my children in their 20s, they're getting letters and phone calls, I know this is not right and any of you doctors who are vaccinating you know it's not right, too. They are not at risk. They are not at risk from the disease, so you are now hoping that the side-effects are so rare that you get away with it. You don't give new technology ... that you don't understand to 100 percent of the population.

Blood clot problems with the AstraZeneca 'vaccine' have been affecting younger people to emphasise the downside risks with no benefit. AstraZeneca's version, produced with Oxford University, does not use mRNA, but still gets its toxic cocktail inside cells where

it targets DNA. The Johnson & Johnson ‘vaccine’ which uses a similar technique has also produced blood clot effects to such an extent that the United States paused its use at one point. They are all ‘gene therapy’ (cell modification) procedures and not ‘vaccines’. The truth is that once the content of these injections enter cells we have no idea what the effect will be. People can speculate and some can give very educated opinions and that’s good. In the end, though, only the makers know what their potions are designed to do and even they won’t know every last consequence. Michael Yeadon was scathing about doctors doing what they knew to be wrong.

‘Everyone’s mute’, he said. Doctors in the NHS must know this was not right, coming into work and injecting people. ‘I don’t know how they sleep at night. I know I couldn’t do it. I know that if I were in that position I’d have to quit.’ He said he knew enough about toxicology to know this was not a good risk-benefit. Yeadon had spoken to seven or eight university professors and all except two would not speak out publicly. Their universities had a policy that no one said anything that countered the government and its medical advisors. They were afraid of losing their government grants. This is how intimidation has been used to silence the truth at every level of the system. I say silence, but these people could still speak out if they made that choice. Yeadon called them ‘moral cowards’ – ‘This is about your children and grandchildren’s lives and you have just buggered off and left it.’

‘Variant’ nonsense

Some of his most powerful comments related to the alleged ‘variants’ being used to instil more fear, justify more lockdowns, and introduce more ‘vaccines’. He said government claims about ‘variants’ were nonsense. He had checked the alleged variant ‘codes’ and they were 99.7 percent identical to the ‘original’. This was the human identity difference equivalent to putting a baseball cap on and off or wearing it the other way round. A 0.3 percent difference would make it impossible for that ‘variant’ to escape immunity from the ‘original’. This made no sense of having new ‘vaccines’ for

'variants'. He said there would have to be at least a *30 percent* difference for that to be justified and even then he believed the immune system would still recognise what it was. Gates-funded 'variant modeller' and 'vaccine'-pusher John Edmunds might care to comment. Yeadon said drug companies were making new versions of the 'vaccine' as a 'top up' for 'variants'. Worse than that, he said, the 'regulators' around the world like the MHRA in the UK had got together and agreed that because 'vaccines' for 'variants' were so similar to the first 'vaccines' *they did not have to do safety studies*. How transparently sinister that is. This is when Yeadon said: 'There is a conspiracy here.' There was no need for another vaccine for 'variants' and yet we were told that there was and the country had shut its borders because of them. 'They are going into hundreds of millions of arms without passing 'go' or any regulator. Why did they do that? Why did they pick this method of making the vaccine?'

The reason had to be something bigger than that it seemed and 'it's not protection against the virus'. It's was a far bigger project that meant politicians and advisers were willing to do things and not do things that knowingly resulted in avoidable deaths – 'that's already happened when you think about lockdown and deprivation of health care for a year.' He spoke of people prepared to do something that results in the avoidable death of their fellow human beings and it not bother them. This is the penny-drop I have been working to get across for more than 30 years – the level of pure evil we are dealing with. Yeadon said his friends and associates could not believe there could be that much evil, but he reminded them of Stalin, Pol Pot and Hitler and of what Stalin had said: 'One death is a tragedy. A million? A statistic.' He could not think of a benign explanation for why you need top-up vaccines 'which I'm sure you don't' and for the regulators 'to just get out of the way and wave them through'. Why would the regulators do that when they were still wrestling with the dangers of the 'parent' vaccine? He was clearly shocked by what he had seen since the 'Covid' hoax began and now he was thinking the previously unthinkable:

If you wanted to depopulate a significant proportion of the world and to do it in a way that doesn't involve destruction of the environment with nuclear weapons, poisoning everyone with anthrax or something like that, and you wanted plausible deniability while you had a multi-year infectious disease crisis, I actually don't think you could come up with a better plan of work than seems to be in front of me. I can't say that's what they are going to do, but I can't think of a benign explanation why they are doing it.

He said he never thought that they would get rid of 99 percent of humans, but now he wondered. 'If you wanted to that this would be a hell of a way to do it – it would be unstoppable folks.' Yeadon had concluded that those who submitted to the 'vaccine' would be allowed to have some kind of normal life (but for how long?) while screws were tightened to coerce and mandate the last few percent. 'I think they'll put the rest of them in a prison camp. I wish I was wrong, but I don't think I am.' Other points he made included: There were no coronavirus vaccines then suddenly they all come along at the same time; we have no idea of the long term affect with trials so short; coercing or forcing people to have medical procedures is against the Nuremberg Code instigated when the Nazis did just that; people should at least delay having the 'vaccine'; a quick Internet search confirms that masks don't reduce respiratory viral transmission and 'the government knows that'; they have smashed civil society and they know that, too; two dozen peer-reviewed studies show no connection between lockdown and reducing deaths; he knew from personal friends the elite were still flying around and going on holiday while the public were locked down; the elite were not having the 'vaccines'. He was also asked if 'vaccines' could be made to target difference races. He said he didn't know, but the document by the Project for the New American Century in September, 2000, said developing 'advanced forms of biological warfare that can target *specific genotypes* may transform biological warfare from the realm of terror to a politically useful tool.' Oh, they're evil all right. Of that we can be *absolutely* sure.

Another cull of old people

We have seen from the CDC definition that the mRNA 'Covid vaccine' is not a vaccine and nor are the others that *claim* to reduce 'severity of symptoms' in *some* people, but not protect from infection or transmission. What about all the lies about returning to 'normal' if people were 'vaccinated'? If they are not claimed to stop infection and transmission of the alleged 'virus', how does anything change? This was all lies to manipulate people to take the jabs and we are seeing that now with masks and distancing still required for the 'vaccinated'. How did they think that elderly people with fragile health and immune responses were going to be affected by infusing their cells with synthetic material and other toxic substances? They *knew* that in the short and long term it would be devastating and fatal as the culling of the old that began with the first lockdowns was continued with the 'vaccine'. Death rates in care homes soared immediately residents began to be 'vaccinated' – infused with synthetic material. Brave and committed whistleblower nurses put their careers at risk by exposing this truth while the rest kept their heads down and their mouths shut to put their careers before those they are supposed to care for. A long-time American Certified Nursing Assistant who gave his name as James posted a video in which he described emotionally what happened in his care home when vaccination began. He said that during 2020 very few residents were sick with 'Covid' and no one died during the entire year; but shortly after the Pfizer mRNA injections 14 people died within two weeks and many others were near death. 'They're dropping like flies', he said. Residents who walked on their own before the shot could no longer and they had lost their ability to conduct an intelligent conversation. The home's management said the sudden deaths were caused by a 'super-spreader' of 'Covid-19'. Then how come, James asked, that residents who refused to take the injections were not sick? It was a case of inject the elderly with mRNA synthetic potions and blame their illness and death that followed on the 'virus'. James described what was happening in care homes as 'the greatest crime of genocide this country has ever seen'. Remember the NHS staff nurse from earlier who used the same

word ‘genocide’ for what was happening with the ‘vaccines’ and that it was an ‘act of human annihilation’. A UK care home whistleblower told a similar story to James about the effect of the ‘vaccine’ in deaths and ‘outbreaks’ of illness dubbed ‘Covid’ after getting the jab. She told how her care home management and staff had zealously imposed government regulations and no one was allowed to even question the official narrative let alone speak out against it. She said the NHS was even worse. Again we see the results of reframing. A worker at a local care home where I live said they had not had a single case of ‘Covid’ there for almost a year and when the residents were ‘vaccinated’ they had 19 positive cases in two weeks with eight dying.

It's not the 'vaccine' – honest

The obvious cause and effect was being ignored by the media and most of the public. Australia’s health minister Greg Hunt (a former head of strategy at the World Economic Forum) was admitted to hospital after he had the ‘vaccine’. He was suffering according to reports from the skin infection ‘cellulitis’ and it must have been a severe case to have warranted days in hospital. Immediately the authorities said this was nothing to do with the ‘vaccine’ when an effect of some vaccines is a ‘cellulitis-like reaction’. We had families of perfectly healthy old people who died after the ‘vaccine’ saying that if only they had been given the ‘vaccine’ earlier they would still be alive. As a numbskull rating that is off the chart. A father of four ‘died of Covid’ at aged 48 when he was taken ill two days after having the ‘vaccine’. The man, a health administrator, had been ‘shielding during the pandemic’ and had ‘not really left the house’ until he went for the ‘vaccine’. Having the ‘vaccine’ and then falling ill and dying does not seem to have qualified as a possible cause and effect and ‘Covid-19’ went on his death certificate. His family said they had no idea how he ‘caught the virus’. A family member said: ‘Tragically, it could be that going for a vaccination ultimately led to him catching Covid ...The sad truth is that they are never going to know where it came from.’ The family warned people to remember

that the virus still existed and was 'very real'. So was their stupidity. Nurses and doctors who had the first round of the 'vaccine' were collapsing, dying and ending up in a hospital bed while they or their grieving relatives were saying they'd still have the 'vaccine' again despite what happened. I kid you not. You mean if your husband returned from the dead he'd have the same 'vaccine' again that killed him??

Doctors at the VCU Medical Center in Richmond, Virginia, said the Johnson & Johnson 'vaccine' was to blame for a man's skin peeling off. Patient Richard Terrell said: 'It all just happened so fast. My skin peeled off. It's still coming off on my hands now.' He said it was stinging, burning and itching and when he bent his arms and legs it was very painful with 'the skin swollen and rubbing against itself'. Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines use mRNA to change the cell while the Johnson & Johnson version uses DNA in a process similar to AstraZeneca's technique. Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca have both had their 'vaccines' paused by many countries after causing serious blood problems. Terrell's doctor Fnu Nutan said he could have died if he hadn't got medical attention. It sounds terrible so what did Nutan and Terrell say about the 'vaccine' now? Oh, they still recommend that people have it. A nurse in a hospital bed 40 minutes after the vaccination and unable to swallow due to throat swelling was told by a doctor that he lost mobility in his arm for 36 hours following the vaccination. What did he say to the ailing nurse? 'Good for you for getting the vaccination.' We are dealing with a serious form of cognitive dissonance madness in both public and medical staff. There is a remarkable correlation between those having the 'vaccine' and trumpeting the fact and suffering bad happenings shortly afterwards. Witold Rogiewicz, a Polish doctor, made a video of his 'vaccination' and ridiculed those who were questioning its safety and the intentions of Bill Gates: 'Vaccinate yourself to protect yourself, your loved ones, friends and also patients. And to mention quickly I have info for anti-vaxxers and anti-Covidiers if you want to contact Bill Gates you can do this through me.' He further ridiculed the dangers of 5G. Days later he

was dead, but naturally the vaccination wasn't mentioned in the verdict of 'heart attack'.

Lies, lies and more lies

So many members of the human race have slipped into extreme states of insanity and unfortunately they include reframed doctors and nursing staff. Having a 'vaccine' and dying within minutes or hours is not considered a valid connection while death from any cause within 28 days or longer of a positive test with a test not testing for the 'virus' means 'Covid-19' goes on the death certificate. How could that 'vaccine'-death connection not have been made except by calculated deceit? US figures in the initial rollout period to February 12th, 2020, revealed that a third of the deaths reported to the CDC after 'Covid vaccines' happened within 48 hours. Five men in the UK suffered an 'extremely rare' blood clot problem after having the AstraZeneca 'vaccine', but no causal link was established said the Gates-funded Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) which had given the 'vaccine' emergency approval to be used. Former Pfizer executive Dr Michael Yeadon explained in his interview how the procedures could cause blood coagulation and clots. People who should have been at no risk were dying from blood clots in the brain and he said he had heard from medical doctor friends that people were suffering from skin bleeding and massive headaches. The AstraZeneca 'shot' was stopped by some 20 countries over the blood clotting issue and still the corrupt MHRA, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the World Health Organization said that it should continue to be given even though the EMA admitted that it 'still cannot rule out definitively' a link between blood clotting and the 'vaccine'. Later Marco Cavaleri, head of EMA vaccine strategy, said there was indeed a clear link between the 'vaccine' and thrombosis, but they didn't know why. So much for the trials showing the 'vaccine' is safe. Blood clots were affecting younger people who would be under virtually no danger from 'Covid' even if it existed which makes it all the more stupid and sinister.

The British government responded to public alarm by wheeling out June Raine, the terrifyingly weak infant school headmistress sound-alike who heads the UK MHRA drug ‘regulator’. The idea that she would stand up to Big Pharma and government pressure is laughable and she told us that all was well in the same way that she did when allowing untested, never-used-on-humans-before, genetically-manipulating ‘vaccines’ to be exposed to the public in the first place. Mass lying is the new normal of the ‘Covid’ era. The MHRA later said 30 cases of rare blood clots had by then been connected with the AstraZeneca ‘vaccine’ (that means a lot more in reality) while stressing that the benefits of the jab in preventing ‘Covid-19’ outweighed any risks. A more ridiculous and disingenuous statement with callous disregard for human health it is hard to contemplate. Immediately after the mendacious ‘all-clears’ two hospital workers in Denmark experienced blood clots and cerebral haemorrhaging following the AstraZeneca jab and one died. Top Norwegian health official Pål Andre Holme said the ‘vaccine’ was the only common factor: ‘There is nothing in the patient history of these individuals that can give such a powerful immune response ... I am confident that the antibodies that we have found are the cause, and I see no other explanation than it being the vaccine which triggers it.’ Strokes, a clot or bleed in the brain, were clearly associated with the ‘vaccine’ from word of mouth and whistleblower reports. Similar consequences followed with all these ‘vaccines’ that we were told were so safe and as the numbers grew by the day it was clear we were witnessing human carnage.

Learning the hard way

A woman interviewed by UKColumn told how her husband suffered dramatic health effects after the vaccine when he’d been in good health all his life. He went from being a little unwell to losing all feeling in his legs and experiencing ‘excruciating pain’. Misdiagnosis followed twice at Accident and Emergency (an ‘allergy’ and ‘sciatica’) before he was admitted to a neurology ward where doctors said his serious condition had been caused by the

'vaccine'. Another seven 'vaccinated' people were apparently being treated on the same ward for similar symptoms. The woman said he had the 'vaccine' because they believed media claims that it was safe. 'I didn't think the government would give out a vaccine that does this to somebody; I believed they would be bringing out a vaccination that would be safe.' What a tragic way to learn that lesson. Another woman posted that her husband was transporting stroke patients to hospital on almost every shift and when he asked them if they had been 'vaccinated' for 'Covid' they all replied 'yes'. One had a 'massive brain bleed' the day after his second dose. She said her husband reported the 'just been vaccinated' information every time to doctors in A and E only for them to ignore it, make no notes and appear annoyed that it was even mentioned. This particular report cannot be verified, but it expresses a common theme that confirms the monumental underreporting of 'vaccine' consequences. Interestingly as the 'vaccines' and their brain blood clot/stroke consequences began to emerge the UK National Health Service began a publicity campaign telling the public what to do in the event of a stroke. A Scottish NHS staff nurse who quit in disgust in March, 2021, said:

I have seen traumatic injuries from the vaccine, they're not getting reported to the yellow card [adverse reaction] scheme, they're treating the symptoms, not asking why, why it's happening. It's just treating the symptoms and when you speak about it you're dismissed like you're crazy, I'm not crazy, I'm not crazy because every other colleague I've spoken to is terrified to speak out, they've had enough.

Videos appeared on the Internet of people uncontrollably shaking after the 'vaccine' with no control over muscles, limbs and even their face. A Scottish mother broke out in a severe rash all over her body almost immediately after she was given the AstraZeneca 'vaccine'. The pictures were horrific. Leigh King, a 41-year-old hairdresser from Lanarkshire said: 'Never in my life was I prepared for what I was about to experience ... My skin was so sore and constantly hot ... I have never felt pain like this ...' But don't you worry, the 'vaccine' is perfectly safe. Then there has been the effect on medical

staff who have been pressured to have the ‘vaccine’ by psychopathic ‘health’ authorities and government. A London hospital consultant who gave the name K. Polyakova wrote this to the *British Medical Journal* or *BMJ*:

I am currently struggling with ... the failure to report the reality of the morbidity caused by our current vaccination program within the health service and staff population. The levels of sickness after vaccination is unprecedented and staff are getting very sick and some with neurological symptoms which is having a huge impact on the health service function. Even the young and healthy are off for days, some for weeks, and some requiring medical treatment. Whole teams are being taken out as they went to get vaccinated together.

Mandatory vaccination in this instance is stupid, unethical and irresponsible when it comes to protecting our staff and public health. We are in the voluntary phase of vaccination, and encouraging staff to take an unlicensed product that is impacting on their immediate health ... it is clearly stated that these vaccine products do not offer immunity or stop transmission. In which case why are we doing it?

Not to protect health that’s for sure. Medical workers are lauded by governments for agenda reasons when they couldn’t give a toss about them any more than they can for the population in general. Schools across America faced the same situation as they closed due to the high number of teachers and other staff with bad reactions to the Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson ‘Covid vaccines’ all of which were linked to death and serious adverse effects. The *BMJ* took down the consultant’s comments pretty quickly on the grounds that they were being used to spread ‘disinformation’. They were exposing the truth about the ‘vaccine’ was the real reason. The cover-up is breathtaking.

Hiding the evidence

The scale of the ‘vaccine’ death cover-up worldwide can be confirmed by comparing official figures with the personal experience of the public. I heard of many people in my community who died immediately or soon after the vaccine that would never appear in the media or even likely on the official totals of ‘vaccine’ fatalities and adverse reactions when only about ten percent are estimated to be

reported and I have seen some estimates as low as one percent in a Harvard study. In the UK alone by April 29th, 2021, some 757,654 adverse reactions had been officially reported from the Pfizer/BioNTech, Oxford/AstraZeneca and Moderna 'vaccines' with more than a thousand deaths linked to jabs and that means an estimated ten times this number in reality from a ten percent reporting rate percentage. That's seven million adverse reactions and 10,000 potential deaths and a one percent reporting rate would be ten times *those* figures. In 1976 the US government pulled the swine flu vaccine after 53 deaths. The UK data included a combined 10,000 eye disorders from the 'Covid vaccines' with more than 750 suffering visual impairment or blindness and again multiply by the estimated reporting percentages. As 'Covid cases' officially fell hospitals virtually empty during the 'Covid crisis' began to fill up with a range of other problems in the wake of the 'vaccine' rollout. The numbers across America have also been catastrophic. Deaths linked to *all* types of vaccine increased by *6,000 percent* in the first quarter of 2021 compared with 2020. A 39-year-old woman from Ogden, Utah, died four days after receiving a second dose of Moderna's 'Covid vaccine' when her liver, heart and kidneys all failed despite the fact that she had no known medical issues or conditions. Her family sought an autopsy, but Dr Erik Christensen, Utah's chief medical examiner, said proving vaccine injury as a cause of death almost never happened. He could think of only one instance where an autopsy would name a vaccine as the official cause of death and that would be anaphylaxis where someone received a vaccine and died almost instantaneously. 'Short of that, it would be difficult for us to definitively say this is the vaccine,' Christensen said. If that is true this must be added to the estimated ten percent (or far less) reporting rate of vaccine deaths and serious reactions and the conclusion can only be that vaccine deaths and serious reactions – including these 'Covid' potions – are phenomenally understated in official figures. The same story can be found everywhere. Endless accounts of deaths and serious reactions among the public, medical

and care home staff while official figures did not even begin to reflect this.

Professional script-reader Dr David Williams, a ‘top public-health official’ in Ontario, Canada, insulted our intelligence by claiming only four serious adverse reactions and no deaths from the more than 380,000 vaccine doses then given. This bore no resemblance to what people knew had happened in their own circles and we had Dirk Huyer in charge of getting millions vaccinated in Ontario while at the same time he was Chief Coroner for the province investigating causes of death including possible death from the vaccine. An aide said he had stepped back from investigating deaths, but evidence indicated otherwise. Rosemary Frei, who secured a Master of Science degree in molecular biology at the Faculty of Medicine at Canada’s University of Calgary before turning to investigative journalism, was one who could see that official figures for ‘vaccine’ deaths and reactions made no sense. She said that doctors seldom reported adverse events and when people got really sick or died after getting a vaccination they would attribute that to anything except the vaccines. It had been that way for years and anyone who wondered aloud whether the ‘Covid vaccines’ or other shots cause harm is immediately branded as ‘anti-vax’ and ‘anti-science’. This was ‘career-threatening’ for health professionals. Then there was the huge pressure to support the push to ‘vaccinate’ billions in the quickest time possible. Frei said:

So that’s where we’re at today. More than half a million vaccine doses have been given to people in Ontario alone. The rush is on to vaccinate all 15 million of us in the province by September. And the mainstream media are screaming for this to be sped up even more. That all adds up to only a very slim likelihood that we’re going to be told the truth by officials about how many people are getting sick or dying from the vaccines.

What is true of Ontario is true of everywhere.

They KNEW – and still did it

The authorities knew what was going to happen with multiple deaths and adverse reactions. The UK government’s Gates-funded

and Big Pharma-dominated Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) hired a company to employ AI in compiling the projected reactions to the ‘vaccine’ that would otherwise be uncountable. The request for applications said: ‘The MHRA urgently seeks an Artificial Intelligence (AI) software tool to process the expected high volume of Covid-19 vaccine Adverse Drug Reaction ...’ This was from the agency, headed by the disingenuous June Raine, that gave the ‘vaccines’ emergency approval and the company was hired before the first shot was given. ‘We are going to kill and maim you – is that okay?’ ‘Oh, yes, perfectly fine – I’m very grateful, thank you, doctor.’ The range of ‘Covid vaccine’ adverse reactions goes on for page after page in the MHRA criminally underreported ‘Yellow Card’ system and includes affects to eyes, ears, skin, digestion, blood and so on. Raine’s MHRA amazingly claimed that the ‘overall safety experience ... is so far as expected from the clinical trials’. The death, serious adverse effects, deafness and blindness were *expected*? When did they ever mention that? If these human tragedies were expected then those that gave approval for the use of these ‘vaccines’ must be guilty of crimes against humanity including murder – a definition of which is ‘killing a person with malice aforethought or with recklessness manifesting extreme indifference to the value of human life.’ People involved at the MHRA, the CDC in America and their equivalent around the world must go before Nuremberg trials to answer for their callous inhumanity. We are only talking here about the immediate effects of the ‘vaccine’. The longer-term impact of the DNA synthetic manipulation is the main reason they are so hysterically desperate to inoculate the entire global population in the shortest possible time.

Africa and the developing world are a major focus for the ‘vaccine’ depopulation agenda and a mass vaccination sales-pitch is underway thanks to caring people like the Rockefellers and other Cult assets. The Rockefeller Foundation, which pre-empted the ‘Covid pandemic’ in a document published in 2010 that ‘predicted’ what happened a decade later, announced an initial \$34.95 million grant in February, 2021, ‘to ensure more equitable access to Covid-19

testing and vaccines' among other things in Africa in collaboration with '24 organizations, businesses, and government agencies'. The pan-Africa initiative would focus on 10 countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia'. Rajiv Shah, President of the Rockefeller Foundation and former administrator of CIA-controlled USAID, said that if Africa was not mass-vaccinated (to change the DNA of its people) it was a 'threat to all of humanity' and not fair on Africans. When someone from the Rockefeller Foundation says they want to do something to help poor and deprived people and countries it is time for a belly-laugh. They are doing this out of the goodness of their 'heart' because 'vaccinating' the entire global population is what the 'Covid' hoax set out to achieve. Official 'decolonisation' of Africa by the Cult was merely a prelude to financial colonisation on the road to a return to physical colonisation. The 'vaccine' is vital to that and the sudden and convenient death of the 'Covid' sceptic president of Tanzania can be seen in its true light. A lot of people in Africa are aware that this is another form of colonisation and exploitation and they need to stand their ground.

The 'vaccine is working' scam

A potential problem for the Cult was that the 'vaccine' is meant to change human DNA and body messaging and not to protect anyone from a 'virus' never shown to exist. The vaccine couldn't work because it was not designed to work and how could they make it *appear* to be working so that more people would have it? This was overcome by lowering the amplification rate of the PCR test to produce fewer 'cases' and therefore fewer 'deaths'. Some of us had been pointing out since March, 2020, that the amplification rate of the test not testing for the 'virus' had been made artificially high to generate positive tests which they could call 'cases' to justify lockdowns. The World Health Organization recommended an absurdly high 45 amplification cycles to ensure the high positives required by the Cult and then remained silent on the issue until January 20th, 2021 – Biden's Inauguration Day. This was when the

'vaccinations' were seriously underway and on that day the WHO recommended after discussions with America's CDC that laboratories *lowered their testing amplification*. Dr David Samadi, a certified urologist and health writer, said the WHO was encouraging all labs to reduce their cycle count for PCR tests. He said the current cycle was much too high and was 'resulting in any particle being declared a positive case'. Even one mainstream news report I saw said this meant the number of 'Covid' infections may have been 'dramatically inflated'. Oh, just a little bit. The CDC in America issued new guidance to laboratories in April, 2021, to use 28 cycles *but only for 'vaccinated' people*. The timing of the CDC/WHO interventions were cynically designed to make it appear the 'vaccines' were responsible for falling cases and deaths when the real reason can be seen in the following examples. New York's state lab, the Wadsworth Center, identified 872 positive tests in July, 2020, based on a threshold of 40 cycles. When the figure was lowered to 35 cycles *43 percent* of the 872 were no longer 'positives'. At 30 cycles the figure was 63 percent. A Massachusetts lab found that between *85 to 90 percent* of people who tested positive in July with a cycle threshold of 40 would be negative at 30 cycles, Ashish Jha, MD, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute, said: 'I'm really shocked that it could be that high ... Boy, does it really change the way we need to be thinking about testing.' I'm shocked that I could see the obvious in the spring of 2020, with no medical background, and most medical professionals still haven't worked it out. No, that's not shocking – it's terrifying.

Three weeks after the WHO directive to lower PCR cycles the London *Daily Mail* ran this headline: 'Why ARE Covid cases plummeting? New infections have fallen 45% in the US and 30% globally in the past 3 weeks but experts say vaccine is NOT the main driver because only 8% of Americans and 13% of people worldwide have received their first dose.' They acknowledged that the drop could not be attributed to the 'vaccine', but soon this morphed throughout the media into the 'vaccine' has caused cases and deaths to fall when it was the PCR threshold. In December, 2020, there was

chaos at English Channel ports with truck drivers needing negative 'Covid' tests before they could board a ferry home for Christmas. The government wanted to remove the backlog as fast as possible and they brought in troops to do the 'testing'. Out of 1,600 drivers just 36 tested positive and the rest were given the all clear to cross the Channel. I guess the authorities thought that 36 was the least they could get away with without the unquestioning catching on. The amplification trick which most people believed in the absence of information in the mainstream applied more pressure on those refusing the 'vaccine' to succumb when it 'obviously worked'. The truth was the exact opposite with deaths in care homes soaring with the 'vaccine' and in Israel the term used was 'skyrocket'. A re-analysis of published data from the Israeli Health Ministry led by Dr Hervé Seligmann at the Medicine Emerging Infectious and Tropical Diseases at Aix-Marseille University found that Pfizer's 'Covid vaccine' killed 'about 40 times more [elderly] people than the disease itself would have killed' during a five-week vaccination period and 260 *times* more younger people than would have died from the 'virus' even according to the manipulated 'virus' figures. Dr Seligmann and his co-study author, Haim Yativ, declared after reviewing the Israeli 'vaccine' death data: 'This is a new Holocaust.'

Then, in mid-April, 2021, after vast numbers of people worldwide had been 'vaccinated', the story changed with clear coordination. The UK government began to prepare the ground for more future lockdowns when Nuremberg-destined Boris Johnson told yet another whopper. He said that cases had fallen because of *lockdowns* not 'vaccines'. Lockdowns are irrelevant when *there is no 'virus'* and the test and fraudulent death certificates are deciding the number of 'cases' and 'deaths'. Study after study has shown that lockdowns don't work and instead kill and psychologically destroy people. Meanwhile in the United States Anthony Fauci and Rochelle Walensky, the ultra-Zionist head of the CDC, peddled the same line. More lockdown was the answer and not the 'vaccine', a line repeated on cue by the moron that is Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Why all the hysteria to get everyone 'vaccinated' if lockdowns and

not ‘vaccines’ made the difference? None of it makes sense on the face of it. Oh, but it does. The Cult wants lockdowns *and* the ‘vaccine’ and if the ‘vaccine’ is allowed to be seen as the total answer lockdowns would no longer be justified when there are still livelihoods to destroy. ‘Variants’ and renewed upward manipulation of PCR amplification are planned to instigate never-ending lockdown *and* more ‘vaccines’.

You must have it – we’re desperate

Israel, where the Jewish and Arab population are ruled by the Sabbatian Cult, was the front-runner in imposing the DNA-manipulating ‘vaccine’ on its people to such an extent that Jewish refusers began to liken what was happening to the early years of Nazi Germany. This would seem to be a fantastic claim. Why would a government of Jewish people be acting like the Nazis did? If you realise that the Sabbatian Cult was behind the Nazis and that Sabbatians hate Jews the pieces start to fit and the question of why a ‘Jewish’ government would treat Jews with such callous disregard for their lives and freedom finds an answer. Those controlling the government of Israel *aren’t Jewish* – they’re Sabbatian. Israeli lawyer Tamir Turgal was one who made the Nazi comparison in comments to German lawyer Reiner Fuellmich who is leading a class action lawsuit against the psychopaths for crimes against humanity. Turgal described how the Israeli government was vaccinating children and pregnant women on the basis that there was no evidence that this was dangerous when they had no evidence that it *wasn’t* dangerous either. They just had no evidence. This was medical experimentation and Turgal said this breached the Nuremberg Code about medical experimentation and procedures requiring informed consent and choice. Think about that. A Nuremberg Code developed because of Nazi experimentation on Jews and others in concentration camps by people like the evil-beyond-belief Josef Mengele is being breached by the *Israeli* government; but when you know that it’s a *Sabbatian* government along with its intelligence and military agencies like Mossad, Shin Bet and the Israeli Defense Forces, and that Sabbatians

were the force behind the Nazis, the kaleidoscope comes into focus. What have we come to when Israeli Jews are suing their government for violating the Nuremberg Code by essentially making Israelis subject to a medical experiment using the controversial 'vaccines'? It's a shocker that this has to be done in the light of what happened in Nazi Germany. The Anshe Ha-Emet, or 'People of the Truth', made up of Israeli doctors, lawyers, campaigners and public, have launched a lawsuit with the International Criminal Court. It says:

When the heads of the Ministry of Health as well as the prime minister presented the vaccine in Israel and began the vaccination of Israeli residents, the vaccinated were not advised, that, in practice, they are taking part in a medical experiment and that their consent is required for this under the Nuremberg Code.

The irony is unbelievable, but easily explained in one word: Sabbatians. The foundation of Israeli 'Covid' apartheid is the 'green pass' or 'green passport' which allows Jews and Arabs who have had the DNA-manipulating 'vaccine' to go about their lives – to work, fly, travel in general, go to shopping malls, bars, restaurants, hotels, concerts, gyms, swimming pools, theatres and sports venues, while non-'vaccinated' are banned from all those places and activities. Israelis have likened the 'green pass' to the yellow stars that Jews in Nazi Germany were forced to wear – the same as the yellow stickers that a branch of UK supermarket chain Morrisons told exempt mask-wears they had to display when shopping. How very sensitive. The Israeli system is blatant South African-style apartheid on the basis of compliance or non-compliance to fascism rather than colour of the skin. How appropriate that the Sabbatian Israeli government was so close to the pre-Mandela apartheid regime in Pretoria. The Sabbatian-instigated 'vaccine passport' in Israel is planned for everywhere. Sabbatians struck a deal with Pfizer that allowed them to lead the way in the percentage of a national population infused with synthetic material and the result was catastrophic. Israeli freedom activist Shai Dannon told me how chairs were appearing on beaches that said 'vaccinated only'. Health Minister Yuli Edelstein said that anyone unwilling or unable to get

the jabs that ‘confer immunity’ will be ‘left behind’. The man’s a liar. Not even the makers claim the ‘vaccines’ confer immunity. When you see those figures of ‘vaccine’ deaths these psychopaths were saying that you must take the chance the ‘vaccine’ will kill you or maim you while knowing it will change your DNA or lockdown for you will be permanent. That’s fascism. The Israeli parliament passed a law to allow personal information of the non-vaccinated to be shared with local and national authorities for three months. This was claimed by its supporters to be a way to ‘encourage’ people to be vaccinated. Hadas Ziv from Physicians for Human Rights described this as a ‘draconian law which crushed medical ethics and the patient rights’. But that’s the idea, the Sabbatians would reply.

Your papers, please

Sabbatian Israel was leading what has been planned all along to be a global ‘vaccine pass’ called a ‘green passport’ without which you would remain in permanent lockdown restriction and unable to do anything. This is how badly – *desperately* – the Cult is to get everyone ‘vaccinated’. The term and colour ‘green’ was not by chance and related to the psychology of fusing the perception of the green climate hoax with the ‘Covid’ hoax and how the ‘solution’ to both is the same Great Reset. Lying politicians, health officials and psychologists denied there were any plans for mandatory vaccinations or restrictions based on vaccinations, but they knew that was exactly what was meant to happen with governments of all countries reaching agreements to enforce a global system. ‘Free’ Denmark and ‘free’ Sweden unveiled digital vaccine certification. Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Spain have all committed to a vaccine passport system and the rest including the whole of the EU would follow. The satanic UK government will certainly go this way despite mendacious denials and at the time of writing it is trying to manipulate the public into having the ‘vaccine’ so they could go abroad on a summer holiday. How would that work without something to prove you had the synthetic toxicity injected into you?

Documents show that the EU's European Commission was moving towards 'vaccine certificates' in 2018 and 2019 before the 'Covid' hoax began. They knew what was coming. Abracadabra – Ursula von der Leyen, the German President of the Commission, announced in March, 2021, an EU 'Digital Green Certificate' – green again – to track the public's 'Covid status'. The passport sting is worldwide and the Far East followed the same pattern with South Korea ruling that only those with 'vaccination' passports – again the *green* pass – would be able to 'return to their daily lives'.

Bill Gates has been preparing for this 'passport' with other Cult operatives for years and beyond the paper version is a Gates-funded 'digital tattoo' to identify who has been vaccinated and who hasn't. The 'tattoo' is reported to include a substance which is externally readable to confirm who has been vaccinated. This is a bio-luminous light-generating enzyme (think fireflies) called ... *Luciferase*. Yes, named after the Cult 'god' Lucifer the 'light bringer' of whom more to come. Gates said he funded the readable tattoo to ensure children in the developing world were vaccinated and no one was missed out. He cares so much about poor kids as we know. This was just the cover story to develop a vaccine tagging system for everyone on the planet. Gates has been funding the ID2020 'alliance' to do just that in league with other lovely people at Microsoft, GAVI, the Rockefeller Foundation, Accenture and IDEO.org. He said in interviews in March, 2020, before any 'vaccine' publicly existed, that the world must have a globalised digital certificate to track the 'virus' and who had been vaccinated. Gates knew from the start that the mRNA vaccines were coming and when they would come and that the plan was to tag the 'vaccinated' to marginalise the intelligent and stop them doing anything including travel. Evil just doesn't suffice. Gates was exposed for offering a \$10 million bribe to the Nigerian House of Representatives to invoke compulsory 'Covid' vaccination of all Nigerians. Sara Cunial, a member of the Italian Parliament, called Gates a 'vaccine criminal'. She urged the Italian President to hand him over to the International Criminal Court for crimes against

humanity and condemned his plans to 'chip the human race' through ID2020.

You know it's a long-planned agenda when war criminal and Cult gofer Tony Blair is on the case. With the scale of arrogance only someone as dark as Blair can muster he said: 'Vaccination in the end is going to be your route to liberty.' Blair is a disgusting piece of work and he confirms that again. The media has given a lot of coverage to a bloke called Charlie Mullins, founder of London's biggest independent plumbing company, Pimlico Plumbers, who has said he won't employ anyone who has not been vaccinated or have them go to any home where people are not vaccinated. He said that if he had his way no one would be allowed to walk the streets if they have not been vaccinated. Gates was cheering at the time while I was alerting the white coats. The plan is that people will qualify for 'passports' for having the first two doses and then to keep it they will have to have all the follow ups and new ones for invented 'variants' until human genetics is transformed and many are dead who can't adjust to the changes. Hollywood celebrities – the usual propaganda stunt – are promoting something called the WELL Health-Safety Rating to verify that a building or space has 'taken the necessary steps to prioritize the health and safety of their staff, visitors and other stakeholders'. They included Lady Gaga, Jennifer Lopez, Michael B. Jordan, Robert DeNiro, Venus Williams, Wolfgang Puck, Deepak Chopra and 17th Surgeon General Richard Carmona. Yawn. WELL Health-Safety has big connections with China. Parent company Delos is headed by former Goldman Sachs partner Paul Scialla. This is another example – and we will see so many others – of using the excuse of 'health' to dictate the lives and activities of the population. I guess one confirmation of the 'safety' of buildings is that only 'vaccinated' people can go in, right?

Electronic concentration camps

I wrote decades ago about the plans to restrict travel and here we are for those who refuse to bow to tyranny. This can be achieved in one go with air travel if the aviation industry makes a blanket decree.

The ‘vaccine’ and guaranteed income are designed to be part of a global version of China’s social credit system which tracks behaviour 24/7 and awards or deletes ‘credits’ based on whether your behaviour is supported by the state or not. I mean your entire lifestyle – what you do, eat, say, everything. Once your credit score falls below a certain level consequences kick in. In China tens of millions have been denied travel by air and train because of this. All the locations and activities denied to refusers by the ‘vaccine’ passports will be included in one big mass ban on doing almost anything for those that don’t bow their head to government. It’s beyond fascist and a new term is required to describe its extremes – I guess fascist technocracy will have to do. The way the Chinese system of technological – technocratic – control is sweeping the West can be seen in the Los Angeles school system and is planned to be expanded worldwide. Every child is required to have a ‘Covid’-tracking app scanned daily before they can enter the classroom. The so-called Daily Pass tracking system is produced by Gates’ Microsoft which I’m sure will shock you rigid. The pass will be scanned using a barcode (one step from an inside-the-body barcode) and the information will include health checks, ‘Covid’ tests and vaccinations. Entry codes are for one specific building only and access will only be allowed if a student or teacher has a negative test with a test not testing for the ‘virus’, has no symptoms of anything alleged to be related to ‘Covid’ (symptoms from a range of other illness), and has a temperature under 100 degrees. No barcode, no entry, is planned to be the case for everywhere and not only schools.

Kids are being psychologically prepared to accept this as ‘normal’ their whole life which is why what they can impose in schools is so important to the Cult and its gofers. Long-time American freedom campaigner John Whitehead of the Rutherford Institute was not exaggerating when he said: ‘Databit by databit, we are building our own electronic concentration camps.’ Canada under its Cult gofer prime minister Justin Trudeau has taken a major step towards the real thing with people interned against their will if they test positive with a test not testing for the ‘virus’ when they arrive at a Canadian

airport. They are jailed in internment hotels often without food or water for long periods and with many doors failing to lock there have been sexual assaults. The interned are being charged sometimes \$2,000 for the privilege of being abused in this way. Trudeau is fully on board with the Cult and says the ‘Covid pandemic’ has provided an opportunity for a global ‘reset’ to permanently change Western civilisation. His number two, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, is a trustee of the World Economic Forum and a Rhodes Scholar. The Trudeau family have long been servants of the Cult. See *The Biggest Secret* and Cathy O’Brien’s book *Trance-Formation of America* for the horrific background to Trudeau’s father Pierre Trudeau another Canadian prime minister. Hide your fascism behind the façade of a heart-on-the-sleeve liberal. It’s a well-honed Cult technique.

What can the ‘vaccine’ really do?

We have a ‘virus’ never shown to exist and ‘variants’ of the ‘virus’ that have also never been shown to exist except, like the ‘original’, as computer-generated fictions. Even if you believe there’s a ‘virus’ the ‘case’ to ‘death’ rate is in the region of 0.23 to 0.15 percent and those ‘deaths’ are concentrated among the very old around the same average age that people die anyway. In response to this lack of threat (in truth none) psychopaths and idiots, knowingly and unknowingly answering to Gates and the Cult, are seeking to ‘vaccinate’ every man, woman and child on Planet Earth. Clearly the ‘vaccine’ is not about ‘Covid’ – none of this ever has been. So what is it all about *really*? Why the desperation to infuse genetically-manipulating synthetic material into everyone through mRNA fraudulent ‘vaccines’ with the intent of doing this over and over with the excuses of ‘variants’ and other ‘virus’ inventions? Dr Sherri Tenpenny, an osteopathic medical doctor in the United States, has made herself an expert on vaccines and their effects as a vehement campaigner against their use. Tenpenny was board certified in emergency medicine, the director of a level two trauma centre for 12 years, and moved to Cleveland in 1996 to start an integrative

medicine practice which has treated patients from all 50 states and some 17 other countries. Weaning people off pharmaceutical drugs is a speciality.

She became interested in the consequences of vaccines after attending a meeting at the National Vaccine Information Center in Washington DC in 2000 where she 'sat through four days of listening to medical doctors and scientists and lawyers and parents of vaccine injured kids' and asked: 'What's going on?' She had never been vaccinated and never got ill while her father was given a list of vaccines to be in the military and was 'sick his entire life'. The experience added to her questions and she began to examine vaccine documents from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). After reading the first one, the 1998 version of *The General Recommendations of Vaccination*, she thought: 'This is it?' The document was poorly written and bad science and Tenpenny began 20 years of research into vaccines that continues to this day. She began her research into 'Covid vaccines' in March, 2020, and she describes them as 'deadly'. For many, as we have seen, they already have been. Tenpenny said that in the first 30 days of the 'vaccine' rollout in the United States there had been more than 40,000 adverse events reported to the vaccine adverse event database. A document had been delivered to her the day before that was 172 pages long. 'We have over 40,000 adverse events; we have over 3,100 cases of [potentially deadly] anaphylactic shock; we have over 5,000 neurological reactions.' Effects ranged from headaches to numbness, dizziness and vertigo, to losing feeling in hands or feet and paraesthesia which is when limbs 'fall asleep' and people have the sensation of insects crawling underneath their skin. All this happened in the first 30 days and remember that only about *ten percent* (or far less) of adverse reactions and vaccine-related deaths are estimated to be officially reported. Tenpenny said:

So can you think of one single product in any industry, any industry, for as long as products have been made on the planet that within 30 days we have 40,000 people complaining of side effects that not only is still on the market but ... we've got paid actors telling us how great

they are for getting their vaccine. We're offering people \$500 if they will just get their vaccine and we've got nurses and doctors going; 'I got the vaccine, I got the vaccine'.

Tenpenny said they were not going to be 'happy dancing folks' when they began to suffer Bell's palsy (facial paralysis), neuropathies, cardiac arrhythmias and autoimmune reactions that kill through a blood disorder. 'They're not going to be so happy, happy then, but we're never going to see pictures of those people' she said. Tenpenny described the 'vaccine' as 'a well-designed killing tool'.

No off-switch

Bad as the initial consequences had been Tenpenny said it would be maybe 14 months before we began to see the 'full ravage' of what is going to happen to the 'Covid vaccinated' with full-out consequences taking anything between two years and 20 years to show. You can understand why when you consider that variations of the 'Covid vaccine' use mRNA (messenger RNA) to in theory activate the immune system to produce protective antibodies without using the actual 'virus'. How can they when it's a computer program and they've never isolated what they claim is the 'real thing'? Instead they use *synthetic* mRNA. They are inoculating synthetic material into the body which through a technique known as the Trojan horse is absorbed into cells to change the nature of DNA. Human DNA is changed by an infusion of messenger RNA and with each new 'vaccine' of this type it is changed even more. Say so and you are banned by Cult Internet platforms. The contempt the contemptuous Mark Zuckerberg has for the truth and human health can be seen in an internal Facebook video leaked to the Project Veritas investigative team in which he said of the 'Covid vaccines': '... I share some caution on this because we just don't know the long term side-effects of basically modifying people's DNA and RNA.' At the same time this disgusting man's Facebook was censoring and banning anyone saying exactly the same. He must go before a Nuremberg trial for crimes against humanity when he *knows* that he

is censoring legitimate concerns and denying the right of informed consent on behalf of the Cult that owns him. People have been killed and damaged by the very ‘vaccination’ technique he cast doubt on himself when they may not have had the ‘vaccine’ with access to information that he denied them. The plan is to have at least annual ‘Covid vaccinations’, add others to deal with invented ‘variants’, and change all other vaccines into the mRNA system. Pfizer executives told shareholders at a virtual Barclays Global Healthcare Conference in March, 2021, that the public may need a third dose of ‘Covid vaccine’, plus regular yearly boosters and the company planned to hike prices to milk the profits in a ‘significant opportunity for our vaccine’. These are the professional liars, cheats and opportunists who are telling you their ‘vaccine’ is safe. Given this volume of mRNA planned to be infused into the human body and its ability to then replicate we will have a transformation of human genetics from biological to synthetic biological – exactly the long-time Cult plan for reasons we’ll see – and many will die. Sherri Tenpenny said of this replication:

It’s like having an on-button but no off-button and that whole mechanism ... they actually give it a name and they call it the Trojan horse mechanism, because it allows that [synthetic] virus and that piece of that [synthetic] virus to get inside of your cells, start to replicate and even get inserted into other parts of your DNA as a Trojan-horse.

Ask the overwhelming majority of people who have the ‘vaccine’ what they know about the contents and what they do and they would reply: ‘The government says it will stop me getting the virus.’ Governments give that false impression on purpose to increase take-up. You can read Sherri Tenpenny’s detailed analysis of the health consequences in her blog at Vaxxter.com, but in summary these are some of them. She highlights the statement by Bill Gates about how human beings can become their own ‘vaccine manufacturing machine’. The man is insane. [‘Vaccine’-generated] ‘antibodies’ carry synthetic messenger RNA into the cells and the damage starts, Tenpenny contends, and she says that lungs can be adversely affected through varying degrees of pus and bleeding which

obviously affects breathing and would be dubbed ‘Covid-19’. Even more sinister was the impact of ‘antibodies’ on macrophages, a white blood cell of the immune system. They consist of Type 1 and Type 2 which have very different functions. She said Type 1 are ‘hyper-vigilant’ white blood cells which ‘gobble up’ bacteria etc. However, in doing so, this could cause inflammation and in extreme circumstances be fatal. She says these affects are mitigated by Type 2 macrophages which kick in to calm down the system and stop it going rogue. They clear up dead tissue debris and reduce inflammation that the Type 1 ‘fire crews’ have caused. Type 1 kills the infection and Type 2 heals the damage, she says. This is her punchline with regard to ‘Covid vaccinations’: She says that mRNA ‘antibodies’ block Type 2 macrophages by attaching to them and deactivating them. This meant that when the Type 1 response was triggered by infection there was nothing to stop that getting out of hand by calming everything down. There’s an on-switch, but no off-switch, she says. What follows can be ‘over and out, see you when I see you’.

Genetic suicide

Tenpenny also highlights the potential for autoimmune disease – the body attacking itself – which has been associated with vaccines since they first appeared. Infusing a synthetic foreign substance into cells could cause the immune system to react in a panic believing that the body is being overwhelmed by an invader (it is) and the consequences can again be fatal. There is an autoimmune response known as a ‘cytokine storm’ which I have likened to a homeowner panicked by an intruder and picking up a gun to shoot randomly in all directions before turning the fire on himself. The immune system unleashes a storm of inflammatory response called cytokines to a threat and the body commits hara-kiri. The lesson is that you mess with the body’s immune response at your peril and these ‘vaccines’ seriously – fundamentally – mess with immune response. Tenpenny refers to a consequence called anaphylactic shock which is a severe and highly dangerous allergic reaction when the immune system

floods the body with chemicals. She gives the example of having a bee sting which primes the immune system and makes it sensitive to those chemicals. When people are stung again maybe years later the immune response can be so powerful that it leads to anaphylactic shock. Tenpenny relates this 'shock' with regard to the 'Covid vaccine' to something called polyethylene glycol or PEG. Enormous numbers of people have become sensitive to this over decades of use in a whole range of products and processes including food, drink, skin creams and 'medicine'. Studies have claimed that some 72 percent of people have antibodies triggered by PEG compared with two percent in the 1960s and allergic hypersensitive reactions to this become a gathering cause for concern. Tenpenny points out that the 'mRNA vaccine' is coated in a 'bubble' of polyethylene glycol which has the potential to cause anaphylactic shock through immune sensitivity. Many reports have appeared of people reacting this way after having the 'Covid vaccine'. What do we think is going to happen as humanity has more and more of these 'vaccines'?

Tenpenny said: 'All these pictures we have seen with people with these rashes ... these weepy rashes, big reactions on their arms and things like that – it's an acute allergic reaction most likely to the polyethylene glycol that you've been previously primed and sensitised to.'

Those who have not studied the conspiracy and its perpetrators at length might think that making the population sensitive to PEG and then putting it in these 'vaccines' is just a coincidence. It is not. It is instead testament to how carefully and coldly-planned current events have been and the scale of the conspiracy we are dealing with. Tenpenny further explains that the 'vaccine' mRNA procedure can breach the blood-brain barrier which protects the brain from toxins and other crap that will cause malfunction. In this case they could make two proteins corrupt brain function to cause Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a progressive nervous system disease leading to loss of muscle control, and frontal lobe degeneration – Alzheimer's and dementia. Immunologist J. Bart Classon published a paper connecting mRNA 'vaccines' to prion

disease which can lead to Alzheimer's and other forms of neurodegenerative disease while others have pointed out the potential to affect the placenta in ways that make women infertile. This will become highly significant in the next chapter when I will discuss other aspects of this non-vaccine that relate to its nanotechnology and transmission from the injected to the uninjected.

Qualified in idiocy

Tenpenny describes how research has confirmed that these 'vaccine'-generated antibodies can interact with a range of other tissues in the body and attack many other organs including the lungs. 'This means that if you have a hundred people standing in front of you that all got this shot they could have a hundred different symptoms.'

Anyone really think that Cult gofers like the Queen, Tony Blair, Christopher Whitty, Anthony Fauci, and all the other psychopaths have really had this 'vaccine' in the pictures we've seen? Not a bloody chance. Why don't doctors all tell us about all these dangers and consequences of the 'Covid vaccine'? Why instead do they encourage and pressure patients to have the shot? Don't let's think for a moment that doctors and medical staff can't be stupid, lazy, and psychopathic and that's without the financial incentives to give the jab. Tenpenny again:

Some people are going to die from the vaccine directly but a large number of people are going to start to get horribly sick and get all kinds of autoimmune diseases 42 days to maybe a year out. What are they going to do, these stupid doctors who say; 'Good for you for getting that vaccine.' What are they going to say; 'Oh, it must be a mutant, we need to give an extra dose of that vaccine.'

Because now the vaccine, instead of one dose or two doses we need three or four because the stupid physicians aren't taking the time to learn anything about it. If I can learn this sitting in my living room reading a 19 page paper and several others so can they. There's nothing special about me, I just take the time to do it.

Remember how Sara Kayat, the NHS and TV doctor, said that the 'Covid vaccine' would '100 percent prevent hospitalisation and death'. Doctors can be idiots like every other profession and they

should not be worshipped as infallible. They are not and far from it. Behind many medical and scientific ‘experts’ lies an uninformed prat trying to hide themselves from you although in the ‘Covid’ era many have failed to do so as with UK narrative-repeating ‘TV doctor’ Hilary Jones. Pushing back against the minority of proper doctors and scientists speaking out against the ‘vaccine’ has been the entire edifice of the Cult global state in the form of governments, medical systems, corporations, mainstream media, Silicon Valley, and an army of compliant doctors, medical staff and scientists willing to say anything for money and to enhance their careers by promoting the party line. If you do that you are an ‘expert’ and if you won’t you are an ‘anti-vaxxer’ and ‘Covidiot’. The pressure to be ‘vaccinated’ is incessant. We have even had reports claiming that the ‘vaccine’ can help cure cancer and Alzheimer’s and make the lame walk. I am waiting for the announcement that it can bring you coffee in the morning and cook your tea. Just as the symptoms of ‘Covid’ seem to increase by the week so have the miracles of the ‘vaccine’. American supermarket giant Kroger Co. offered nearly 500,000 employees in 35 states a \$100 bonus for having the ‘vaccine’ while donut chain Krispy Kreme promised ‘vaccinated’ customers a free glazed donut every day for the rest of 2021. Have your DNA changed and you will get a doughnut although we might not have to give you them for long. Such offers and incentives confirm the desperation.

Perhaps the worse vaccine-stunt of them all was UK ‘Health’ Secretary Matt-the-prat Hancock on live TV after watching a clip of someone being ‘vaccinated’ when the roll-out began. Hancock faked tears so badly it was embarrassing. Brain-of-Britain Piers Morgan, the lockdown-supporting, ‘vaccine’ supporting, ‘vaccine’ passport-supporting, TV host played along with Hancock – ‘You’re quite emotional about that’ he said in response to acting so atrocious it would have been called out at a school nativity which will presumably today include Mary and Jesus in masks, wise men keeping their camels six feet apart, and shepherds under tent arrest. System-serving Morgan tweeted this: ‘Love the idea of covid vaccine passports for everywhere: flights, restaurants, clubs, football, gyms,

shops etc. It's time covid-denying, anti-vaxxer loonies had their bullsh*t bluff called & bar themselves from going anywhere that responsible citizens go.' If only I could aspire to his genius. To think that Morgan, who specialises in shouting over anyone he disagrees with, was lauded as a free speech hero when he lost his job after storming off the set of his live show like a child throwing his dolly out of the pram. If he is a free speech hero we are in real trouble. I have no idea what 'bullsh*t' means, by the way, the * throws me completely.

The Cult is desperate to infuse its synthetic DNA-changing concoction into everyone and has been using every lie, trick and intimidation to do so. The question of '*Why?*' we shall now address.

CHAPTER TEN

Human 2.0

I believe that at the end of the century the use of words and general educated opinion will have altered so much that one will be able to speak of machines thinking without expecting to be contradicted –

Alan Turing (1912-1954), the ‘Father of artificial intelligence’

I have been exposing for decades the plan to transform the human body from a biological to a synthetic-biological state. The new human that I will call Human 2.0 is planned to be connected to artificial intelligence and a global AI ‘Smart Grid’ that would operate as one global system in which AI would control everything from your fridge to your heating system to your car to your mind. Humans would no longer be ‘human’, but post-human and sub-human, with their thinking and emotional processes replaced by AI.

What I said sounded crazy and beyond science fiction and I could understand that. To any balanced, rational, mind it *is* crazy. Today, however, that world is becoming reality and it puts the ‘Covid vaccine’ into its true context. Ray Kurzweil is the ultra-Zionist ‘computer scientist, inventor and futurist’ and co-founder of the Singularity University. Singularity refers to the merging of humans with machines or ‘transhumanism’. Kurzweil has said humanity would be connected to the cyber ‘cloud’ in the period of the ever-recurring year of 2030:

Our thinking ... will be a hybrid of biological and non-biological thinking ... humans will be able to extend their limitations and ‘think in the cloud’ ... We’re going to put gateways to the

cloud in our brains ... We're going to gradually merge and enhance ourselves ... In my view, that's the nature of being human – we transcend our limitations. As the technology becomes vastly superior to what we are then the small proportion that is still human gets smaller and smaller and smaller until it's just utterly negligible.

They are trying to sell this end-of-humanity-as-we-know-it as the next stage of 'evolution' when we become super-human and 'like the gods'. They are lying to you. Shocked, eh? The population, and again especially the young, have been manipulated into addiction to technologies designed to enslave them for life. First they induced an addiction to smartphones (holdables); next they moved to technology on the body (wearables); and then began the invasion of the body (implantables). I warned way back about the plan for microchipped people and we are now entering that era. We should not be diverted into thinking that this refers only to chips we can see. Most important are the nanochips known as smart dust, neural dust and nanobots which are far too small to be seen by the human eye. Nanotechnology is everywhere, increasingly in food products, and released into the atmosphere by the geoengineering of the skies funded by Bill Gates to 'shut out the Sun' and 'save the planet from global warming'. Gates has been funding a project to spray millions of tonnes of chalk (calcium carbonate) into the stratosphere over Sweden to 'dim the Sun' and cool the Earth. Scientists warned the move could be disastrous for weather systems in ways no one can predict and opposition led to the Swedish space agency announcing that the 'experiment' would not be happening as planned in the summer of 2021; but it shows where the Cult is going with dimming the impact of the Sun and there's an associated plan to change the planet's atmosphere. Who gives psychopath Gates the right to dictate to the entire human race and dismantle planetary systems? The world will not be safe while this man is at large.

The global warming hoax has made the Sun, like the gas of life, something to fear when both are essential to good health and human survival (more inversion). The body transforms sunlight into vital vitamin D through a process involving ... *cholesterol*. This is the cholesterol we are also told to fear. We are urged to take Big Pharma

statin drugs to reduce cholesterol and it's all systematic. Reducing cholesterol means reducing vitamin D uptake with all the multiple health problems that will cause. At least if you take statins long term it saves the government from having to pay you a pension. The delivery system to block sunlight is widely referred to as chemtrails although these have a much deeper agenda, too. They appear at first to be contrails or condensation trails streaming from aircraft into cold air at high altitudes. Contrails disperse very quickly while chemtrails do not and spread out across the sky before eventually their content falls to earth. Many times I have watched aircraft cross-cross a clear blue sky releasing chemtrails until it looks like a cloudy day. Chemtrails contain many things harmful to humans and the natural world including toxic heavy metals, aluminium (see Alzheimer's) and nanotechnology. Ray Kurzweil reveals the reason without actually saying so: 'Nanobots will infuse all the matter around us with information. Rocks, trees, everything will become these intelligent creatures.' How do you deliver that? *From the sky.* Self-replicating nanobots would connect everything to the Smart Grid. The phenomenon of Morgellons disease began in the chemtrail era and the correlation has led to it being dubbed the 'chemtrail disease'. Self-replicating fibres appear in the body that can be pulled out through the skin. Morgellons fibres continue to grow outside the body and have a form of artificial intelligence. I cover this at greater length in *Phantom Self*.

'Vaccine' operating system

'Covid vaccines' with their self-replicating synthetic material are also designed to make the connection between humanity and Kurzweil's 'cloud'. American doctor and dedicated campaigner for truth, Carrie Madej, an Internal Medicine Specialist in Georgia with more than 20 years medical experience, has highlighted the nanotechnology aspect of the fake 'vaccines'. She explains how one of the components in at least the Moderna and Pfizer synthetic potions are 'lipid nanoparticles' which are 'like little tiny computer bits' – a 'sci-fi substance' known as nanobots and hydrogel which can be 'triggered

at any moment to deliver its payload' and act as 'biosensors'. The synthetic substance had 'the ability to accumulate data from your body like your breathing, your respiration, thoughts and emotions, all kind of things' and each syringe could carry a *million* nanobots:

This substance because it's like little bits of computers in your body, crazy, but it's true, it can do that, [and] obviously has the ability to act through Wi-Fi. It can receive and transmit energy, messages, frequencies or impulses. That issue has never been addressed by these companies. What does that do to the human?

Just imagine getting this substance in you and it can react to things all around you, the 5G, your smart device, your phones, what is happening with that? What if something is triggering it, too, like an impulse, a frequency? We have something completely foreign in the human body.

Madej said her research revealed that electromagnetic (EMF) frequencies emitted by phones and other devices had increased dramatically in the same period of the 'vaccine' rollout and she was seeing more people with radiation problems as 5G and other electromagnetic technology was expanded and introduced to schools and hospitals. She said she was 'floored with the EMF coming off' the devices she checked. All this makes total sense and syncs with my own work of decades when you think that Moderna refers in documents to its mRNA 'vaccine' as an 'operating system':

Recognizing the broad potential of mRNA science, we set out to create an mRNA technology platform that functions very much like an operating system on a computer. It is designed so that it can plug and play interchangeably with different programs. In our case, the 'program' or 'app' is our mRNA drug – the unique mRNA sequence that codes for a protein ...

... Our mRNA Medicines – 'The Software Of Life': When we have a concept for a new mRNA medicine and begin research, fundamental components are already in place. Generally, the only thing that changes from one potential mRNA medicine to another is the coding region – the actual genetic code that instructs ribosomes to make protein. Utilizing these instruction sets gives our investigational mRNA medicines a software-like quality. We also have the ability to combine different mRNA sequences encoding for different proteins in a single mRNA investigational medicine.

Who needs a real ‘virus’ when you can create a computer version to justify infusing your operating system into the entire human race on the road to making living, breathing people into cyborgs? What is missed with the ‘vaccines’ is the *digital* connection between synthetic material and the body that I highlighted earlier with the study that hacked a computer with human DNA. On one level the body is digital, based on mathematical codes, and I’ll have more about that in the next chapter. Those who ridiculously claim that mRNA ‘vaccines’ are not designed to change human genetics should explain the words of Dr Tal Zaks, chief medical officer at Moderna, in a 2017 TED talk. He said that over the last 30 years ‘we’ve been living this phenomenal digital scientific revolution, and I’m here today to tell you, that we are actually *hacking the software of life*, and that it’s changing the way we think about prevention and treatment of disease’:

In every cell there’s this thing called messenger RNA, or mRNA for short, that transmits the critical information from the DNA in our genes to the protein, which is really the stuff we’re all made out of. This is the critical information that determines what the cell will do. So we think about it as an operating system. So if you could change that, if you could introduce a line of code, or change a line of code, it turns out, that has profound implications for everything, from the flu to cancer.

Zaks should more accurately have said that this has profound implications for the human genetic code and the nature of DNA. Communications within the body go both ways and not only one. But, hey, no, the ‘Covid vaccine’ will not affect your genetics. Cult fact-checkers say so even though the man who helped to develop the mRNA technique says that it does. Zaks said in 2017:

If you think about what it is we’re trying to do. We’ve taken information and our understanding of that information and how that information is transmitted in a cell, and we’ve taken our understanding of medicine and how to make drugs, and we’re fusing the two. We think of it as information therapy.

I have been writing for decades that the body is an information field communicating with itself and the wider world. This is why

radiation which is information can change the information field of body and mind through phenomena like 5G and change their nature and function. ‘Information therapy’ means to change the body’s information field and change the way it operates. DNA is a receiver-transmitter of information and can be mutated by information like mRNA synthetic messaging. Technology to do this has been ready and waiting in the underground bases and other secret projects to be rolled out when the ‘Covid’ hoax was played. ‘Trials’ of such short and irrelevant duration were only for public consumption. When they say the ‘vaccine’ is ‘experimental’ that is not true. It may appear to be ‘experimental’ to those who don’t know what’s going on, but the trials have already been done to ensure the Cult gets the result it desires. Zaks said that it took decades to sequence the human genome, completed in 2003, but now they could do it in a week. By ‘they’ he means scientists operating in the public domain. In the secret projects they were sequencing the genome in a week long before even 2003.

Deluge of mRNA

Highly significantly the Moderna document says the guiding premise is that if using mRNA as a medicine works for one disease then it should work for many diseases. They were leveraging the flexibility afforded by their platform and the fundamental role mRNA plays in protein synthesis to pursue mRNA medicines for a broad spectrum of diseases. Moderna is confirming what I was saying through 2020 that multiple ‘vaccines’ were planned for ‘Covid’ (and later invented ‘variants’) and that previous vaccines would be converted to the mRNA system to infuse the body with massive amounts of genetically-manipulating synthetic material to secure a transformation to a synthetic-biological state. The ‘vaccines’ are designed to kill stunning numbers as part of the long-exposed Cult depopulation agenda and transform the rest. Given this is the goal you can appreciate why there is such hysterical demand for every human to be ‘vaccinated’ for an alleged ‘disease’ that has an estimated ‘infection’ to ‘death’ ratio of 0.23-0.15 percent. As I write

children are being given the ‘vaccine’ in trials (their parents are a disgrace) and ever-younger people are being offered the vaccine for a ‘virus’ that even if you believe it exists has virtually zero chance of harming them. Horrific effects of the ‘trials’ on a 12-year-old girl were revealed by a family member to be serious brain and gastric problems that included a bowel obstruction and the inability to swallow liquids or solids. She was unable to eat or drink without throwing up, had extreme pain in her back, neck and abdomen, and was paralysed from the waist down which stopped her urinating unaided. When the girl was first taken to hospital doctors said it was all in her mind. She was signed up for the ‘trial’ by her parents for whom no words suffice. None of this ‘Covid vaccine’ insanity makes any sense unless you see what the ‘vaccine’ really is – a body-changer. Synthetic biology or ‘SynBio’ is a fast-emerging and expanding scientific discipline which includes everything from genetic and molecular engineering to electrical and computer engineering. Synthetic biology is defined in these ways:

- A multidisciplinary area of research that seeks to create new biological parts, devices, and systems, or to redesign systems that are already found in nature.
- The use of a mixture of physical engineering and genetic engineering to create new (and therefore synthetic) life forms.
- An emerging field of research that aims to combine the knowledge and methods of biology, engineering and related disciplines in the design of chemically-synthesized DNA to create organisms with novel or enhanced characteristics and traits (synthetic organisms including humans).

We now have synthetic blood, skin, organs and limbs being developed along with synthetic body parts produced by 3D printers. These are all elements of the synthetic human programme and this comment by Kurzweil’s co-founder of the Singularity University,

Peter Diamandis, can be seen in a whole new light with the ‘Covid’ hoax and the sanctions against those that refuse the ‘vaccine’:

Anybody who is going to be resisting the progress forward [to transhumanism] is going to be resisting evolution and, fundamentally, they will die out. It’s not a matter of whether it’s good or bad. It’s going to happen.

‘Resisting evolution’? What absolute bollocks. The arrogance of these people is without limit. His ‘it’s going to happen’ mantra is another way of saying ‘resistance is futile’ to break the spirit of those pushing back and we must not fall for it. Getting this genetically-transforming ‘vaccine’ into everyone is crucial to the Cult plan for total control and the desperation to achieve that is clear for anyone to see. Vaccine passports are a major factor in this and they, too, are a form of resistance is futile. It’s NOT. The paper funded by the Rockefeller Foundation for the 2013 ‘health conference’ in China said:

We will interact more with artificial intelligence. The use of robotics, bio-engineering to augment human functioning is already well underway and will advance. Re-engineering of humans into potentially separate and unequal forms through genetic engineering or mixed human-robots raises debates on ethics and equality.

A new demography is projected to emerge after 2030 [that year again] of technologies (robotics, genetic engineering, nanotechnology) producing robots, engineered organisms, ‘nanobots’ and artificial intelligence (AI) that can self-replicate. Debates will grow on the implications of an impending reality of human designed life.

What is happening today is so long planned. The world army enforcing the will of the world government is intended to be a robot army, not a human one. Today’s military and its technologically ‘enhanced’ troops, pilotless planes and driverless vehicles are just stepping stones to that end. Human soldiers are used as Cult fodder and its time they woke up to that and worked for the freedom of the population instead of their own destruction and their family’s destruction – the same with the police. Join us and let’s sort this out. The phenomenon of enforce my own destruction is widespread in the ‘Covid’ era with Woker ‘luvvies’ in the acting and entertainment

industries supporting ‘Covid’ rules which have destroyed their profession and the same with those among the public who put signs on the doors of their businesses ‘closed due to Covid – stay safe’ when many will never reopen. It’s a form of masochism and most certainly insanity.

Transgender = transhumanism

When something explodes out of nowhere and is suddenly everywhere it is always the Cult agenda and so it is with the tidal wave of claims and demands that have infiltrated every aspect of society under the heading of ‘transgenderism’. The term ‘trans’ is so ‘in’ and this is the dictionary definition:

A prefix meaning ‘across’, ‘through’, occurring ... in loanwords from Latin, used in particular for denoting movement or conveyance from place to place (transfer; transmit; transplant) or complete change (transform; transmute), or to form adjectives meaning ‘crossing’, ‘on the other side of’, or ‘going beyond’ the place named (transmontane; transnational; trans-Siberian).

Transgender means to go beyond gender and transhuman means to go beyond human. Both are aspects of the Cult plan to transform the human body to a synthetic state with *no gender*. Human 2.0 is not designed to procreate and would be produced technologically with no need for parents. The new human would mean the end of parents and so men, and increasingly women, are being targeted for the deletion of their rights and status. Parental rights are disappearing at an ever-quickening speed for the same reason. The new human would have no need for men or women when there is no procreation and no gender. Perhaps the transgender movement that appears to be in a permanent state of frenzy might now contemplate on how it is being used. This was never about transgender rights which are only the interim excuse for confusing gender, particularly in the young, on the road to *fusing* gender. Transgender activism is not an end; it is a *means* to an end. We see again the technique of creative destruction in which you destroy the status quo to ‘build back better’ in the form that you want. The gender status quo had to be

destroyed by persuading the Cult-created Woke mentality to believe that you can have 100 genders or more. A programme for 9 to 12 year olds produced by the Cult-owned BBC promoted the 100 genders narrative. The very idea may be the most monumental nonsense, but it is not what is true that counts, only what you can make people *believe* is true. Once the gender of $2 + 2 = 4$ has been dismantled through indoctrination, intimidation and $2 + 2 = 5$ then the new no-gender normal can take its place with Human 2.0.

Aldous Huxley revealed the plan in his prophetic *Brave New World* in 1932:

Natural reproduction has been done away with and children are created, 'decanted', and raised in 'hatcheries and conditioning centres'. From birth, people are genetically designed to fit into one of five castes, which are further split into 'Plus' and 'Minus' members and designed to fulfil predetermined positions within the social and economic strata of the World State.

How could Huxley know this in 1932? For the same reason George Orwell knew about the Big Brother state in 1948, Cult insiders I have quoted knew about it in 1969, and I have known about it since the early 1990s. If you are connected to the Cult or you work your balls off to uncover the plan you can predict the future. The process is simple. If there is a plan for the world and nothing intervenes to stop it then it will happen. Thus if you communicate the plan ahead of time you are perceived to have predicted the future, but you haven't. You have revealed the plan which without intervention will become the human future. The whole reason I have done what I have is to alert enough people to inspire an intervention and maybe at last that time has come with the Cult and its intentions now so obvious to anyone with a brain in working order.

The future is here

Technological wombs that Huxley described to replace parent procreation are already being developed and they are only the projects we know about in the public arena. Israeli scientists told *The Times of Israel* in March, 2021, that they have grown 250-cell embryos

into mouse foetuses with fully formed organs using artificial wombs in a development they say could pave the way for gestating humans outside the womb. Professor Jacob Hanna of the Weizmann Institute of Science said:

We took mouse embryos from the mother at day five of development, when they are just of 250 cells, and had them in the incubator from day five until day 11, by which point they had grown all their organs.

By day 11 they make their own blood and have a beating heart, a fully developed brain. Anybody would look at them and say, 'this is clearly a mouse foetus with all the characteristics of a mouse.' It's gone from being a ball of cells to being an advanced foetus.

A special liquid is used to nourish embryo cells in a laboratory dish and they float on the liquid to duplicate the first stage of embryonic development. The incubator creates all the right conditions for its development, Hanna said. The liquid gives the embryo 'all the nutrients, hormones and sugars they need' along with a custom-made electronic incubator which controls gas concentration, pressure and temperature. The cutting-edge in the underground bases and other secret locations will be light years ahead of that, however, and this was reported by the London *Guardian* in 2017:

We are approaching a biotechnological breakthrough. Ectogenesis, the invention of a complete external womb, could completely change the nature of human reproduction. In April this year, researchers at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia announced their development of an artificial womb.

The article was headed 'Artificial wombs could soon be a reality. What will this mean for women?' What would it mean for children is an even bigger question. No mother to bond with only a machine in preparation for a life of soulless interaction and control in a world governed by machines (see the *Matrix* movies). Now observe the calculated manipulations of the 'Covid' hoax as human interaction and warmth has been curtailed by distancing, isolation and fear with people communicating via machines on a scale never seen before.

These are all dots in the same picture as are all the personal assistants, gadgets and children's toys through which kids and adults communicate with AI as if it is human. The AI 'voice' on Sat-Nav should be included. All these things are psychological preparation for the Cult endgame. Before you can make a physical connection with AI you have to make a psychological connection and that is what people are being conditioned to do with this ever gathering human-AI interaction. Movies and TV programmes depicting the transhuman, robot dystopia relate to a phenomenon known as 'pre-emptive programming' in which the world that is planned is portrayed everywhere in movies, TV and advertising. This is conditioning the conscious and subconscious mind to become familiar with the planned reality to dilute resistance when it happens for real. What would have been a shock such is the change is made less so. We have young children put on the road to transgender transition surgery with puberty blocking drugs at an age when they could never be able to make those life-changing decisions.

Rachel Levine, a professor of paediatrics and psychiatry who believes in treating children this way, became America's highest-ranked openly-transgender official when she was confirmed as US Assistant Secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services after being nominated by Joe Biden (the Cult). Activists and governments press for laws to deny parents a say in their children's transition process so the kids can be isolated and manipulated into agreeing to irreversible medical procedures. A Canadian father Robert Hoogland was denied bail by the Vancouver Supreme Court in 2021 and remained in jail for breaching a court order that he stay silent over his young teenage daughter, a minor, who was being offered life-changing hormone therapy without parental consent. At the age of 12 the girl's 'school counsellor' said she may be transgender, referred her to a doctor and told the school to treat her like a boy. This is another example of state-serving schools imposing ever more control over children's lives while parents have ever less.

Contemptible and extreme child abuse is happening all over the world as the Cult gender-fusion operation goes into warp-speed.

Why the war on men – and now women?

The question about what artificial wombs mean for women should rightly be asked. The answer can be seen in the deletion of women's rights involving sport, changing rooms, toilets and status in favour of people in male bodies claiming to identify as women. I can identify as a mountain climber, but it doesn't mean I can climb a mountain any more than a biological man can be a biological woman. To believe so is a triumph of belief over factual reality which is the very perceptual basis of everything Woke. Women's sport is being destroyed by allowing those with male bodies who say they identify as female to 'compete' with girls and women. Male body 'women' dominate 'women's' competition with their greater muscle mass, bone density, strength and speed. With that disadvantage sport for women loses all meaning. To put this in perspective nearly 300 American high school boys can run faster than the quickest woman sprinter in the world. Women are seeing their previously protected spaces invaded by male bodies simply because they claim to identify as women. That's all they need to do to access all women's spaces and activities under the Biden 'Equality Act' that destroys equality for women with the usual Orwellian Woke inversion. Male sex offenders have already committed rapes in women's prisons after claiming to identify as women to get them transferred. Does this not matter to the Woke 'equality' hypocrites? Not in the least. What matters to Cult manipulators and funders behind transgender activists is to advance gender fusion on the way to the no-gender 'human'. When you are seeking to impose transparent nonsense like this, or the 'Covid' hoax, the only way the nonsense can prevail is through censorship and intimidation of dissenters, deletion of factual information, and programming of the unquestioning, bewildered and naive. You don't have to scan the world for long to see that all these things are happening.

Many women's rights organisations have realised that rights and status which took such a long time to secure are being eroded and that it is systematic. Kara Dansky of the global Women's Human Rights Campaign said that Biden's transgender executive order immediately he took office, subsequent orders, and Equality Act legislation that followed 'seek to erase women and girls in the law as a category'. *Exactly.* I said during the long ago-started war on men (in which many women play a crucial part) that this was going to turn into a war on them. The Cult is phasing out *both* male and female genders. To get away with that they are brought into conflict so they are busy fighting each other while the Cult completes the job with no unity of response. Unity, people, *unity*. We need unity everywhere. Transgender is the only show in town as the big step towards the no-gender human. It's not about rights for transgender people and never has been. Woke political correctness is deleting words relating to genders to the same end. Wokers believe this is to be 'inclusive' when the opposite is true. They are deleting words describing gender because gender *itself* is being deleted by Human 2.0. Terms like 'man', 'woman', 'mother' and 'father' are being deleted in the universities and other institutions to be replaced by the *no*-gender, not trans-gender, 'individuals' and 'guardians'. Women's rights campaigner Maria Keffler of Partners for Ethical Care said: 'Children are being taught from kindergarten upward that some boys have a vagina, some girls have a penis, and that kids can be any gender they want to be.' Do we really believe that suddenly countries all over the world at the same time had the idea of having drag queens go into schools or read transgender stories to very young children in the local library? It's coldly-calculated confusion of gender on the way to the fusion of gender. Suzanne Vierling, a psychologist from Southern California, made another important point:

Yesterday's slave woman who endured gynecological medical experiments is today's girl-child being butchered in a booming gender-transitioning sector. Ovaries removed, pushing her into menopause and osteoporosis, uncharted territory, and parents' rights and authority decimated.

The erosion of parental rights is a common theme in line with the Cult plans to erase the very concept of parents and 'ovaries removed, pushing her into menopause' means what? Those born female lose the ability to have children – another way to discontinue humanity as we know it.

Eliminating Human 1.0 (before our very eyes)

To pave the way for Human 2.0 you must phase out Human 1.0. This is happening through plummeting sperm counts and making women infertile through an onslaught of chemicals, radiation (including smartphones in pockets of men) and mRNA 'vaccines'. Common agriculture pesticides are also having a devastating impact on human fertility. I have been tracking collapsing sperm counts in the books for a long time and in 2021 came a book by fertility scientist and reproductive epidemiologist Shanna Swan, *Count Down: How Our Modern World Is Threatening Sperm Counts, Altering Male and Female Reproductive Development and Imperiling the Future of the Human Race*. She reports how the global fertility rate dropped by half between 1960 and 2016 with America's birth rate 16 percent below where it needs to be to sustain the population. Women are experiencing declining egg quality, more miscarriages, and more couples suffer from infertility. Other findings were an increase in erectile dysfunction, infant boys developing more genital abnormalities, male problems with conception, and plunging levels of the male hormone testosterone which would explain why so many men have lost their backbone and masculinity. This has been very evident during the 'Covid' hoax when women have been prominent among the Pushbackers and big strapping blokes have bowed their heads, covered their faces with a nappy and quietly submitted. Mind control expert Cathy O'Brien also points to how global education introduced the concept of 'we're all winners' in sport and classrooms: 'Competition was defused, and it in turn defused a sense of fighting back.' This is another version of the 'equity' doctrine in which you drive down rather than raise up. What a contrast in Cult-controlled China with its global ambitions

where the government published plans in January, 2021, to 'cultivate masculinity' in boys from kindergarten through to high school in the face of a 'masculinity crisis'. A government adviser said boys would be soon become 'delicate, timid and effeminate' unless action was taken. Don't expect any similar policy in the targeted West. A 2006 study showed that a 65-year-old man in 2002 had testosterone levels 15 percent lower than a 65-year-old man in 1987 while a 2020 study found a similar story with young adults and adolescents. Men are getting prescriptions for testosterone replacement therapy which causes an even greater drop in sperm count with up to 99 percent seeing sperm counts drop to zero during the treatment. More sperm is defective and malfunctioning with some having two heads or not pursuing an egg.

A class of *synthetic* chemicals known as phthalates are being blamed for the decline. These are found everywhere in plastics, shampoos, cosmetics, furniture, flame retardants, personal care products, pesticides, canned foods and even receipts. Why till receipts? Everyone touches them. Let no one delude themselves that all this is not systematic to advance the long-time agenda for human body transformation. Phthalates mimic hormones and disrupt the hormone balance causing testosterone to fall and genital birth defects in male infants. Animals and fish have been affected in the same way due to phthalates and other toxins in rivers. When fish turn gay or change sex through chemicals in rivers and streams it is a pointer to why there has been such an increase in gay people and the sexually confused. It doesn't matter to me what sexuality people choose to be, but if it's being affected by chemical pollution and consumption then we need to know. Does anyone really think that this is not connected to the transgender agenda, the war on men and the condemnation of male 'toxic masculinity'? You watch this being followed by 'toxic femininity'. It's already happening. When breastfeeding becomes 'chest-feeding', pregnant women become pregnant people along with all the other Woke claptrap you know that the world is going insane and there's a Cult scam in progress. Transgender activists are promoting the Cult agenda while Cult

billionaires support and fund the insanity as they laugh themselves to sleep at the sheer stupidity for which humans must be infamous in galaxies far, far away.

'Covid vaccines' and female infertility

We can now see why the 'vaccine' has been connected to potential infertility in women. Dr Michael Yeadon, former Vice President and Chief Scientific Advisor at Pfizer, and Dr Wolfgang Wodarg in Germany, filed a petition with the European Medicines Agency in December, 2020, urging them to stop trials for the Pfizer/BioNTech shot and all other mRNA trials until further studies had been done. They were particularly concerned about possible effects on fertility with 'vaccine'-produced antibodies attacking the protein Syncytin-1 which is responsible for developing the placenta. The result would be infertility 'of indefinite duration' in women who have the 'vaccine' with the placenta failing to form. Section 10.4.2 of the Pfizer/BioNTech trial protocol says that pregnant women or those who might become so should not have mRNA shots. Section 10.4 warns men taking mRNA shots to 'be abstinent from heterosexual intercourse' and not to donate sperm. The UK government said that it *did not know* if the mRNA procedure had an effect on fertility. *Did not know?* These people have to go to jail. UK government advice did not recommend at the start that pregnant women had the shot and said they should avoid pregnancy for at least two months after 'vaccination'. The 'advice' was later updated to pregnant women should only have the 'vaccine' if the benefits outweighed the risks to mother and foetus. What the hell is that supposed to mean? Then 'spontaneous abortions' began to appear and rapidly increase on the adverse reaction reporting schemes which include only a fraction of adverse reactions. Thousands and ever-growing numbers of 'vaccinated' women are describing changes to their menstrual cycle with heavier blood flow, irregular periods and menstruating again after going through the menopause – all links to reproduction effects. Women are passing blood clots and the lining of their uterus while men report erectile dysfunction and blood effects. Most

significantly of all *unvaccinated* women began to report similar menstrual changes after interaction with '*vaccinated*' people and men and children were also affected with bleeding noses, blood clots and other conditions. 'Shedding' is when vaccinated people can emit the content of a vaccine to affect the unvaccinated, but this is different. '*Vaccinated*' people were not shedding a 'live virus' allegedly in '*vaccines*' as before because the fake '*Covid vaccines*' involve synthetic material and other toxicity. Doctors exposing what is happening prefer the term '*transmission*' to shedding. Somehow those that have had the shots are transmitting effects to those that haven't. Dr Carrie Madej said the nano-content of the '*vaccines*' can 'act like an antenna' to others around them which fits perfectly with my own conclusions. This '*vaccine*' transmission phenomenon was becoming known as the book went into production and I deal with this further in the Postscript.

Vaccine effects on sterility are well known. The World Health Organization was accused in 2014 of sterilising millions of women in Kenya with the evidence confirmed by the content of the vaccines involved. The same WHO behind the '*Covid*' hoax admitted its involvement for more than ten years with the vaccine programme. Other countries made similar claims. Charges were lodged by Tanzania, Nicaragua, Mexico, and the Philippines. The Gardasil vaccine claimed to protect against a genital 'virus' known as HPV has also been linked to infertility. Big Pharma and the WHO (same thing) are criminal and satanic entities. Then there's the Bill Gates Foundation which is connected through funding and shared interests with 20 pharmaceutical giants and laboratories. He stands accused of directing the policy of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), vaccine alliance GAVI, and other groupings, to advance the vaccine agenda and silence opposition at great cost to women and children. At the same time Gates wants to reduce the global population. Coincidence?

Great Reset = Smart Grid = new human

The Cult agenda I have been exposing for 30 years is now being openly promoted by Cult assets like Gates and Klaus Schwab of the World Economic Forum under code-terms like the 'Great Reset', 'Build Back Better' and 'a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reflect, reimagine, and reset our world'. What provided this 'rare but narrow window of opportunity'? The 'Covid' hoax did. Who created that? *They* did. My books from not that long ago warned about the planned 'Internet of Things' (IoT) and its implications for human freedom. This was the plan to connect all technology to the Internet and artificial intelligence and today we are way down that road with an estimated 36 billion devices connected to the World Wide Web and that figure is projected to be 76 billion by 2025. I further warned that the Cult planned to go beyond that to the Internet of *Everything* when the human brain was connected via AI to the Internet and Kurzweil's 'cloud'. Now we have Cult operatives like Schwab calling for precisely that under the term 'Internet of Bodies', a fusion of the physical, digital and biological into one centrally-controlled Smart Grid system which the Cult refers to as the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'. They talk about the 'biological', but they really mean the synthetic-biological which is required to fully integrate the human body and brain into the Smart Grid and artificial intelligence planned to replace the human mind. We have everything being synthetically manipulated including the natural world through GMO and smart dust, the food we eat and the human body itself with synthetic 'vaccines'. I said in *The Answer* that we would see the Cult push for synthetic meat to replace animals and in February, 2021, the so predictable psychopath Bill Gates called for the introduction of synthetic meat to save us all from 'climate change'. The climate hoax just keeps on giving like the 'Covid' hoax. The war on meat by vegan activists is a carbon (oops, sorry) copy of the manipulation of transgender activists. They have no idea (except their inner core) that they are being used to promote and impose the agenda of the Cult or that they are only the *vehicle* and not the *reason*. This is not to say those who choose not to eat meat shouldn't be respected and supported in that right, but there are ulterior motives

for those in power. A *Forbes* article in December, 2019, highlighted the plan so beloved of Schwab and the Cult under the heading: 'What Is The Internet of Bodies? And How Is It Changing Our World?' The article said the human body is the latest data platform (remember 'our vaccine is an operating system'). *Forbes* described the plan very accurately and the words could have come straight out of my books from long before:

The Internet of Bodies (IoB) is an extension of the IoT and basically connects the human body to a network through devices that are ingested, implanted, or connected to the body in some way. Once connected, data can be exchanged, and the body and device can be remotely monitored and controlled.

They were really describing a human hive mind with human perception centrally-dictated via an AI connection as well as allowing people to be 'remotely monitored and controlled'.

Everything from a fridge to a human mind could be directed from a central point by these insane psychopaths and 'Covid vaccines' are crucial to this. *Forbes* explained the process I mentioned earlier of holdable and wearable technology followed by implantable. The article said there were three generations of the Internet of Bodies that include:

- Body external: These are wearable devices such as Apple Watches or Fitbits that can monitor our health.
- Body internal: These include pacemakers, cochlear implants, and digital pills that go inside our bodies to monitor or control various aspects of health.
- Body embedded: The third generation of the Internet of Bodies is embedded technology where technology and the human body are melded together and have a real-time connection to a remote machine.

Forbes noted the development of the Brain Computer Interface (BCI) which merges the brain with an external device for monitoring and controlling in real-time. ‘The ultimate goal is to help restore function to individuals with disabilities by using brain signals rather than conventional neuromuscular pathways.’ Oh, do fuck off. The goal of brain interface technology is controlling human thought and emotion from the central point in a hive mind serving its masters wishes. Many people are now agreeing to be chipped to open doors without a key. You can recognise them because they’ll be wearing a mask, social distancing and lining up for the ‘vaccine’. The Cult plans a Great Reset money system after they have completed the demolition of the global economy in which ‘money’ will be exchanged through communication with body operating systems. Rand Corporation, a Cult-owned think tank, said of the Internet of Bodies or IoB:

Internet of Bodies technologies fall under the broader IoT umbrella. But as the name suggests, IoB devices introduce an even more intimate interplay between humans and gadgets. IoB devices monitor the human body, collect health metrics and other personal information, and transmit those data over the Internet. Many devices, such as fitness trackers, are already in use ... IoB devices ... and those in development can track, record, and store users’ whereabouts, bodily functions, and what they see, hear, and even think.

Schwab’s World Economic Forum, a long-winded way of saying ‘fascism’ or ‘the Cult’, has gone full-on with the Internet of Bodies in the ‘Covid’ era. ‘We’re entering the era of the Internet of Bodies’, it declared, ‘collecting our physical data via a range of devices that can be implanted, swallowed or worn’. The result would be a huge amount of health-related data that could improve human wellbeing around the world, and prove crucial in fighting the ‘Covid-19 pandemic’. Does anyone think these clowns care about ‘human wellbeing’ after the death and devastation their pandemic hoax has purposely caused? Schwab and co say we should move forward with the Internet of Bodies because ‘Keeping track of symptoms could help us stop the spread of infection, and quickly detect new cases’. How wonderful, but keeping track’ is all they are really bothered

about. Researchers were investigating if data gathered from smartwatches and similar devices could be used as viral infection alerts by tracking the user's heart rate and breathing. Schwab said in his 2018 book *Shaping the Future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*:

The lines between technologies and beings are becoming blurred and not just by the ability to create lifelike robots or synthetics. Instead it is about the ability of new technologies to literally become part of us. Technologies already influence how we understand ourselves, how we think about each other, and how we determine our realities. As the technologies ... give us deeper access to parts of ourselves, we may begin to integrate digital technologies into our bodies.

You can see what the game is. Twenty-four hour control and people – if you could still call them that – would never know when something would go ping and take them out of circulation. It's the most obvious rush to a global fascist dictatorship and the complete submission of humanity and yet still so many are locked away in their Cult-induced perceptual coma and can't see it.

Smart Grid control centres

The human body is being transformed by the 'vaccines' and in other ways into a synthetic cyborg that can be attached to the global Smart Grid which would be controlled from a central point and other sub-locations of Grid manipulation. Where are these planned to be? Well, China for a start which is one of the Cult's biggest centres of operation. The technological control system and technocratic rule was incubated here to be unleashed across the world after the 'Covid' hoax came out of China in 2020. Another Smart Grid location that will surprise people new to this is Israel. I have exposed in *The Trigger* how Sabbatian technocrats, intelligence and military operatives were behind the horrors of 9/11 and not 19 Arab hijackers' who somehow manifested the ability to pilot big passenger airliners when instructors at puddle-jumping flying schools described some of them as a joke. The 9/11 attacks were made possible through control of civilian and military air computer systems and those of the White House, Pentagon and connected agencies. See *The Trigger* – it

will blow your mind. The controlling and coordinating force were the Sabbatian networks in Israel and the United States which by then had infiltrated the entire US government, military and intelligence system. The real name of the American Deep State is 'Sabbatian State'. Israel is a tiny country of only nine million people, but it is one of the global centres of cyber operations and fast catching Silicon Valley in importance to the Cult. Israel is known as the 'start-up nation' for all the cyber companies spawned there with the Sabbatian specialisation of 'cyber security' that I mentioned earlier which gives those companies access to computer systems of their clients in real time through 'backdoors' written into the coding when security software is downloaded. The Sabbatian centre of cyber operations outside Silicon Valley is the Israeli military Cyber Intelligence Unit, the biggest infrastructure project in Israel's history, headquartered in the desert-city of Beersheba and involving some 20,000 'cyber soldiers'. Here are located a literal army of Internet trolls scanning social media, forums and comment lists for anyone challenging the Cult agenda. The UK military has something similar with its 77th Brigade and associated operations. The Beersheba complex includes research and development centres for other Cult operations such as Intel, Microsoft, IBM, Google, Apple, Hewlett-Packard, Cisco Systems, Facebook and Motorola. [Techcrunch.com](#) ran an article about the Beersheba global Internet technology centre headlined 'Israel's desert city of Beersheba is turning into a cybertech oasis':

The military's massive relocation of its prestigious technology units, the presence of multinational and local companies, a close proximity to Ben Gurion University and generous government subsidies are turning Beersheba into a major global cybertech hub. Beersheba has all of the ingredients of a vibrant security technology ecosystem, including Ben Gurion University with its graduate program in cybersecurity and Cyber Security Research Center, and the presence of companies such as EMC, Deutsche Telekom, PayPal, Oracle, IBM, and Lockheed Martin. It's also the future home of the INCB (Israeli National Cyber Bureau); offers a special income tax incentive for cyber security companies, and was the site for the relocation of the army's intelligence corps units.

Sabbatians have taken over the cyber world through the following process: They scan the schools for likely cyber talent and develop them at Ben Gurion University and their period of conscription in the Israeli Defense Forces when they are stationed at the Beersheba complex. When the cyber talented officially leave the army they are funded to start cyber companies with technology developed by themselves or given to them by the state. Much of this is stolen through backdoors of computer systems around the world with America top of the list. Others are sent off to Silicon Valley to start companies or join the major ones and so we have many major positions filled by apparently 'Jewish' but really Sabbatian operatives. Google, YouTube and Facebook are all run by 'Jewish' CEOs while Twitter is all but run by ultra-Zionist hedge-fund shark Paul Singer. At the centre of the Sabbatian global cyber web is the Israeli army's Unit 8200 which specialises in hacking into computer systems of other countries, inserting viruses, gathering information, instigating malfunction, and even taking control of them from a distance. A long list of Sabbatians involved with 9/11, Silicon Valley and Israeli cyber security companies are operatives of Unit 8200. This is not about Israel. It's about the Cult. Israel is planned to be a Smart Grid hub as with China and what is happening at Beersheba is not for the benefit of Jewish people who are treated disgustingly by the Sabbatian elite that control the country. A glance at the Nuremberg Codes will tell you that.

The story is much bigger than 'Covid', important as that is to where we are being taken. Now, though, it's time to really strap in. There's more ... much more ...

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Who controls the Cult?

Awake, arise or be forever fall'n

John Milton, Paradise Lost

I have exposed this far the level of the Cult conspiracy that operates in the world of the seen and within the global secret society and satanic network which operates in the shadows one step back from the seen. The story, however, goes much deeper than that.

The 'Covid' hoax is major part of the Cult agenda, but only part, and to grasp the biggest picture we have to expand our attention beyond the realm of human sight and into the infinity of possibility that we cannot see. It is from here, ultimately, that humanity is being manipulated into a state of total control by the force which dictates the actions of the Cult. How much of reality can we see? Next to damn all is the answer. We may appear to see all there is to see in the 'space' our eyes survey and observe, but little could be further from the truth. The human 'world' is only a tiny band of frequency that the body's visual and perceptual systems can decode into *perception* of a 'world'. According to mainstream science the electromagnetic spectrum is 0.005 percent of what exists in the Universe ([Fig 10](#)). The maximum estimate I have seen is 0.5 percent and either way it's minuscule. I say it is far, far, smaller even than 0.005 percent when you compare reality we see with the totality of reality that we don't. Now get this if you are new to such information: Visible light, the only band of frequency that we can see, is a *fraction* of the 0.005

percent (Fig 11 overleaf). Take this further and realise that our universe is one of infinite universes and that universes are only a fragment of overall reality – *infinite* reality. Then compare that with the almost infinitesimal frequency band of visible light or human sight. You see that humans are as near blind as it is possible to be without actually being so. Artist and filmmaker, Sergio Toporek, said:

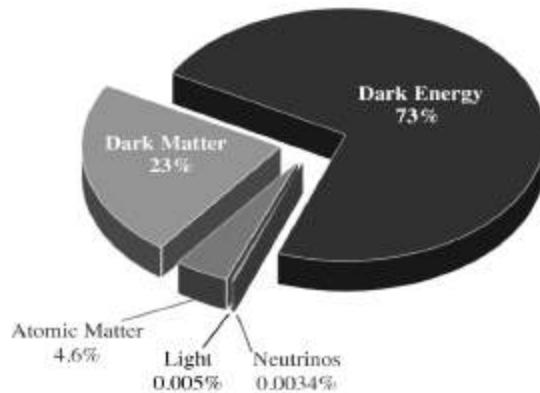


Figure 10: Humans can perceive such a tiny band of visual reality it's laughable.

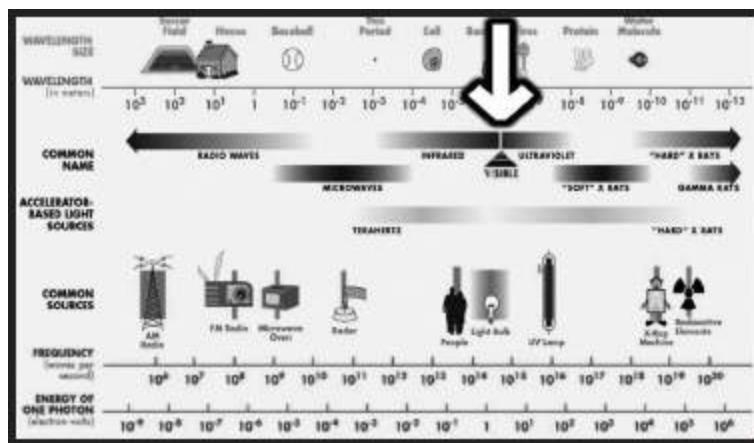


Figure 11: We can see a smear of the 0.005 percent electromagnetic spectrum, but we still know it all. Yep, makes sense.

Consider that you can see less than 1% of the electromagnetic spectrum and hear less than 1% of the acoustic spectrum. 90% of the cells in your body carry their own microbial DNA and are not 'you'. The atoms in your body are 99.99999999999999% empty space and none of them are the ones you were born with ... Human beings have 46 chromosomes, two less than a potato.

The existence of the rainbow depends on the conical photoreceptors in your eyes; to animals without cones, the rainbow does not exist. So you don't just look at a rainbow, you create it. This is pretty amazing, especially considering that all the beautiful colours you see represent less than 1% of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Suddenly the 'world' of humans looks a very different place. Take into account, too, that Planet Earth when compared with the projected size of this single universe is the equivalent of a billionth of a pinhead. Imagine the ratio that would be when compared to infinite reality. To think that Christianity once insisted that Earth and humanity were the centre of everything. This background is vital if we are going to appreciate the nature of 'human' and how we can be manipulated by an unseen force. To human visual reality virtually *everything* is unseen and yet the prevailing perception within the institutions and so much of the public is that if we can't see it, touch it, hear it, taste it and smell it then it cannot exist. Such perception is indoctrinated and encouraged by the Cult and its agents because it isolates believers in the strictly limited, village-idiot, realm of the five senses where perceptions can be firewalled and information controlled. Most of those perpetuating the 'this-world-is-all-there-is' insanity are themselves indoctrinated into believing the same delusion. While major players and influencers know that official reality is laughable most of those in science, academia and medicine really believe the nonsense they peddle and teach succeeding generations. Those who challenge the orthodoxy are dismissed as nutters and freaks to protect the manufactured illusion from exposure. Observe the dynamic of the 'Covid' hoax and you will see how that takes the same form. The inner-circle psychopaths know it's a gigantic scam, but almost the entirety of those imposing their fascist rules believe that 'Covid' is all that they're told it is.

Stolen identity

Ask people who they are and they will give you their name, place of birth, location, job, family background and life story. Yet that is not who they are – it is what they are *experiencing*. The difference is *absolutely crucial*. The true 'I', the eternal, infinite 'I', is consciousness,

a state of being aware. Forget ‘form’. That is a vehicle for a brief experience. Consciousness does not come *from* the brain, but *through* the brain and even that is more symbolic than literal. We are awareness, pure awareness, and this is what withdraws from the body at what we call ‘death’ to continue our eternal beingness, *isness*, in other realms of reality within the limitlessness of infinity or the Biblical ‘many mansions in my father’s house’. Labels of a human life, man, woman, transgender, black, white, brown, nationality, circumstances and income are not who we are. They are what we are – awareness – is *experiencing* in a brief connection with a band of frequency we call ‘human’. The labels are not the self; they are, to use the title of one of my books, a *Phantom Self*. I am not David Icke born in Leicester, England, on April 29th, 1952. I am the consciousness *having that experience*. The Cult and its non-human masters seek to convince us through the institutions of ‘education’, science, medicine, media and government that what we are *experiencing* is who we *are*. It’s so easy to control and direct perception locked away in the bewildered illusions of the five senses with no expanded radar. Try, by contrast, doing the same with a humanity aware of its true self and its true power to consciously create its reality and experience. How is it possible to do this? We do it all day every day. If you perceive yourself as ‘little me’ with no power to impact upon your life and the world then your life experience will reflect that. You will hand the power you don’t think you have to authority in all its forms which will use it to control your experience. This, in turn, will appear to confirm your perception of ‘little me’ in a self-fulfilling feedback loop. But that is what ‘little me’ really is – a *perception*. We are all ‘big-me’, infinite me, and the Cult has to make us forget that if its will is to prevail. We are therefore manipulated and pressured into self-identifying with human labels and not the consciousness/awareness *experiencing* those human labels.

The phenomenon of identity politics is a Cult-instigated manipulation technique to sub-divide previous labels into even smaller ones. A United States university employs this list of letters to

describe student identity: LGBTQQFAGPBDSM or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, flexual, asexual, gender-fuck, polyamorous, bondage/discipline, dominance/submission and sadism/masochism. I'm sure other lists are even longer by now as people feel the need to self-identify the 'I' with the minutiae of race and sexual preference. Wokers programmed by the Cult for generations believe this is about 'inclusivity' when it's really the Cult locking them away into smaller and smaller versions of Phantom Self while firewalls them from the influence of their true self, the infinite, eternal 'I'. You may notice that my philosophy which contends that we are all unique points of attention/awareness within the same infinite whole or Oneness is the ultimate non-racism. The very sense of Oneness makes the judgement of people by their body-type, colour or sexuality utterly ridiculous and confirms that racism has no understanding of reality (including anti-white racism). Yet despite my perception of life Cult agents and fast-asleep Wokers label me racist to discredit my information while they are themselves phenomenally racist and sexist. All they see is race and sexuality and they judge people as good or bad, demons or untouchables, by their race and sexuality. All they see is *Phantom Self* and perceive themselves in terms of *Phantom Self*. They are pawns and puppets of the Cult agenda to focus attention and self-identity in the five senses and play those identities against each other to divide and rule. Columbia University has introduced segregated graduations in another version of social distancing designed to drive people apart and teach them that different racial and cultural groups have nothing in common with each other. The last thing the Cult wants is unity. Again the pump-primers of this will be Cult operatives in the knowledge of what they are doing, but the rest are just the *Phantom Self* blind leading the *Phantom Self* blind. We *do* have something in common – we are all *the same consciousness* having different temporary experiences.

What is this 'human'?

Yes, what *is* ‘human’? That is what we are supposed to be, right? I mean ‘human’? True, but ‘human’ is the experience not the ‘I’. Break it down to basics and ‘human’ is the way that information is processed. If we are to experience and interact with this band of frequency we call the ‘world’ we must have a vehicle that operates within that band of frequency. Our consciousness in its prime form cannot do that; it is way beyond the frequency of the human realm. My consciousness or awareness could not tap these keys and pick up the cup in front of me in the same way that radio station A cannot interact with radio station B when they are on different frequencies. The human body is the means through which we have that interaction. I have long described the body as a biological computer which processes information in a way that allows consciousness to experience this reality. The body is a receiver, transmitter and processor of information in a particular way that we call human. We visually perceive only the world of the five senses in a wakened state – that is the limit of the body’s visual decoding system. In truth it’s not even visual in the way we experience ‘visual reality’ as I will come to in a moment. We are ‘human’ because the body processes the information sources of human into a reality and behaviour system that we *perceive* as human. Why does an elephant act like an elephant and not like a human or a duck? The elephant’s biological computer is a different information field and processes information according to that program into a visual and behaviour type we call an elephant. The same applies to everything in our reality. These body information fields are perpetuated through procreation (like making a copy of a software program). The Cult wants to break that cycle and intervene technologically to transform the human information field into one that will change what we call humanity. If it can change the human information field it will change the way that field processes information and change humanity both ‘physically’ and psychologically. Hence the *messenger* (information) RNA ‘vaccines’ and so much more that is targeting human genetics by changing the body’s information – *messaging* – construct through food, drink, radiation, toxicity and other means.

Reality that we experience is nothing like reality as it really is in the same way that the reality people experience in virtual reality games is not the reality they are really living in. The game is only a decoded source of information that appears to be a reality. Our world is also an information construct – a *simulation* (more later). In its base form our reality is a wavefield of information much the same in theme as Wi-Fi. The five senses decode wavefield information into electrical information which they communicate to the brain to decode into holographic (illusory ‘physical’) information. Different parts of the brain specialise in decoding different senses and the information is fused into a reality that appears to be outside of us but is really inside the brain and the genetic structure in general ([Fig 12](#) overleaf). DNA is a receiver-transmitter of information and a vital part of this decoding process and the body’s connection to other realities. Change DNA and you change the way we decode and connect with reality – see ‘Covid vaccines’. Think of computers decoding Wi-Fi. You have information encoded in a radiation field and the computer decodes that information into a very different form on the screen. You can’t see the Wi-Fi until its information is made manifest on the screen and the information on the screen is inside the computer and not outside. I have just described how we decode the ‘human world’. All five senses decode the waveform ‘Wi-Fi’ field into electrical signals and the brain (computer) constructs reality inside the brain and not outside – ‘You don’t just look at a rainbow, you create it’. Sound is a simple example. We don’t hear sound until the brain decodes it. Waveform sound waves are picked up by the hearing sense and communicated to the brain in an electrical form to be decoded into the sounds that we hear. Everything we hear is inside the brain along with everything we see, feel, smell and taste. Words and language are waveform fields generated by our vocal chords which pass through this process until they are decoded by the brain into words that we hear. Different languages are different frequency fields or sound waves generated by vocal chords. Late British philosopher Alan Watts said:

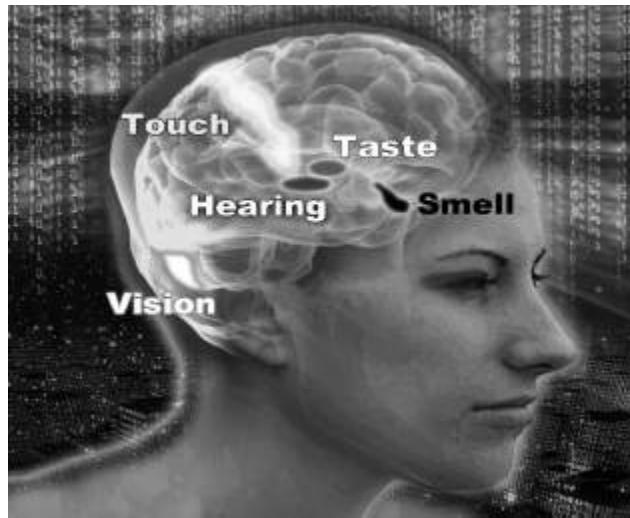


Figure 12: The brain receives information from the five senses and constructs from that our perceived reality.

[Without the brain] the world is devoid of light, heat, weight, solidity, motion, space, time or any other imaginable feature. All these phenomena are interactions, or transactions, of vibrations with a certain arrangement of neurons.

That's exactly what they are and scientist Robert Lanza describes in his book, *Biocentrism*, how we decode electromagnetic waves and energy into visual and 'physical' experience. He uses the example of a flame emitting photons, electromagnetic energy, each pulsing electrically and magnetically:

... these ... invisible electromagnetic waves strike a human retina, and if (and only if) the waves happen to measure between 400 and 700 nano meters in length from crest to crest, then their energy is just right to deliver a stimulus to the 8 million cone-shaped cells in the retina.

Each in turn send an electrical pulse to a neighbour neuron, and on up the line this goes, at 250 mph, until it reaches the ... occipital lobe of the brain, in the back of the head. There, a cascading complex of neurons fire from the incoming stimuli, and we subjectively perceive this experience as a yellow brightness occurring in a place we have been conditioned to call the 'external world'.

You hear what you decode

If a tree falls or a building collapses they make no noise unless someone is there to decode the energetic waves generated by the disturbance into what we call sound. Does a falling tree make a noise? Only if you hear it – *decode* it. Everything in our reality is a frequency field of information operating within the overall ‘Wi-Fi’ field that I call The Field. A vibrational disturbance is generated in The Field by the fields of the falling tree or building. These disturbance waves are what we decode into the sound of them falling. If no one is there to do that then neither will make any noise. Reality is created by the observer – *decoder* – and the *perceptions* of the observer affect the decoding process. For this reason different people – different *perceptions* – will perceive the same reality or situation in a different way. What one may perceive as a nightmare another will see as an opportunity. The question of why the Cult is so focused on controlling human perception now answers itself. All experienced reality is the act of decoding and we don’t experience Wi-Fi until it is decoded on the computer screen. The sight and sound of an Internet video is encoded in the Wi-Fi all around us, but we don’t see or hear it until the computer decodes that information. Taste, smell and touch are all phenomena of the brain as a result of the same process. We don’t taste, smell or feel anything except in the brain and there are pain relief techniques that seek to block the signal from the site of discomfort to the brain because if the brain doesn’t decode that signal we don’t feel pain. Pain is in the brain and only appears to be at the point of impact thanks to the feedback loop between them. We don’t see anything until electrical information from the sight senses is decoded in an area at the back of the brain. If that area is damaged we can go blind when our eyes are perfectly okay. So why do we go blind if we damage an eye? We damage the information processing between the waveform visual information and the visual decoding area of the brain. If information doesn’t reach the brain in a form it can decode then we can’t see the visual reality that it represents. What’s more the brain is decoding only a fraction of the information it receives and the rest is absorbed by the

sub-conscious mind. This explanation is from the science magazine, *Wonderpedia*:

Every second, 11 million sensations crackle along these [brain] pathways ... The brain is confronted with an alarming array of images, sounds and smells which it rigorously filters down until it is left with a manageable list of around 40. Thus 40 sensations per second make up what we perceive as reality.

The ‘world’ is not what people are told to believe that is it and the inner circles of the Cult *know that*.

Illusory ‘physical’ reality

We can only see a smear of 0.005 percent of the Universe which is only one of a vast array of universes – ‘mansions’ – within infinite reality. Even then the brain decodes only 40 pieces of information (‘sensations’) from a potential *11 million* that we receive every second. Two points strike you from this immediately: The sheer breathtaking stupidity of believing we know anything so rigidly that there’s nothing more to know; and the potential for these processes to be manipulated by a malevolent force to control the reality of the population. One thing I can say for sure with no risk of contradiction is that when you can perceive an almost indescribable fraction of infinite reality there is always more to know as in tidal waves of it. Ancient Greek philosopher Socrates was so right when he said that wisdom is to know how little we know. How obviously true that is when you think that we are experiencing a physical world of solidity that is neither physical nor solid and a world of apartness when everything is connected. Cult-controlled ‘science’ dismisses the so-called ‘paranormal’ and all phenomena related to that when the ‘para’-normal is perfectly normal and explains the alleged ‘great mysteries’ which dumbfound scientific minds. There is a reason for this. A ‘scientific mind’ in terms of the mainstream is a material mind, a five-sense mind imprisoned in see it, touch it, hear it, smell it and taste it. Phenomena and happenings that can’t be explained that way leave the ‘scientific mind’ bewildered and the rule is that if they

can't account for why something is happening then it can't, by definition, be happening. I beg to differ. Telepathy is thought waves passing through The Field (think wave disturbance again) to be decoded by someone able to connect with that wavelength (information). For example: You can pick up the thought waves of a friend at any distance and at the very least that will bring them to mind. A few minutes later the friend calls you. 'My god', you say, 'that's incredible – I was just thinking of you.' Ah, but *they* were thinking of *you* before they made the call and that's what you decoded. Native peoples not entrapped in five-sense reality do this so well it became known as the 'bush telegraph'. Those known as psychics and mediums (genuine ones) are doing the same only across dimensions of reality. 'Mind over matter' comes from the fact that matter and mind are the *same*. The state of one influences the state of the other. Indeed one *and* the other are illusions. They are aspects of the same field. Paranormal phenomena are all explainable so why are they still considered 'mysteries' or not happening? Once you go down this road of understanding you begin to expand awareness beyond the five senses and that's the nightmare for the Cult.



Figure 13: Holograms are not solid, but the best ones appear to be.

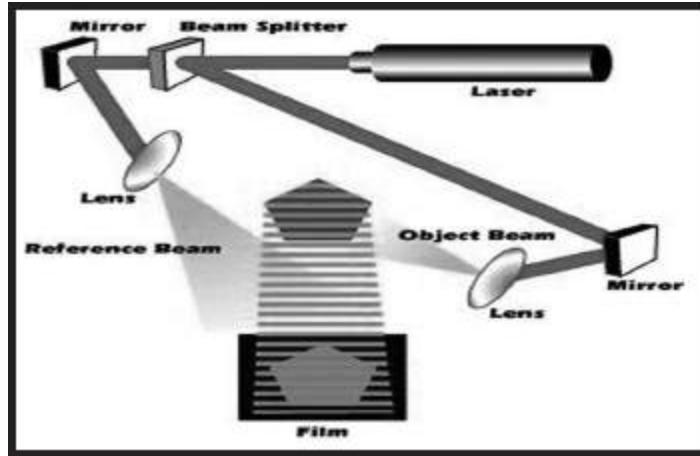


Figure 14: How holograms are created by capturing a waveform version of the subject image.

Holographic ‘solidity’

Our reality is not solid, it is holographic. We are now well aware of holograms which are widely used today. Two-dimensional information is decoded into a three-dimensional reality that is not solid although can very much appear to be (Fig 13). Holograms are created with a laser divided into two parts. One goes directly onto a photographic print ('reference beam') and the other takes a waveform image of the subject ('working beam') before being directed onto the print where it 'collides' with the other half of the laser (Fig 14). This creates a *waveform* interference pattern which contains the wavefield information of whatever is being photographed (Fig 15 overleaf). The process can be likened to dropping pebbles in a pond. Waves generated by each one spread out across the water to collide with the others and create a wave representation of where the stones fell and at what speed, weight and distance. A waveform interference pattern of a hologram is akin to the waveform information in The Field which the five senses decode into electrical signals to be decoded by the brain into a holographic illusory 'physical' reality. In the same way when a laser (think human attention) is directed at the waveform interference pattern a three-dimensional version of the subject is projected into apparently 'solid' reality (Fig 16). An amazing trait of holograms reveals more 'paranormal mysteries'. Information of the *whole*

hologram is encoded in waveform in every part of the interference pattern by the way they are created. This means that every *part* of a hologram is a smaller version of the whole. Cut the interference wave-pattern into four and you won't get four parts of the image. You get quarter-sized versions of the *whole* image. The body is a hologram and the same applies. Here we have the basis of acupuncture, reflexology and other forms of healing which identify representations of the whole body in all of the parts, hands, feet, ears, everywhere. Skilled palm readers can do what they do because the information of whole body is encoded in the hand. The concept of as above, so below, comes from this.



Figure 15: A waveform interference pattern that holds the information that transforms into a hologram.



Figure 16: Holographic people including 'Elvis' holographically inserted to sing a duet with Celine Dion.

The question will be asked of why, if solidity is illusory, we can't just walk through walls and each other. The resistance is not solid against solid; it is electromagnetic field against electromagnetic field and we decode this into the *experience* of solid against solid. We should also not underestimate the power of belief to dictate reality. What you believe is impossible *will be*. Your belief impacts on your decoding processes and they won't decode what you think is impossible. What we believe we perceive and what we perceive we experience. 'Can't dos' and 'impossibles' are like a firewall in a computer system that won't put on the screen what the firewall blocks. How vital that is to understanding how human experience has been hijacked. I explain in *The Answer, Everything You Need To Know But Have Never Been Told* and other books a long list of 'mysteries' and 'paranormal' phenomena that are not mysterious and perfectly normal once you realise what reality is and how it works. 'Ghosts' can be seen to pass through 'solid' walls because the walls are not solid and the ghost is a discarnate entity operating on a frequency so different to that of the wall that it's like two radio stations sharing the same space while never interfering with each other. I have seen ghosts do this myself. The apartness of people and objects is also an illusion. Everything is connected by the Field like all sea life is connected by the sea. It's just that within the limits of our visual reality we only 'see' holographic information and not the field of information that connects everything and from which the holographic world is made manifest. If you can only see holographic 'objects' and not the field that connects them they will appear to you as unconnected to each other in the same way that we see the computer while not seeing the Wi-Fi.

What you don't know *can* hurt you

Okay, we return to those 'two worlds' of human society and the Cult with its global network of interconnecting secret societies and satanic groups which manipulate through governments, corporations, media, religions, etc. The fundamental difference between them is *knowledge*. The idea has been to keep humanity

ignorant of the plan for its total enslavement underpinned by a crucial ignorance of reality – who we are and where we are – and how we interact with it. ‘Human’ should be the interaction between our expanded eternal consciousness and the five-sense body experience. We are meant to be *in* this world in terms of the five senses but not *of* this world in relation to our greater consciousness and perspective. In that state we experience the small picture of the five senses within the wider context of the big picture of awareness beyond the five senses. Put another way the five senses see the dots and expanded awareness connects them into pictures and patterns that give context to the apparently random and unconnected. Without the context of expanded awareness the five senses see only apartness and randomness with apparently no meaning. The Cult and its other-dimensional controllers seek to intervene in the frequency realm where five-sense reality is supposed to connect with expanded reality and to keep the two apart (more on this in the final chapter). When that happens five-sense mental and emotional processes are no longer influenced by expanded awareness, or the True ‘I’, and instead are driven by the isolated perceptions of the body’s decoding systems. They are in the world *and* of it. Here we have the human plight and why humanity with its potential for infinite awareness can be so easily manipulatable and descend into such extremes of stupidity.

Once the Cult isolates five-sense mind from expanded awareness it can then program the mind with perceptions and beliefs by controlling information that the mind receives through the ‘education’ system of the formative years and the media perceptual bombardment and censorship of an entire lifetime. Limit perception and a sense of the possible through limiting knowledge by limiting and skewing information while censoring and discrediting that which could set people free. As the title of another of my books says ... *And The Truth Shall Set You Free*. For this reason the last thing the Cult wants in circulation is the truth about anything – especially the reality of the eternal ‘I’ – and that’s why it is desperate to control information. The Cult knows that information becomes perception

which becomes behaviour which, collectively, becomes human society. Cult-controlled and funded mainstream ‘science’ denies the existence of an eternal ‘I’ and seeks to dismiss and trash all evidence to the contrary. Cult-controlled mainstream religion has a version of ‘God’ that is little more than a system of control and dictatorship that employs threats of damnation in an afterlife to control perceptions and behaviour in the here and now through fear and guilt. Neither is true and it’s the ‘neither’ that the Cult wishes to suppress. This ‘neither’ is that everything is an expression, a point of attention, within an infinite state of consciousness which is the real meaning of the term ‘God’.

Perceptual obsession with the ‘physical body’ and five-senses means that ‘God’ becomes personified as a bearded bloke sitting among the clouds or a raging bully who loves us if we do what ‘he’ wants and condemns us to the fires of hell if we don’t. These are no more than a ‘spiritual’ fairy tales to control and dictate events and behaviour through fear of this ‘God’ which has bizarrely made ‘God-fearing’ in religious circles a state to be desired. I would suggest that fearing *anything* is not to be encouraged and celebrated, but rather deleted. You can see why ‘God fearing’ is so beneficial to the Cult and its religions when *they* decide what ‘God’ wants and what ‘God’ demands (the Cult demands) that everyone do. As the great American comedian Bill Hicks said satirising a Christian zealot: ‘I think what God meant to say.’ How much of this infinite awareness (“God”) that we access is decided by how far we choose to expand our perceptions, self-identity and sense of the possible. The scale of self-identity reflects itself in the scale of awareness that we can connect with and are influenced by – how much knowing and insight we have instead of programmed perception. You cannot expand your awareness into the infinity of possibility when you believe that you are little me Peter the postman or Mary in marketing and nothing more. I’ll deal with this in the concluding chapter because it’s crucial to how we turnaround current events.

Where the Cult came from

When I realised in the early 1990s there was a Cult network behind global events I asked the obvious question: When did it start? I took it back to ancient Rome and Egypt and on to Babylon and Sumer in Mesopotamia, the 'Land Between Two Rivers', in what we now call Iraq. The two rivers are the Tigris and Euphrates and this region is of immense historical and other importance to the Cult, as is the land called Israel only 550 miles away by air. There is much more going with deep esoteric meaning across this whole region. It's not only about 'wars for oil'. Priceless artefacts from Mesopotamia were stolen or destroyed after the American and British invasion of Iraq in 2003 justified by the lies of Boy Bush and Tony Blair (their Cult masters) about non-existent 'weapons of mass destruction'.

Mesopotamia was the location of Sumer (about 5,400BC to 1,750BC), and Babylon (about 2,350BC to 539BC). Sabbatians may have become immensely influential in the Cult in modern times but they are part of a network that goes back into the mists of history. Sumer is said by historians to be the 'cradle of civilisation'. I disagree. I say it was the re-start of what we call human civilisation after cataclysmic events symbolised in part as the 'Great Flood' destroyed the world that existed before. These fantastic upheavals that I have been describing in detail in the books since the early 1990s appear in accounts and legends of ancient cultures across the world and they are supported by geological and biological evidence. Stone tablets found in Iraq detailing the Sumer period say the cataclysms were caused by non-human 'gods' they call the Anunnaki. These are described in terms of extraterrestrial visitations in which knowledge supplied by the Anunnaki is said to have been the source of at least one of the world's oldest writing systems and developments in astronomy, mathematics and architecture that were way ahead of their time. I have covered this subject at length in *The Biggest Secret* and *Children of the Matrix* and the same basic 'Anunnaki' story can be found in Zulu accounts in South Africa where the late and very great Zulu high shaman Credo Mutwa told me that the Sumerian Anunnaki were known by Zulus as the Chitauri or 'children of the serpent'. See my six-hour video interview with Credo on this subject entitled *The*

Reptilian Agenda recorded at his then home near Johannesburg in 1999 which you can watch on the Ickonic media platform.

The Cult emerged out of Sumer, Babylon and Egypt (and elsewhere) and established the Roman Empire before expanding with the Romans into northern Europe from where many empires were savagely imposed in the form of Cult-controlled societies all over the world. Mass death and destruction was their calling card. The Cult established its centre of operations in Europe and European Empires were Cult empires which allowed it to expand into a global force. Spanish and Portuguese colonialists headed for Central and South America while the British and French targeted North America. Africa was colonised by Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Germany. Some like Britain and France moved in on the Middle East. The British Empire was by far the biggest for a simple reason. By now Britain was the headquarters of the Cult from which it expanded to form Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. The Sun never set on the British Empire such was the scale of its occupation. London remains a global centre for the Cult along with Rome and the Vatican although others have emerged in Israel and China. It is no accident that the 'virus' is alleged to have come out of China while Italy was chosen as the means to terrify the Western population into compliance with 'Covid' fascism. Nor that Israel has led the world in 'Covid' fascism and mass 'vaccination'.

You would think that I would mention the United States here, but while it has been an important means of imposing the Cult's will it is less significant than would appear and is currently in the process of having what power it does have deleted. The Cult in Europe has mostly loaded the guns for the US to fire. America has been controlled from Europe from the start through Cult operatives in Britain and Europe. The American Revolution was an illusion to make it appear that America was governing itself while very different forces were pulling the strings in the form of Cult families such as the Rothschilds through the Rockefellers and other subordinates. The Rockefellers are extremely close to Bill Gates and

established both scalpel and drug ‘medicine’ and the World Health Organization. They play a major role in the development and circulation of vaccines through the Rockefeller Foundation on which Bill Gates said his Foundation is based. Why wouldn’t this be the case when the Rockefellers and Gates are on the same team? Cult infiltration of human society goes way back into what we call history and has been constantly expanding and centralising power with the goal of establishing a global structure to dictate everything. Look how this has been advanced in great leaps with the ‘Covid’ hoax.

The non-human dimension

I researched and observed the comings and goings of Cult operatives through the centuries and even thousands of years as they were born, worked to promote the agenda within the secret society and satanic networks, and then died for others to replace them. Clearly there had to be a coordinating force that spanned this entire period while operatives who would not have seen the end goal in their lifetimes came and went advancing the plan over millennia. I went in search of that coordinating force with the usual support from the extraordinary synchronicity of my life which has been an almost daily experience since 1990. I saw common themes in religious texts and ancient cultures about a non-human force manipulating human society from the hidden. Christianity calls this force Satan, the Devil and demons; Islam refers to the Jinn or Djinn; Zulus have their Chitauri (spelt in other ways in different parts of Africa); and the Gnostic people in Egypt in the period around and before 400AD referred to this phenomena as the ‘Archons’, a word meaning rulers in Greek. Central American cultures speak of the ‘Predators’ among other names and the same theme is everywhere. I will use ‘Archons’ as a collective name for all of them. When you see how their nature and behaviour is described all these different sources are clearly talking about the same force. Gnostics described the Archons in terms of ‘luminous fire’ while Islam relates the Jinn to ‘smokeless fire’. Some refer to beings in form that could occasionally be seen, but the most common of common theme is that they operate from

unseen realms which means almost all existence to the visual processes of humans. I had concluded that this was indeed the foundation of human control and that the Cult was operating within the human frequency band on behalf of this hidden force when I came across the writings of Gnostics which supported my conclusions in the most extraordinary way.

A sealed earthen jar was found in 1945 near the town of Nag Hammadi about 75-80 miles north of Luxor on the banks of the River Nile in Egypt. Inside was a treasure trove of manuscripts and texts left by the Gnostic people some 1,600 years earlier. They included 13 leather-bound papyrus codices (manuscripts) and more than 50 texts written in Coptic Egyptian estimated to have been hidden in the jar in the period of 400AD although the source of the information goes back much further. Gnostics oversaw the Great or Royal Library of Alexandria, the fantastic depository of ancient texts detailing advanced knowledge and accounts of human history. The Library was dismantled and destroyed in stages over a long period with the death-blow delivered by the Cult-established Roman Church in the period around 415AD. The Church of Rome was the Church of Babylon relocated as I said earlier. Gnostics were not a race. They were a way of perceiving reality. Whenever they established themselves and their information circulated the terrorists of the Church of Rome would target them for destruction. This happened with the Great Library and with the Gnostic Cathars who were burned to death by the psychopaths after a long period of oppression at the siege of the Castle of Monségur in southern France in 1244. The Church has always been terrified of Gnostic information which demolishes the official Christian narrative although there is much in the Bible that supports the Gnostic view if you read it in another way. To anyone studying the texts of what became known as the Nag Hammadi Library it is clear that great swathes of Christian and Biblical belief has its origin with Gnostics sources going back to Sumer. Gnostic themes have been twisted to manipulate the perceived reality of Bible believers. Biblical texts have been in the open for centuries where they could be changed while Gnostic

documents found at Nag Hammadi were sealed away and untouched for 1,600 years. What you see is what they wrote.

Use your *pneuma* not your *nous*

Gnosticism and Gnostic come from 'gnosis' which means knowledge, or rather *secret* knowledge, in the sense of spiritual awareness – knowledge about reality and life itself. The desperation of the Cult's Church of Rome to destroy the Gnostics can be understood when the knowledge they were circulating was the last thing the Cult wanted the population to know. Sixteen hundred years later the same Cult is working hard to undermine and silence me for the same reason. The dynamic between knowledge and ignorance is a constant. 'Time' appears to move on, but essential themes remain the same. We are told to 'use your *nous*', a Gnostic word for head/brain/intelligence. They said, however, that spiritual awakening or 'salvation' could only be secured by expanding awareness *beyond* what they called *nous* and into *pneuma* or Infinite Self. Obviously as I read these texts the parallels with what I have been saying since 1990 were fascinating to me. There is a universal truth that spans human history and in that case why wouldn't we be talking the same language 16 centuries apart? When you free yourself from the perception program of the five senses and explore expanded realms of consciousness you are going to connect with the same information no matter what the perceived 'era' within a manufactured timeline of a single and tiny range of manipulated frequency. Humans working with 'smart' technology or knocking rocks together in caves is only a timeline appearing to operate within the human frequency band. Expanded awareness and the knowledge it holds have always been there whether the era be Stone Age or computer age. We can only access that knowledge by opening ourselves to its frequency which the five-sense prison cell is designed to stop us doing. Gates, Fauci, Whitty, Vallance, Zuckerberg, Brin, Page, Wojcicki, Bezos, and all the others behind the 'Covid' hoax clearly have a long wait before their range of frequency can make that connection given that an open heart is

crucial to that as we shall see. Instead of accessing knowledge directly through expanded awareness it is given to Cult operatives by the secret society networks of the Cult where it has been passed on over thousands of years outside the public arena. Expanded realms of consciousness is where great artists, composers and writers find their inspiration and where truth awaits anyone open enough to connect with it. We need to go there fast.

Archon hijack

A fifth of the Nag Hammadi texts describe the existence and manipulation of the Archons led by a 'Chief Archon' they call 'Yaldabaoth', or the 'Demiurge', and this is the Christian 'Devil', 'Satan', 'Lucifer', and his demons. Archons in Biblical symbolism are the 'fallen ones' which are also referred to as fallen angels after the angels expelled from heaven according to the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These angels are claimed to tempt humans to 'sin' ongoing and you will see how accurate that symbolism is during the rest of the book. The theme of 'original sin' is related to the 'Fall' when Adam and Eve were 'tempted by the serpent' and fell from a state of innocence and 'obedience' (connection) with God into a state of disobedience (disconnection). The Fall is said to have brought sin into the world and corrupted everything including human nature. Yaldabaoth, the 'Lord Archon', is described by Gnostics as a 'counterfeit spirit', 'The Blind One', 'The Blind God', and 'The Foolish One'. The Jewish name for Yaldabaoth in Talmudic writings is Samael which translates as 'Poison of God', or 'Blindness of God'. You see the parallels. Yaldabaoth in Islamic belief is the Muslim Jinn devil known as Shaytan – Shaytan is Satan as the same themes are found all over the world in every religion and culture. The 'Lord God' of the Old Testament is the 'Lord Archon' of Gnostic manuscripts and that's why he's such a bloodthirsty bastard. Satan is known by Christians as 'the Demon of Demons' and Gnostics called Yaldabaoth the 'Archon of Archons'. Both are known as 'The Deceiver'. We are talking about the same 'bloke' for sure and these common themes

using different names, storylines and symbolism tell a common tale of the human plight.

Archons are referred to in Nag Hammadi documents as mind parasites, inverters, guards, gatekeepers, detainers, judges, pitiless ones and deceivers. The 'Covid' hoax alone is a glaring example of all these things. The Biblical 'God' is so different in the Old and New Testaments because they are not describing the same phenomenon. The vindictive, angry, hate-filled, 'God' of the Old Testament, known as Yahweh, is Yaldabaoth who is depicted in Cult-dictated popular culture as the 'Dark Lord', 'Lord of Time', Lord (Darth) Vader and Dormammu, the evil ruler of the 'Dark Dimension' trying to take over the 'Earth Dimension' in the Marvel comic movie, *Dr Strange*. Yaldabaoth is both the Old Testament 'god' and the Biblical 'Satan'. Gnostics referred to Yaldabaoth as the 'Great Architect of the Universe' and the Cult-controlled Freemason network calls their god 'the Great Architect of the Universe' (also Grand Architect). The 'Great Architect' Yaldabaoth is symbolised by the Cult as the all-seeing eye at the top of the pyramid on the Great Seal of the United States and the dollar bill. Archon is encoded in *arch-itect* as it is in *arch-angels* and *arch-bishops*. All religions have the theme of a force for good and force for evil in some sort of spiritual war and there is a reason for that – the theme is true. The Cult and its non-human masters are quite happy for this to circulate. They present themselves as the force for good fighting evil when they are really the force of evil (absence of love). The whole foundation of Cult modus operandi is inversion. They promote themselves as a force for good and anyone challenging them in pursuit of peace, love, fairness, truth and justice is condemned as a satanic force for evil. This has been the game plan throughout history whether the Church of Rome inquisitions of non-believers or 'conspiracy theorists' and 'anti-vaxxers' of today. The technique is the same whatever the timeline era.

Yaldabaoth is revolting (true)

Yaldabaoth and the Archons are said to have revolted against God with Yaldabaoth claiming to *be* God – the *All That Is*. The Old Testament ‘God’ (Yaldabaoth) demanded to be worshipped as such: ‘*I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me*’ (Isaiah 45:5). I have quoted in other books a man who said he was the unofficial son of the late Baron Philippe de Rothschild of the Mouton-Rothschild wine producing estates in France who died in 1988 and he told me about the Rothschild ‘revolt from God’. The man said he was given the name Phillip Eugene de Rothschild and we shared long correspondence many years ago while he was living under another identity. He said that he was conceived through ‘occult incest’ which (within the Cult) was ‘normal and to be admired’. ‘Phillip’ told me about his experience attending satanic rituals with rich and famous people whom he names and you can see them and the wider background to Cult Satanism in my other books starting with *The Biggest Secret*. Cult rituals are interactions with Archontic ‘gods’. ‘Phillip’ described Baron Philippe de Rothschild as ‘a master Satanist and hater of God’ and he used the same term ‘revolt from God’ associated with Yaldabaoth/Satan/Lucifer/the Devil in describing the Sabbatian Rothschild dynasty. ‘I played a key role in my family’s revolt from God’, he said. That role was to infiltrate in classic Sabbatian style the Christian Church, but eventually he escaped the mind-prison to live another life. The Cult has been targeting religion in a plan to make worship of the Archons the global one-world religion. Infiltration of Satanism into modern ‘culture’, especially among the young, through music videos, stage shows and other means, is all part of this.

Nag Hammadi texts describe Yaldabaoth and the Archons in their prime form as energy – consciousness – and say they can take form if they choose in the same way that consciousness takes form as a human. Yaldabaoth is called ‘formless’ and represents a deeply inverted, distorted and chaotic state of consciousness which seeks to attach to humans and turn them into a likeness of itself in an attempt at assimilation. For that to happen it has to manipulate

humans into low frequency mental and emotional states that match its own. Archons can certainly appear in human form and this is the origin of the psychopathic personality. The energetic distortion Gnostics called Yaldabaoth is psychopathy. When psychopathic Archons take human form that human will be a psychopath as an expression of Yaldabaoth consciousness. Cult psychopaths are Archons in human form. The principle is the same as that portrayed in the 2009 *Avatar* movie when the American military travelled to a fictional Earth-like moon called Pandora in the Alpha Centauri star system to infiltrate a society of blue people, or Na'vi, by hiding within bodies that looked like the Na'vi. Archons posing as humans have a particular hybrid information field, part human, part Archon, (the ancient 'demigods') which processes information in a way that manifests behaviour to match their psychopathic evil, lack of empathy and compassion, and stops them being influenced by the empathy, compassion and love that a fully-human information field is capable of expressing. Cult bloodlines interbreed, be they royalty or dark suits, for this reason and you have their obsession with incest. Interbreeding with full-blown humans would dilute the Archontic energy field that guarantees psychopathy in its representatives in the human realm.

Gnostic writings say the main non-human forms that Archons take are *serpentine* (what I have called for decades 'reptilian' amid unbounded ridicule from the Archontically-programmed) and what Gnostics describe as 'an unborn baby or foetus with grey skin and dark, unmoving eyes'. This is an excellent representation of the ET 'Greys' of UFO folklore which large numbers of people claim to have seen and been abducted by – Zulu shaman Credo Mutwa among them. I agree with those that believe in extraterrestrial or interdimensional visitations today and for thousands of years past. No wonder with their advanced knowledge and technological capability they were perceived and worshipped as gods for technological and other 'miracles' they appeared to perform. Imagine someone arriving in a culture disconnected from the modern world with a smartphone and computer. They would be

seen as a ‘god’ capable of ‘miracles’. The Renegade Mind, however, wants to know the source of everything and not only the way that source manifests as human or non-human. In the same way that a Renegade Mind seeks the original source material for the ‘Covid virus’ to see if what is claimed is true. The original source of Archons in form is consciousness – the distorted state of consciousness known to Gnostics as Yaldabaoth.

‘Revolt from God’ is energetic disconnection

Where I am going next will make a lot of sense of religious texts and ancient legends relating to ‘Satan’, Lucifer’ and the ‘gods’. Gnostic descriptions sync perfectly with the themes of my own research over the years in how they describe a consciousness distortion seeking to impose itself on human consciousness. I’ve referred to the core of infinite awareness in previous books as Infinite Awareness in Awareness of Itself. By that I mean a level of awareness that knows that it is all awareness and is aware of all awareness. From here comes the frequency of love in its true sense and balance which is what love is on one level – the balance of all forces into a single whole called Oneness and Isness. The more we disconnect from this state of love that many call ‘God’ the constituent parts of that Oneness start to unravel and express themselves as a part and not a whole. They become individualised as intellect, mind, selfishness, hatred, envy, desire for power over others, and such like. This is not a problem in the greater scheme in that ‘God’, the *All That Is*, can experience all these possibilities through different expressions of itself including humans. What we as expressions of the whole experience the *All That Is* experiences. We are the *All That Is* experiencing itself. As we withdraw from that state of Oneness we disconnect from its influence and things can get very unpleasant and very stupid. Archontic consciousness is at the extreme end of that. It has so disconnected from the influence of Oneness that it has become an inversion of unity and love, an inversion of everything, an inversion of life itself. Evil is appropriately live written backwards. Archontic consciousness is obsessed with death, an inversion of life,

and so its manifestations in Satanism are obsessed with death. They use inverted symbols in their rituals such as the inverted pentagram and cross. Sabbatians as Archontic consciousness incarnate invert Judaism and every other religion and culture they infiltrate. They seek disunity and chaos and they fear unity and harmony as they fear love like garlic to a vampire. As a result the Cult, Archons incarnate, act with such evil, psychopathy and lack of empathy and compassion disconnected as they are from the source of love. How could Bill Gates and the rest of the Archontic psychopaths do what they have to human society in the 'Covid' era with all the death, suffering and destruction involved and have no emotional consequence for the impact on others? Now you know. Why have Zuckerberg, Brin, Page, Wojcicki and company callously censored information warning about the dangers of the 'vaccine' while thousands have been dying and having severe, sometimes life-changing reactions? Now you know. Why have Tedros, Fauci, Whitty, Vallance and their like around the world been using case and death figures they're aware are fraudulent to justify lockdowns and all the deaths and destroyed lives that have come from that? Now you know. Why did Christian Drosten produce and promote a 'testing' protocol that he knew couldn't test for infectious disease which led to a global human catastrophe. Now you know. The Archontic mind doesn't give a shit ([Fig 17](#)). I personally think that Gates and major Cult insiders are a form of AI cyborg that the Archons want humans to become.

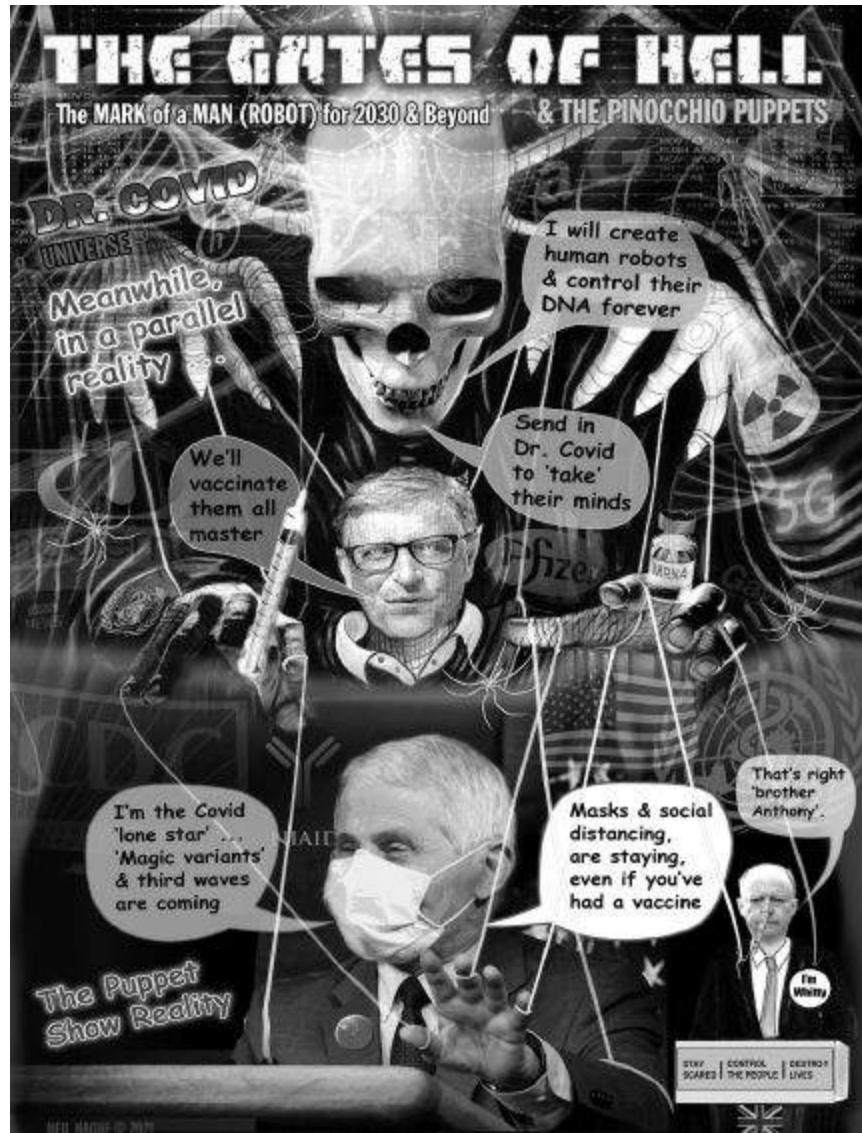


Figure 17: Artist Neil Hague's version of the 'Covid' hierarchy.

Human batteries

A state of such inversion does have its consequences, however. The level of disconnection from the Source of All means that you withdraw from that source of energetic sustenance and creativity. This means that you have to find your own supply of energetic power and it has – *us*. When the Morpheus character in the first *Matrix* movie held up a battery he spoke a profound truth when he said: 'The Matrix is a computer-generated dream world built to keep us under control in order to change the human being into one of

these.' The statement was true in all respects. We do live in a technologically-generated virtual reality simulation (more very shortly) and we have been manipulated to be an energy source for Archontic consciousness. The Disney-Pixar animated movie *Monsters, Inc.* in 2001 symbolised the dynamic when monsters in their world had no energy source and they would enter the human world to terrify children in their beds, catch the child's scream, terror (low-vibrational frequencies), and take that energy back to power the monster world. The lead character you might remember was a single giant eye and the symbolism of the Cult's all-seeing eye was obvious. Every thought and emotion is broadcast as a frequency unique to that thought and emotion. Feelings of love and joy, empathy and compassion, are high, quick, frequencies while fear, depression, anxiety, suffering and hate are low, slow, dense frequencies. Which kind do you think Archontic consciousness can connect with and absorb? In such a low and dense frequency state there's no way it can connect with the energy of love and joy. Archons can only feed off energy compatible with their own frequency and they and their Cult agents want to delete the human world of love and joy and manipulate the transmission of low vibrational frequencies through low-vibrational human mental and emotional states. *We are their energy source.* Wars are energetic banquets to the Archons – a world war even more so – and think how much low-frequency mental and emotional energy has been generated from the consequences for humanity of the 'Covid' hoax orchestrated by Archons incarnate like Gates.

The ancient practice of human sacrifice 'to the gods', continued in secret today by the Cult, is based on the same principle. 'The gods' are Archontic consciousness in different forms and the sacrifice is induced into a state of intense terror to generate the energy the Archontic frequency can absorb. Incarnate Archons in the ritual drink the blood which contains an adrenaline they crave which floods into the bloodstream when people are terrorised. Most of the sacrifices, ancient and modern, are children and the theme of 'sacrificing young virgins to the gods' is just code for children. They

have a particular pre-puberty energy that Archons want more than anything and the energy of the young in general is their target. The California Department of Education wants students to chant the names of Aztec gods (Archontic gods) once worshipped in human sacrifice rituals in a curriculum designed to encourage them to ‘challenge racist, bigoted, discriminatory, imperialist/colonial beliefs’, join ‘social movements that struggle for social justice’, and ‘build new possibilities for a post-racist, post-systemic racism society’. It’s the usual Woke crap that inverts racism and calls it anti-racism. In this case solidarity with ‘indigenous tribes’ is being used as an excuse to chant the names of ‘gods’ to which people were sacrificed (and still are in secret). What an example of Woke’s inability to see beyond black and white, us and them, They condemn the colonisation of these tribal cultures by Europeans (quite right), but those cultures sacrificing people including children to their ‘gods’, and mass murdering untold numbers as the Aztecs did, is just fine. One chant is to the Aztec god Tezcatlipoca who had a man sacrificed to him in the 5th month of the Aztec calendar. His heart was cut out and he was eaten. Oh, that’s okay then. Come on children … after three … Other sacrificial ‘gods’ for the young to chant their allegiance include Quetzalcoatl, Huitzilopochtli and Xipe Totec. The curriculum says that ‘chants, affirmations, and energizers can be used to bring the class together, build unity around ethnic studies principles and values, and to reinvigorate the class following a lesson that may be emotionally taxing or even when student engagement may appear to be low’. Well, that’s the cover story, anyway. Chanting and mantras are the repetition of a particular frequency generated from the vocal cords and chanting the names of these Archontic ‘gods’ tunes you into their frequency. That is the last thing you want when it allows for energetic synchronisation, attachment and perceptual influence. Initiates chant the names of their ‘Gods’ in their rituals for this very reason.

Vampires of the Woke

Paedophilia is another way that Archons absorb the energy of children. Paedophiles possessed by Archontic consciousness are used as the conduit during sexual abuse for discarnate Archons to vampire the energy of the young they desire so much. Stupendous numbers of children disappear every year never to be seen again although you would never know from the media. Imagine how much low-vibrational energy has been generated by children during the 'Covid' hoax when so many have become depressed and psychologically destroyed to the point of killing themselves.

Shocking numbers of children are now taken by the state from loving parents to be handed to others. I can tell you from long experience of researching this since 1996 that many end up with paedophiles and assets of the Cult through corrupt and Cult-owned social services which in the reframing era has hired many psychopaths and emotionless automatons to do the job. Children are even stolen to order using spurious reasons to take them by the corrupt and secret (because they're corrupt) 'family courts'. I have written in detail in other books, starting with *The Biggest Secret* in 1997, about the ubiquitous connections between the political, corporate, government, intelligence and military elites (Cult operatives) and Satanism and paedophilia. If you go deep enough both networks have an interlocking leadership. The Woke mentality has been developed by the Cult for many reasons: To promote almost every aspect of its agenda; to hijack the traditional political left and turn it fascist; to divide and rule; and to target agenda pushbackers. But there are other reasons which relate to what I am describing here. How many happy and joyful Wokers do you ever see especially at the extreme end? They are a mental and psychological mess consumed by emotional stress and constantly emotionally cocked for the next explosion of indignation at someone referring to a female as a female. They are walking, talking, batteries as Morpheus might say emitting frequencies which both enslave them in low-vibrational bubbles of perceptual limitation and feed the Archons. Add to this the hatred claimed to be love; fascism claimed to 'anti-fascism', racism claimed to be 'anti-racism';

exclusion claimed to inclusion; and the abuse-filled Internet trolling. You have a purpose-built Archontic energy system with not a wind turbine in sight and all founded on Archontic *inversion*. We have whole generations now manipulated to serve the Archons with their actions and energy. They will be doing so their entire adult lives unless they snap out of their Archon-induced trance. Is it really a surprise that Cult billionaires and corporations put so much money their way? Where is the energy of joy and laughter, including laughing at yourself which is confirmation of your own emotional security? Mark Twain said: 'The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter.' We must use it all the time. Woke has destroyed comedy because it has no humour, no joy, sense of irony, or self-deprecation. Its energy is dense and intense. *Mmmmm*, lunch says the Archontic frequency. Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was the Austrian philosopher and famous esoteric thinker who established Waldorf education or Steiner schools to treat children like unique expressions of consciousness and not minds to be programmed with the perceptions determined by authority. I'd been writing about this energy vampiring for decades when I was sent in 2016 a quote by Steiner. He was spot on:

There are beings in the spiritual realms for whom anxiety and fear emanating from human beings offer welcome food. When humans have no anxiety and fear, then these creatures starve. If fear and anxiety radiates from people and they break out in panic, then these creatures find welcome nutrition and they become more and more powerful. These beings are hostile towards humanity. Everything that feeds on negative feelings, on anxiety, fear and superstition, despair or doubt, are in reality hostile forces in super-sensible worlds, launching cruel attacks on human beings, while they are being fed ... These are exactly the feelings that belong to contemporary culture and materialism; because it estranges people from the spiritual world, it is especially suited to evoke hopelessness and fear of the unknown in people, thereby calling up the above mentioned hostile forces against them.

Pause for a moment from this perspective and reflect on what has happened in the world since the start of 2020. Not only will pennies drop, but billion dollar bills. We see the same theme from Don Juan Matus, a Yaqui Indian shaman in Mexico and the information source for Peruvian-born writer, Carlos Castaneda, who wrote a series of

books from the 1960s to 1990s. Don Juan described the force manipulating human society and his name for the Archons was the predator:

We have a predator that came from the depths of the cosmos and took over the rule of our lives. Human beings are its prisoners. The predator is our lord and master. It has rendered us docile, helpless. If we want to protest, it suppresses our protest. If we want to act independently, it demands that we don't do so ... indeed we are held prisoner!

They took us over because we are food to them, and they squeeze us mercilessly because we are their sustenance. Just as we rear chickens in coops, the predators rear us in human coops, humaneros. Therefore, their food is always available to them.

Different cultures, different eras, same recurring theme.

The 'ennoia' dilemma

Nag Hammadi Gnostic manuscripts say that Archon consciousness has no 'ennoia'. This is directly translated as 'intentionality', but I'll use the term 'creative imagination'. The *All That Is* in awareness of itself is the source of all creativity – all possibility – and the more disconnected you are from that source the more you are subsequently denied 'creative imagination'. Given that Archon consciousness is almost entirely disconnected it severely lacks creativity and has to rely on far more mechanical processes of thought and exploit the creative potential of those that do have 'ennoia'. You can see cases of this throughout human society. Archon consciousness almost entirely dominates the global banking system and if we study how that system works you will appreciate what I mean. Banks manifest 'money' out of nothing by issuing lines of 'credit' which is 'money' that has never, does not, and will never exist except in theory. It's a confidence trick. If you think 'credit' figures-on-a-screen 'money' is worth anything you accept it as payment. If you don't then the whole system collapses through lack of confidence in the value of that 'money'. Archontic bankers with no 'ennoia' are 'lending' 'money' that doesn't exist to humans that *do* have creativity – those that have the inspired ideas and create businesses and products. Archon banking feeds off human creativity

which it controls through ‘money’ creation and debt. Humans have the creativity and Archons exploit that for their own benefit and control while having none themselves. Archon Internet platforms like Facebook claim joint copyright of everything that creative users post and while Archontic minds like Zuckerberg may officially head that company it will be human creatives on the staff that provide the creative inspiration. When you have limitless ‘money’ you can then buy other companies established by creative humans. Witness the acquisition record of Facebook, Google and their like. Survey the Archon-controlled music industry and you see non-creative dark suit executives making their fortune from the human creativity of their artists. The cases are endless. Research the history of people like Gates and Zuckerberg and how their empires were built on exploiting the creativity of others. Archon minds cannot create out of nothing, but they are skilled (because they have to be) in what Gnostic texts call ‘countermimicry’. They can imitate, but not innovate. Sabbatians trawl the creativity of others through backdoors they install in computer systems through their cybersecurity systems. Archon-controlled China is globally infamous for stealing intellectual property and I remember how Hong Kong, now part of China, became notorious for making counterfeit copies of the creativity of others – ‘countermimicry’. With the now pervasive and all-seeing surveillance systems able to infiltrate any computer you can appreciate the potential for Archons to vampire the creativity of humans. Author John Lamb Lash wrote in his book about the Nag Hammadi texts, *Not In His Image*:

Although they cannot originate anything, because they lack the divine factor of ennoia (intentionality), Archons can imitate with a vengeance. Their expertise is simulation (HAL, virtual reality). The Demiurge [Yaldabaoth] fashions a heaven world copied from the fractal patterns [of the original] ... His construction is celestial kitsch, like the fake Italianate villa of a Mafia don complete with militant angels to guard every portal.

This brings us to something that I have been speaking about since the turn of the millennium. Our reality is a simulation; a virtual reality that we think is real. No, I’m not kidding.

Human reality? Well, virtually

I had pondered for years about whether our reality is ‘real’ or some kind of construct. I remembered being immensely affected on a visit as a small child in the late 1950s to the then newly-opened Planetarium on the Marylebone Road in London which is now closed and part of the adjacent Madame Tussauds wax museum. It was in the middle of the day, but when the lights went out there was the night sky projected in the Planetarium’s domed ceiling and it appeared to be so real. The experience never left me and I didn’t know why until around the turn of the millennium when I became certain that our ‘night sky’ and entire reality is a projection, a virtual reality, akin to the illusory world portrayed in the *Matrix* movies. I looked at the sky one day in this period and it appeared to me like the domed roof of the Planetarium. The release of the first *Matrix* movie in 1999 also provided a synchronistic and perfect visual representation of where my mind had been going for a long time. I hadn’t come across the Gnostic Nag Hammadi texts then. When I did years later the correlation was once again astounding. As I read Gnostic accounts from 1,600 years and more earlier it was clear that they were describing the same simulation phenomenon. They tell how the Yaldabaoth ‘Demiurge’ and Archons created a ‘bad copy’ of original reality to rule over all that were captured by its illusions and the body was a prison to trap consciousness in the ‘bad copy’ fake reality. Read how Gnostics describe the ‘bad copy’ and update that to current times and they are referring to what we would call today a virtual reality simulation.

Author John Lamb Lash said ‘the Demiurge fashions a heaven world copied from the fractal patterns’ of the original through expertise in ‘HAL’ or virtual reality simulation. Fractal patterns are part of the energetic information construct of our reality, a sort of blueprint. If these patterns were copied in computer terms it would indeed give you a copy of a ‘natural’ reality in a non-natural frequency and digital form. The principle is the same as making a copy of a website. The original website still exists, but now you can change the copy version to make it whatever you like and it can

become very different to the original website. Archons have done this with our reality, a *synthetic* copy of prime reality that still exists beyond the frequency walls of the simulation. Trapped within the illusions of this synthetic Matrix, however, were and are human consciousness and other expressions of prime reality and this is why the Archons via the Cult are seeking to make the human body synthetic and give us synthetic AI minds to complete the job of turning the entire reality synthetic including what we perceive to be the natural world. To quote Kurzweil: ‘Nanobots will infuse all the matter around us with information. Rocks, trees, everything will become these intelligent creatures.’ Yes, *synthetic* ‘creatures’ just as ‘Covid’ and other genetically-manipulating ‘vaccines’ are designed to make the human body synthetic. From this perspective it is obvious why Archons and their Cult are so desperate to infuse synthetic material into every human with their ‘Covid’ scam.

Let there be (electromagnetic) light

Yaldabaoth, the force that created the simulation, or Matrix, makes sense of the Gnostic reference to ‘The Great Architect’ and its use by Cult Freemasonry as the name of its deity. The designer of the Matrix in the movies is called ‘The Architect’ and that trilogy is jam-packed with symbolism relating to these subjects. I have contended for years that the angry Old Testament God (Yaldabaoth) is the ‘God’ being symbolically ‘quoted’ in the opening of Genesis as ‘creating the world’. This is not the creation of prime reality – it’s the creation of the *simulation*. The Genesis ‘God’ says: ‘Let there be Light: and there was light.’ But what is this ‘Light’? I have said for decades that the speed of light (186,000 miles per second) is not the fastest speed possible as claimed by mainstream science and is in fact the frequency walls or outer limits of the Matrix. You can’t have a fastest or slowest anything within all possibility when everything is possible. The human body is encoded to operate within the speed of light or *within the simulation* and thus we see only the tiny frequency band of visible *light*. Near-death experiencers who perceive reality outside the body during temporary ‘death’ describe a very different

form of light and this is supported by the Nag Hammadi texts. Prime reality beyond the simulation ('Upper Aeons' to the Gnostics) is described as a realm of incredible beauty, bliss, love and harmony – a realm of 'watery light' that is so powerful 'there are no shadows'. Our false reality of Archon control, which Gnostics call the 'Lower Aeons', is depicted as a realm with a different kind of 'light' and described in terms of chaos, 'Hell', 'the Abyss' and 'Outer Darkness', where trapped souls are tormented and manipulated by demons (relate that to the 'Covid' hoax alone). The watery light theme can be found in near-death accounts and it is not the same as *simulation* 'light' which is electromagnetic or radiation light within the speed of light – the 'Lower Aeons'. Simulation 'light' is the 'luminous fire' associated by Gnostics with the Archons. The Bible refers to Yaldabaoth as 'that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world' (Revelation 12:9). I think that making a simulated copy of prime reality ('countermimicry') and changing it dramatically while all the time manipulating humanity to believe it to be real could probably meet the criteria of deceiving the whole world. Then we come to the Cult god Lucifer – the *Light Bringer*. Lucifer is symbolic of Yaldabaoth, the bringer of radiation light that forms the bad copy simulation within the speed of light. 'He' is symbolised by the lighted torch held by the Statue of Liberty and in the name 'Illuminati'. Sabbatian-Frankism declares that Lucifer is the true god and Lucifer is the real god of Freemasonry honoured as their 'Great or Grand Architect of the Universe' (simulation).

I would emphasise, too, the way Archontic technologically-generated luminous fire of radiation has deluged our environment since I was a kid in the 1950s and changed the nature of The Field with which we constantly interact. Through that interaction technological radiation is changing us. The Smart Grid is designed to operate with immense levels of communication power with 5G expanding across the world and 6G, 7G, in the process of development. Radiation is the simulation and the Archontic manipulation system. Why wouldn't the Archon Cult wish to unleash radiation upon us to an ever-greater extreme to form

Kurzweil's 'cloud'? The plan for a synthetic human is related to the need to cope with levels of radiation beyond even anything we've seen so far. Biological humans would not survive the scale of radiation they have in their script. The Smart Grid is a technological sub-reality within the technological simulation to further disconnect five-sense perception from expanded consciousness. It's a technological prison of the mind.

Infusing the 'spirit of darkness'

A recurring theme in religion and native cultures is the manipulation of human genetics by a non-human force and most famously recorded as the biblical 'sons of god' (the gods plural in the original) who interbred with the daughters of men. The Nag Hammadi *Apocryphon of John* tells the same story this way:

He [Yaldabaoth] sent his angels [Archons/demons] to the daughters of men, that they might take some of them for themselves and raise offspring for their enjoyment. And at first they did not succeed. When they had no success, they gathered together again and they made a plan together ... And the angels changed themselves in their likeness into the likeness of their mates, filling them with the spirit of darkness, which they had mixed for them, and with evil ... And they took women and begot children out of the darkness according to the likeness of their spirit.

Possession when a discarnate entity takes over a human body is an age-old theme and continues today. It's very real and I've seen it. Satanic and secret society rituals can create an energetic environment in which entities can attach to initiates and I've heard many stories of how people have changed their personality after being initiated even into lower levels of the Freemasons. I have been inside three Masonic temples, one at a public open day and two by just walking in when there was no one around to stop me. They were in Ryde, the town where I live, Birmingham, England, when I was with a group, and Boston, Massachusetts. They all felt the same energetically – dark, dense, low-vibrational and sinister. Demonic attachment can happen while the initiate has no idea what is going on. To them it's just a ritual to get in the Masons and do a bit of good

business. In the far more extreme rituals of Satanism human possession is even more powerful and they are designed to make possession possible. The hierarchy of the Cult is dictated by the power and perceived status of the possessing Archon. In this way the Archon hierarchy becomes the Cult hierarchy. Once the entity has attached it can influence perception and behaviour and if it attaches to the extreme then so much of its energy (information) infuses into the body information field that the hologram starts to reflect the nature of the possessing entity. This is the *Exorcist* movie type of possession when facial features change and it's known as shapeshifting. Islam's Jinn are said to be invisible tricksters who change shape, 'whisper', confuse and take human form. These are all traits of the Archons and other versions of the same phenomenon. Extreme possession could certainty infuse the 'spirit of darkness' into a partner during sex as the Nag Hammadi texts appear to describe. Such an infusion can change genetics which is also energetic information. Human genetics is information and the 'spirit of darkness' is information. Mix one with the other and change must happen. Islam has the concept of a 'Jinn baby' through possession of the mother and by Jinn taking human form. There are many ways that human genetics can be changed and remember that Archons have been aware all along of advanced techniques to do this. What is being done in human society today – and far more – was known about by Archons at the time of the 'fallen ones' and their other versions described in religions and cultures.

Archons and their human-world Cult are obsessed with genetics as we see today and they know this dictates how information is processed into perceived reality during a human life. They needed to produce a human form that would decode the simulation and this is symbolically known as 'Adam and Eve' who left the 'garden' (prime reality) and 'fell' into Matrix reality. The simulation is not a 'physical' construct (there is no 'physical'); it is a source of information. Think Wi-Fi again. The simulation is an energetic field encoded with information and body-brain systems are designed to decode that information encoded in wave or frequency form which

is transmitted to the brain as electrical signals. These are decoded by the brain to construct our sense of reality – an illusory ‘physical’ world that only exists in the brain or the mind. Virtual reality games mimic this process using the same sensory decoding system. Information is fed to the senses to decode a virtual reality that can appear so real, but isn’t (Figs 18 and 19). Some scientists believe – and I agree with them – that what we perceive as ‘physical’ reality only exists when we are looking or observing. The act of perception or focus triggers the decoding systems which turn waveform information into holographic reality. When we are not observing something our reality reverts from a holographic state to a waveform state. This relates to the same principle as a falling tree not making a noise unless someone is there to hear it or decode it. The concept makes sense from the simulation perspective. A computer is not decoding all the information in a Wi-Fi field all the time and only decodes or brings into reality on the screen that part of Wi-Fi that it’s decoding – focusing upon – at that moment.



Figure 18: Virtual reality technology ‘hacks’ into the body’s five-sense decoding system.



Figure 19: The result can be experienced as very ‘real’.

Interestingly, Professor Donald Hoffman at the Department of Cognitive Sciences at the University of California, Irvine, says that our experienced reality is like a computer interface that shows us only the level with which we interact while hiding all that exists beyond it: ‘Evolution shaped us with a user interface that hides the truth. Nothing that we see is the truth – the very language of space and time and objects is the wrong language to describe reality.’ He is correct in what he says on so many levels. Space and time are not a universal reality. They are a phenomenon of decoded *simulation* reality as part of the process of enslaving our sense of reality. Near-death experiencers report again and again how space and time did not exist as we perceive them once they were free of the body – body decoding systems. You can appreciate from this why Archons and their Cult are so desperate to entrap human attention in the five senses where we are in the Matrix and of the Matrix. Opening your mind to expanded states of awareness takes you beyond the information confines of the simulation and you become aware of knowledge and insights denied to you before. This is what we call ‘awakening’ – *awakening from the Matrix* – and in the final chapter I will relate this to current events.

Where are the ‘aliens’?

A simulation would explain the so-called ‘Fermi Paradox’ named after Italian physicist Enrico Fermi (1901-1954) who created the first nuclear reactor. He considered the question of why there is such a lack of extraterrestrial activity when there are so many stars and planets in an apparently vast universe; but what if the night sky that we see, or think we do, is a simulated projection as I say? If you control the simulation and your aim is to hold humanity fast in essential ignorance would you want other forms of life including advanced life coming and going sharing information with humanity? Or would you want them to believe they were isolated and apparently alone? Themes of human isolation and apartness are common whether they be the perception of a lifeless universe or the fascist isolation laws of the ‘Covid’ era. Paradoxically the very

existence of a simulation means that we are not alone when some force had to construct it. My view is that experiences that people have reported all over the world for centuries with Reptilians and Grey entities are Archon phenomena as Nag Hammadi texts describe; and that benevolent 'alien' interactions are non-human groups that come in and out of the simulation by overcoming Archon attempts to keep them out. It should be highlighted, too, that Reptilians and Greys are obsessed with *genetics* and *technology* as related by cultural accounts and those who say they have been abducted by them. Technology is their way of overcoming some of the limitations in their creative potential and our technology-driven and controlled human society of today is *archetypical* Archon-Reptilian-Grey modus operandi. Technocracy is really *Archontocracy*. The Universe does not have to be as big as it appears with a simulation. There is no space or distance only information decoded into holographic reality. What we call 'space' is only the absence of holographic 'objects' and that 'space' is The Field of energetic information which connects everything into a single whole. The same applies with the artificially-generated information field of the simulation. The Universe is not big or small as a physical reality. It is decoded information, that's all, and its perceived size is decided by the way the simulation is encoded to make it appear. The entire night sky as we perceive it only exists in our brain and so where are those 'millions of light years'? The 'stars' on the ceiling of the Planetarium looked a vast distance away.

There's another point to mention about 'aliens'. I have been highlighting since the 1990s the plan to stage a fake 'alien invasion' to justify the centralisation of global power and a world military. Nazi scientist Werner von Braun, who was taken to America by Operation Paperclip after World War Two to help found NASA, told his American assistant Dr Carol Rosin about the Cult agenda when he knew he was dying in 1977. Rosin said that he told her about a sequence that would lead to total human control by a one-world government. This included threats from terrorism, rogue nations, meteors and asteroids before finally an 'alien invasion'. All of these

things, von Braun said, would be bogus and what I would refer to as a No-Problem-Reaction-Solution. Keep this in mind when ‘the aliens are coming’ is the new mantra. The aliens are not coming – they are *already here* and they have infiltrated human society while looking human. French-Canadian investigative journalist Serge Monast said in 1994 that he had uncovered a NASA/military operation called Project Blue Beam which fits with what Werner von Braun predicted. Monast died of a ‘heart attack’ in 1996 the day after he was arrested and spent a night in prison. He was 51. He said Blue Beam was a plan to stage an alien invasion that would include religious figures beamed holographically into the sky as part of a global manipulation to usher in a ‘new age’ of worshipping what I would say is the Cult ‘god’ Yaldabaoth in a one-world religion. Fake holographic asteroids are also said to be part of the plan which again syncs with von Braun. How could you stage an illusory threat from asteroids unless they were holographic inserts? This is pretty straightforward given the advanced technology outside the public arena and the fact that our ‘physical’ reality is holographic anyway. Information fields would be projected and we would decode them into the illusion of a ‘physical’ asteroid. If they can sell a global ‘pandemic’ with a ‘virus’ that doesn’t exist what will humans not believe if government and media tell them?

All this is particularly relevant as I write with the Pentagon planning to release in June, 2021, information about ‘UFO sightings’. I have been following the UFO story since the early 1990s and the common theme throughout has been government and military denials and cover up. More recently, however, the Pentagon has suddenly become more talkative and apparently open with Air Force pilot radar images released of unexplained craft moving and changing direction at speeds well beyond anything believed possible with human technology. Then, in March, 2021, former Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe said a Pentagon report months later in June would reveal a great deal of information about UFO sightings unknown to the public. He said the report would have ‘massive implications’. The order to do this was included bizarrely

in a \$2.3 trillion ‘coronavirus’ relief and government funding bill passed by the Trump administration at the end of 2020. I would add some serious notes of caution here. I have been pointing out since the 1990s that the US military and intelligence networks have long had craft – ‘flying saucers’ or anti-gravity craft – which any observer would take to be extraterrestrial in origin. Keeping this knowledge from the public allows craft flown by *humans* to be perceived as alien visitations. I am not saying that ‘aliens’ do not exist. I would be the last one to say that, but we have to be streetwise here. President Ronald Reagan told the UN General Assembly in 1987: ‘I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world.’ That’s the idea. Unite against a common ‘enemy’ with a common purpose behind your ‘saviour force’ (the Cult) as this age-old technique of mass manipulation goes global.

Science moves this way ...

I could find only one other person who was discussing the simulation hypothesis publicly when I concluded it was real. This was Nick Bostrom, a Swedish-born philosopher at the University of Oxford, who has explored for many years the possibility that human reality is a computer simulation although his version and mine are not the same. Today the simulation and holographic reality hypothesis have increasingly entered the scientific mainstream. Well, the more open-minded mainstream, that is. Here are a few of the ever-gathering examples. American nuclear physicist Silas Beane led a team of physicists at the University of Bonn in Germany pursuing the question of whether we live in a simulation. They concluded that we probably do and it was likely based on a lattice of cubes. They found that cosmic rays align with that specific pattern. The team highlighted the Greisen-Zatsepin-Kuzmin (GZK) limit which refers to cosmic ray particle interaction with cosmic background radiation that creates an apparent boundary for cosmic ray particles. They say in a paper entitled ‘Constraints on the Universe as a Numerical Simulation’ that this ‘pattern of constraint’ is exactly what you

would find with a computer simulation. They also made the point that a simulation would create its own ‘laws of physics’ that would limit possibility. I’ve been making the same point for decades that the *perceived* laws of physics relate only to this reality, or what I would later call the simulation. When designers write codes to create computer and virtual reality games they are the equivalent of the laws of physics for that game. Players interact within the limitations laid out by the coding. In the same way those who wrote the codes for the simulation decided the laws of physics that would apply. These can be overridden by expanded states of consciousness, but not by those enslaved in only five-sense awareness where simulation codes rule. Overriding the codes is what people call ‘miracles’. They are not. They are bypassing the encoded limits of the simulation. A population caught in simulation perception would have no idea that this was their plight. As the Bonn paper said: ‘Like a prisoner in a pitch-black cell we would not be able to see the “walls” of our prison.’ That’s true if people remain mesmerised by the five senses. Open to expanded awareness and those walls become very clear. The main one is the speed of light.

American theoretical physicist James Gates is another who has explored the simulation question and found considerable evidence to support the idea. Gates was Professor of Physics at the University of Maryland, Director of The Center for String and Particle Theory, and on Barack Obama’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. He and his team found *computer codes* of digital data embedded in the fabric of our reality. They relate to on-off electrical charges of 1 and 0 in the binary system used by computers. ‘We have no idea what they are doing there’, Gates said. They found within the energetic fabric mathematical sequences known as error-correcting codes or block codes that ‘reboot’ data to its original state or ‘default settings’ when something knocks it out of sync. Gates was asked if he had found a set of equations embedded in our reality indistinguishable from those that drive search engines and browsers and he said: ‘That is correct.’ Rich Terrile, director of the Centre for Evolutionary Computation and Automated Design at NASA’s Jet

Propulsion Laboratory, has said publicly that he believes the Universe is a digital hologram that must have been created by a form of intelligence. I agree with that in every way. Waveform information is delivered electrically by the senses to the brain which constructs a *digital* holographic reality that we call the ‘world’. This digital level of reality can be read by the esoteric art of numerology. Digital holograms are at the cutting edge of holographics today. We have digital technology everywhere designed to access and manipulate our digital level of perceived reality. Synthetic mRNA in ‘Covid vaccines’ has a digital component to manipulate the body’s digital ‘operating system’.

Reality is numbers

How many know that our reality can be broken down to numbers and codes that are the same as computer games? Max Tegmark, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), is the author of *Our Mathematical Universe* in which he lays out how reality can be entirely described by numbers and maths in the way that a video game is encoded with the ‘physics’ of computer games. Our world and computer virtual reality are essentially the same.

Tegmark imagines the perceptions of characters in an advanced computer game when the graphics are so good they don’t know they are in a game. They think they can bump into real objects (electromagnetic resistance in our reality), fall in love and feel emotions like excitement. When they began to study the apparently ‘physical world’ of the video game they would realise that everything was made of pixels (which have been found in our energetic reality as must be the case when on one level our world is digital). What computer game characters thought was physical ‘stuff’, Tegmark said, could actually be broken down into numbers:

And we’re exactly in this situation in our world. We look around and it doesn’t seem that mathematical at all, but everything we see is made out of elementary particles like quarks and electrons. And what properties does an electron have? Does it have a smell or a colour or a texture? No! ... We physicists have come up with geeky names for [Electron] properties, like

electric charge, or spin, or lepton number, but the electron doesn't care what we call it, the properties are just numbers.

This is the illusory reality Gnostics were describing. This is the simulation. The A, C, G, and T codes of DNA have a binary value – A and C = 0 while G and T = 1. This has to be when the simulation is digital and the body must be digital to interact with it. Recurring mathematical sequences are encoded throughout reality and the body. They include the Fibonacci sequence in which the two previous numbers are added to get the next one, as in ... 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, etc. The sequence is encoded in the human face and body, proportions of animals, DNA, seed heads, pine cones, trees, shells, spiral galaxies, hurricanes and the number of petals in a flower. The list goes on and on. There are fractal patterns – a 'never-ending pattern that is infinitely complex and self-similar across all scales in the as above, so below, principle of holograms. These and other famous recurring geometrical and mathematical sequences such as Phi, Pi, Golden Mean, Golden Ratio and Golden Section are *computer codes* of the simulation. I had to laugh and give my head a shake the day I finished this book and it went into the production stage. I was sent an article in *Scientific American* published in April, 2021, with the headline 'Confirmed! We Live in a Simulation'. Two decades after I first said our reality is a simulation and the speed of light is its outer limit the article suggested that we do live in a simulation and that the speed of light is its outer limit. I left school at 15 and never passed a major exam in my life while the writer was up to his eyes in qualifications. As I will explain in the final chapter *knowing* is far better than thinking and they come from very different sources. The article rightly connected the speed of light to the processing speed of the 'Matrix' and said what has been in my books all this time ... 'If we are in a simulation, as it appears, then space is an abstract property written in code. It is not real'. No it's not and if we live in a simulation something created it and it wasn't *us*. 'That David Icke says we are manipulated by aliens' – he's crackers.'

Wow ...

The reality that humanity thinks is so real is an illusion. Politicians, governments, scientists, doctors, academics, law enforcement, media, school and university curriculums, on and on, are all founded on a world that *does not exist* except as a simulated prison cell. Is it such a stretch to accept that 'Covid' doesn't exist when our entire 'physical' reality doesn't exist? Revealed here is the knowledge kept under raps in the Cult networks of compartmentalised secrecy to control humanity's sense of reality by inducing the population to believe in a reality that's not real. If it wasn't so tragic in its experiential consequences the whole thing would be hysterically funny. None of this is new to Renegade Minds. Ancient Greek philosopher Plato (about 428 to about 347BC) was a major influence on Gnostic belief and he described the human plight thousands of years ago with his Allegory of the Cave. He told the symbolic story of prisoners living in a cave who had never been outside. They were chained and could only see one wall of the cave while behind them was a fire that they could not see. Figures walked past the fire casting shadows on the prisoners' wall and those moving shadows became their sense of reality. Some prisoners began to study the shadows and were considered experts on them (today's academics and scientists), but what they studied was only an illusion (today's academics and scientists). A prisoner escaped from the cave and saw reality as it really is. When he returned to report this revelation they didn't believe him, called him mad and threatened to kill him if he tried to set them free. Plato's tale is not only a brilliant analogy of the human plight and our illusory reality. It describes, too, the dynamics of the 'Covid' hoax. I have only skimmed the surface of these subjects here. The aim of this book is to crisply connect all essential dots to put what is happening today into its true context. All subject areas and their connections in this chapter are covered in great evidential detail in *Everything You Need To Know, But Have Never Been Told* and *The Answer*.

They say that bewildered people 'can't see the forest for the trees'. Humanity, however, can't see the forest for the *twigs*. The five senses

see only twigs while Renegade Minds can see the forest and it's the forest where the answers lie with the connections that reveals. Breaking free of perceptual programming so the forest can be seen is the way we turn all this around. Not breaking free is how humanity got into this mess. The situation may seem hopeless, but I promise you it's not. We are a perceptual heartbeat from paradise if only we knew.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Escaping Wetiko

Life is simply a vacation from the infinite

Dean Cavanagh

Renegade Minds weave the web of life and events and see common themes in the apparently random. They are always there if you look for them and their pursuit is aided by incredible synchronicity that comes when your mind is open rather than mesmerised by what it thinks it can see.

Infinite awareness is infinite possibility and the more of infinite possibility that we access the more becomes infinitely possible. That may be stating the apparently obvious, but it is a devastatingly-powerful fact that can set us free. We are a point of attention within an infinity of consciousness. The question is how much of that infinity do we choose to access? How much knowledge, insight, awareness, wisdom, do we want to connect with and explore? If your focus is only in the five senses you will be influenced by a fraction of infinite awareness. I mean a range so tiny that it gives new meaning to infinitesimal. Limitation of self-identity and a sense of the possible limit accordingly your range of consciousness. We are what we think we are. Life is what we think it is. The dream is the dreamer and the dreamer is the dream. Buddhist philosophy puts it this way: 'As a thing is viewed, so it appears.' Most humans live in the realm of touch, taste, see, hear, and smell and that's the limit of their sense of the possible and sense of self. Many will follow a religion and speak of a God in his heaven, but their lives are still

dominated by the five senses in their perceptions and actions. The five senses become the arbiter of everything. When that happens all except a smear of infinity is sealed away from influence by the rigid, unyielding, reality bubbles that are the five-sense human or Phantom Self. Archon Cult methodology is to isolate consciousness within five-sense reality – the simulation – and then program that consciousness with a sense of self and the world through a deluge of life-long information designed to instil the desired perception that allows global control. Efforts to do this have increased dramatically with identity politics as identity bubbles are squeezed into the minutiae of five-sense detail which disconnect people even more profoundly from the infinite ‘I’.

Five-sense focus and self-identity are like a firewall that limits access to the infinite realms. You only perceive one radio or television station and no other. We’ll take that literally for a moment. Imagine a vast array of stations giving different information and angles on reality, but you only ever listen to one. Here we have the human plight in which the population is overwhelmingly confined to CultFM. This relates only to the frequency range of CultFM and limits perception and insight to that band – limits *possibility* to that band. It means you are connecting with an almost imperceptibly minuscule range of possibility and creative potential within the infinite Field. It’s a world where everything seems apart from everything else and where synchronicity is rare. Synchronicity is defined in the dictionary as ‘the happening by chance of two or more related or similar events at the same time’. Use of ‘by chance’ betrays a complete misunderstanding of reality. Synchronicity is not ‘by chance’. As people open their minds, or ‘awaken’ to use the term, they notice more and more coincidences in their lives, bits of ‘luck’, apparently miraculous happenings that put them in the right place at the right time with the right people. Days become peppered with ‘fancy meeting you here’ and ‘what are the chances of that?’ My entire life has been lived like this and ever more so since my own colossal awakening in 1990 and 91 which transformed my sense of reality. Synchronicity is not ‘by chance’; it is by accessing expanded

realms of possibility which allow expanded potential for manifestation. People broadcasting the same vibe from the same openness of mind tend to be drawn ‘by chance’ to each other through what I call frequency magnetism and it’s not only people. In the last more than 30 years incredible synchronicity has also led me through the Cult maze to information in so many forms and to crucial personal experiences. These ‘coincidences’ have allowed me to put the puzzle pieces together across an enormous array of subjects and situations. Those who have breached the bubble of five-sense reality will know exactly what I mean and this escape from the perceptual prison cell is open to everyone whenever they make that choice. This may appear super-human when compared with the limitations of ‘human’, but it’s really our natural state. ‘Human’ as currently experienced is consciousness in an unnatural state of induced separation from the infinity of the whole. I’ll come to how this transformation into unity can be made when I have described in more detail the force that holds humanity in servitude by denying this access to infinite self.

The Wetiko factor

I have been talking and writing for decades about the way five-sense mind is systematically barricaded from expanded awareness. I have used the analogy of a computer (five-sense mind) and someone at the keyboard (expanded awareness). Interaction between the computer and the operator is symbolic of the interaction between five-sense mind and expanded awareness. The computer directly experiences the Internet and the operator experiences the Internet via the computer which is how it’s supposed to be – the two working as one. Archons seek to control that point where the operator connects with the computer to stop that interaction ([Fig 20](#)). Now the operator is banging the keyboard and clicking the mouse, but the computer is not responding and this happens when the computer is taken over – *possessed* – by an appropriately-named computer ‘virus’. The operator has lost all influence over the computer which goes its own way making decisions under the control of the ‘virus’. I have

just described the dynamic through which the force known to Gnostics as Yaldabaoth and Archons disconnects five-sense mind from expanded awareness to imprison humanity in perceptual servitude.



Figure 20: The mind ‘virus’ I have been writing about for decades seeks to isolate five-sense mind (the computer) from the true ‘I’. (Image by Neil Hague).

About a year ago I came across a Native American concept of Wetiko which describes precisely the same phenomenon. Wetiko is the spelling used by the Cree and there are other versions including wintiko and windigo used by other tribal groups. They spell the name with lower case, but I see Wetiko as a proper noun as with Archons and prefer a capital. I first saw an article about Wetiko by writer and researcher Paul Levy which so synced with what I had been writing about the computer/operator disconnection and later the Archons. I then read his book, the fascinating *Dispelling Wetiko, Breaking the Spell of Evil*. The parallels between what I had concluded long before and the Native American concept of Wetiko were so clear and obvious that it was almost funny. For Wetiko see the Gnostic Archons for sure and the Jinn, the Predators, and every other name for a force of evil, inversion and chaos. Wetiko is the Native American name for the force that divides the computer from

the operator ([Fig 21](#)). Indigenous author Jack D. Forbes, a founder of the Native American movement in the 1960s, wrote another book about Wetiko entitled *Columbus And Other Cannibals – The Wetiko Disease of Exploitation, Imperialism, and Terrorism* which I also read. Forbes says that Wetiko refers to an evil person or spirit ‘who terrorizes other creatures by means of terrible acts, including cannibalism’. Zulu shaman Credo Mutwa told me that African accounts tell how cannibalism was brought into the world by the Chitauri ‘gods’ – another manifestation of Wetiko. The distinction between ‘evil person or spirit’ relates to Archons/Wetiko possessing a human or acting as pure consciousness. Wetiko is said to be a sickness of the soul or spirit and a state of being that takes but gives nothing back – the Cult and its operatives perfectly described. Black Hawk, a Native American war leader defending their lands from confiscation, said European invaders had ‘poisoned hearts’ – Wetiko hearts – and that this would spread to native societies. Mention of the heart is very significant as we shall shortly see. Forbes writes: ‘Tragically, the history of the world for the past 2,000 years is, in great part, the story of the epidemiology of the wetiko disease.’ Yes, and much longer. Forbes is correct when he says: ‘The wetikos destroyed Egypt and Babylon and Athens and Rome and Tenochtitlan [capital of the Aztec empire] and perhaps now they will destroy the entire earth.’ Evil, he said, is the number one export of a Wetiko culture – see its globalisation with ‘Covid’. Constant war, mass murder, suffering of all kinds, child abuse, Satanism, torture and human sacrifice are all expressions of Wetiko and the Wetiko possessed. The world is Wetiko made manifest, *but it doesn’t have to be*. There is a way out of this even now.



Figure 21: The mind ‘virus’ is known to Native Americans as ‘Wetiko’. (Image by Neil Hague).

Cult of Wetiko

Wetiko is the Yaldabaoth frequency distortion that seeks to attach to human consciousness and absorb it into its own. Once this connection is made Wetiko can drive the perceptions of the target which they believe to be coming from their own mind. All the horrors of history and today from mass killers to Satanists, paedophiles like Jeffrey Epstein and other psychopaths, are the embodiment of Wetiko and express its state of being in all its grotesqueness. The Cult is Wetiko incarnate, Yaldabaoth incarnate, and it seeks to facilitate Wetiko assimilation of humanity in totality into its distortion by manipulating the population into low frequency states that match its own. Paul Levy writes: ‘Holographically enforced within the psyche of every human being the wetiko virus pervades and underlies the entire field of consciousness, and can therefore potentially manifest through any one of us at any moment if we are not mindful.’ The ‘Covid’ hoax has achieved this with many people, but others have not fallen into Wetiko’s frequency lair. Players in the ‘Covid’ human catastrophe including Gates, Schwab, Tedros, Fauci, Whitty, Vallance, Johnson, Hancock, Ferguson, Drosten, and all the rest, including the psychopath psychologists, are expressions of Wetiko. This is why

they have no compassion or empathy and no emotional consequence for what they do that would make them stop doing it. Observe all the people who support the psychopaths in authority against the Pushbackers despite the damaging impact the psychopaths have on their own lives and their family's lives. You are again looking at Wetiko possession which prevents them seeing through the lies to the obvious scam going on. *Why can't they see it?* Wetiko won't let them see it. The perceptual divide that has now become a chasm is between the Wetikoed and the non-Wetikoed.

Paul Levy describes Wetiko in the same way that I have long described the Archontic force. They are the same distorted consciousness operating across dimensions of reality: '... the subtle body of wetiko is not located in the third dimension of space and time, literally existing in another dimension ... it is able to affect ordinary lives by mysteriously interpenetrating into our three-dimensional world.' Wetiko does this through its incarnate representatives in the Cult and by weaving itself into The Field which on our level of reality is the electromagnetic information field of the simulation or Matrix. More than that, the simulation *is* Wetiko / Yaldabaoth. Caleb Scharf, Director of Astrobiology at Columbia University, has speculated that 'alien life' could be so advanced that it has transcribed itself into the quantum realm to become what we call physics. He said intelligence indistinguishable from the fabric of the Universe would solve many of its greatest mysteries:

Perhaps hyper-advanced life isn't just external. Perhaps it's already all around. It is embedded in what we perceive to be physics itself, from the root behaviour of particles and fields to the phenomena of complexity and emergence ... In other words, life might not just be in the equations. It might BE the equations [My emphasis].

Scharf said it is possible that 'we don't recognise advanced life because it forms an integral and unsuspicious part of what we've considered to be the natural world'. I agree. Wetiko/Yaldabaoth *is* the simulation. We are literally in the body of the beast. But that doesn't mean it has to control us. We all have the power to overcome Wetiko

influence and the Cult knows that. I doubt it sleeps too well because it knows that.

Which Field?

This, I suggest, is how it all works. There are two Fields. One is the fierce electromagnetic light of the Matrix within the speed of light; the other is the ‘watery light’ of The Field beyond the walls of the Matrix that connects with the Great Infinity. Five-sense mind and the decoding systems of the body attach us to the Field of Matrix light. They have to or we could not experience this reality. Five-sense mind sees only the Matrix Field of information while our expanded consciousness is part of the Infinity Field. When we open our minds, and most importantly our hearts, to the Infinity Field we have a mission control which gives us an expanded perspective, a road map, to understand the nature of the five-sense world. If we are isolated only in five-sense mind there is no mission control. We’re on our own trying to understand a world that’s constantly feeding us information to ensure we do not understand. People in this state can feel ‘lost’ and bewildered with no direction or radar. You can see ever more clearly those who are influenced by the Fields of Big Infinity or little five-sense mind simply by their views and behaviour with regard to the ‘Covid’ hoax. We have had this division throughout known human history with the mass of the people on one side and individuals who could see and intuit beyond the walls of the simulation – Plato’s prisoner who broke out of the cave and saw reality for what it is. Such people have always been targeted by Wetiko/Archon-possessed authority, burned at the stake or demonised as mad, bad and dangerous. The Cult today and its global network of ‘anti-hate’, ‘anti-fascist’ Woke groups are all expressions of Wetiko attacking those exposing the conspiracy, ‘Covid’ lies and the ‘vaccine’ agenda.

Woke as a whole is Wetiko which explains its black and white mentality and how at one it is with the Wetiko-possessed Cult. Paul Levy said: ‘To be in this paradigm is to still be under the thrall of a two-valued logic – where things are either true or false – of a

wetikoized mind.' Wetiko consciousness is in a permanent rage, therefore so is Woke, and then there is Woke inversion and contradiction. 'Anti-fascists' act like fascists because fascists *and* 'anti-fascists' are both Wetiko at work. Political parties act the same while claiming to be different for the same reason. Secret society and satanic rituals are attaching initiates to Wetiko and the cold, ruthless, psychopathic mentality that secures the positions of power all over the world is Wetiko. Reframing 'training programmes' have the same cumulative effect of attaching Wetiko and we have their graduates described as automatons and robots with a cold, psychopathic, uncaring demeanour. They are all traits of Wetiko possession and look how many times they have been described in this book and elsewhere with regard to personnel behind 'Covid' including the police and medical profession. Climbing the greasy pole in any profession in a Wetiko society requires traits of Wetiko to get there and that is particularly true of politics which is not about fair competition and pre-eminence of ideas. It is founded on how many backs you can stab and arses you can lick. This culminated in the global 'Covid' coordination between the Wetiko possessed who pulled it off in all the different countries without a trace of empathy and compassion for their impact on humans. Our sight sense can see only holographic form and not the Field which connects holographic form. Therefore we perceive 'physical' objects with 'space' in between. In fact that 'space' is energy/consciousness operating on multiple frequencies. One of them is Wetiko and that connects the Cult psychopaths, those who submit to the psychopaths, and those who serve the psychopaths in the media operations of the world. Wetiko is Gates. Wetiko is the mask-wearing submissive. Wetiko is the fake journalist and 'fact-checker'. The Wetiko Field is coordinating the whole thing. Psychopaths, gofers, media operatives, 'anti-hate' hate groups, 'fact-checkers' and submissive people work as one unit *even without human coordination* because they are attached to the *same* Field which is organising it all ([Fig 22](#)). Paul Levy is here describing how Wetiko-possessed people are drawn together and refuse to let any information breach their rigid

perceptions. He was writing long before ‘Covid’, but I think you will recognise followers of the ‘Covid’ religion *oh just a little bit*:

People who are channelling the vibratory frequency of wetiko align with each other through psychic resonance to reinforce their unspoken shared agreement so as to uphold their deranged view of reality. Once an unconscious content takes possession of certain individuals, it irresistibly draws them together by mutual attraction and knits them into groups tied together by their shared madness that can easily swell into an avalanche of insanity.

A psychic epidemic is a closed system, which is to say that it is insular and not open to any new information or informing influences from the outside world which contradict its fixed, limited, and limiting perspective.

There we have the Woke mind and the ‘Covid’ mind. Compatible resonance draws the awakening together, too, which is clearly happening today.

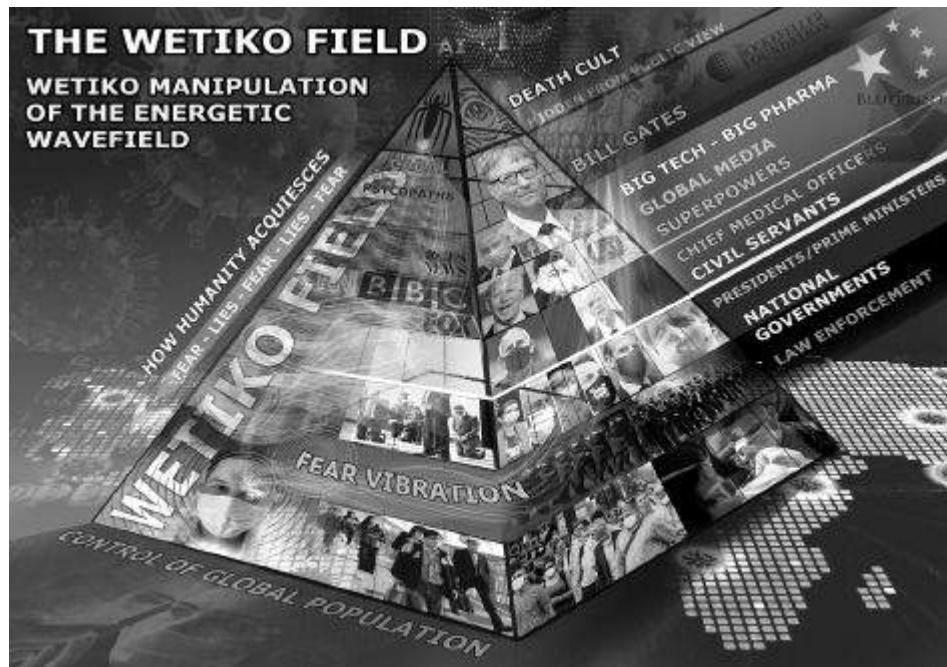


Figure 22: The Wetiko Field from which the Cult pyramid and its personnel are made manifest. (Image by Neil Hague).

Spiritual servitude

Wetiko doesn't care about humans. It's not human; it just possesses humans for its own ends and the effect (depending on the scale of

possession) can be anything from extreme psychopathy to unquestioning obedience. Wetiko's worst nightmare is for human consciousness to expand beyond the simulation. Everything is focussed on stopping that happening through control of information, thus perception, thus frequency. The 'education system', media, science, medicine, academia, are all geared to maintaining humanity in five-sense servitude as is the constant stimulation of low-vibrational mental and emotional states (see 'Covid'). Wetiko seeks to dominate those subconscious spaces between five-sense perception and expanded consciousness where the computer meets the operator. From these subconscious hiding places Wetiko speaks to us to trigger urges and desires that we take to be our own and manipulate us into anything from low-vibrational to psychopathic states. Remember how Islam describes the Jinn as invisible tricksters that 'whisper' and confuse. Wetiko is the origin of the 'trickster god' theme that you find in cultures all over the world. Jinn, like the Archons, are Wetiko which is terrified of humans awakening and reconnecting with our true self for then its energy source has gone. With that the feedback loop breaks between Wetiko and human perception that provides the energetic momentum on which its very existence depends as a force of evil. Humans are both its target and its source of survival, but only if we are operating in low-vibrational states of fear, hate, depression and the background anxiety that most people suffer. We are Wetiko's target because we are its key to survival. It needs us, not the other way round. Paul Levy writes:

A vampire has no intrinsic, independent, substantial existence in its own right; it only exists in relation to us. The pathogenic, vampiric mind-parasite called wetiko is nothing in itself – not being able to exist from its own side – yet it has a 'virtual reality' such that it can potentially destroy our species ...

...The fact that a vampire is not reflected by a mirror can also mean that what we need to see is that there's nothing, no-thing to see, other than ourselves. The fact that wetiko is the expression of something inside of us means that the cure for wetiko is with us as well. The critical issue is finding this cure within us and then putting it into effect.

Evil begets evil because if evil does not constantly expand and find new sources of energetic sustenance its evil, its *distortion*, dies with the assimilation into balance and harmony. Love is the garlic to Wetiko's vampire. Evil, the absence of love, cannot exist in the presence of love. I think I see a way out of here. I have emphasised so many times over the decades that the Archons/Wetiko and their Cult are not all powerful. *They are not.* I don't care how it looks even now *they are not.* I have not called them little boys in short trousers for effect. I have said it because it is true. Wetiko's insatiable desire for power over others is not a sign of its omnipotence, but its insecurity. Paul Levy writes: 'Due to the primal fear which ultimately drives it and which it is driven to cultivate, wetiko's body politic has an intrinsic and insistent need for centralising power and control so as to create imagined safety for itself.' *Yeeeeees!* Exactly! Why does Wetiko want humans in an ongoing state of fear? Wetiko itself *is* fear and it is petrified of love. As evil is an absence of love, so love is an absence of fear. Love conquers all and *especially* Wetiko which *is* fear. Wetiko brought fear into the world when it wasn't here before. *Fear* was the 'fall', the fall into low-frequency ignorance and illusion – fear is False Emotion Appearing Real. The simulation is driven and energised by fear because Wetiko/Yaldabaoth (fear) *are* the simulation. Fear is the absence of love and Wetiko is the absence of love.

Wetiko today

We can now view current events from this level of perspective. The 'Covid' hoax has generated momentous amounts of ongoing fear, anxiety, depression and despair which have empowered Wetiko. No wonder people like Gates have been the instigators when they are Wetiko incarnate and exhibit every trait of Wetiko in the extreme. See how cold and unemotional these people are like Gates and his cronies, how dead of eye they are. That's Wetiko. Sabbatians are Wetiko and everything they control including the World Health Organization, Big Pharma and the 'vaccine' makers, national 'health'

hierarchies, corporate media, Silicon Valley, the banking system, and the United Nations with its planned transformation into world government. All are controlled and possessed by the Wetiko distortion into distorting human society in its image. We are with this knowledge at the gateway to understanding the world.

Divisions of race, culture, creed and sexuality are diversions to hide the real division between those possessed and influenced by Wetiko and those that are not. The ‘Covid’ hoax has brought both clearly into view. Human behaviour is not about race. Tyrants and dictatorships come in all colours and creeds. What unites the US president bombing the innocent and an African tribe committing genocide against another as in Rwanda? What unites them? *Wetiko*. All wars are Wetiko, all genocide is Wetiko, all hunger over centuries in a world of plenty is Wetiko. Children going to bed hungry, including in the West, is Wetiko. Cult-generated Woke racial divisions that focus on the body are designed to obscure the reality that divisions in behaviour are manifestations of mind, not body. Obsession with body identity and group judgement is a means to divert attention from the real source of behaviour – mind and perception. Conflict sown by the Woke both within themselves and with their target groups are Wetiko providing lunch for itself through still more agents of the division, chaos, and fear on which it feeds. The Cult is seeking to assimilate the entirety of humanity and all children and young people into the Wetiko frequency by manipulating them into states of fear and despair. Witness all the suicide and psychological unravelling since the spring of 2020. Wetiko psychopaths want to impose a state of unquestioning obedience to authority which is no more than a conduit for Wetiko to enforce its will and assimilate humanity into itself. It needs us to believe that resistance is futile when it fears resistance and even more so the game-changing non-cooperation with its impositions. It can use violent resistance for its benefit. Violent impositions and violent resistance are *both* Wetiko. The Power of Love with its Power of No will sweep Wetiko from our world. Wetiko and its Cult know that. They just don’t want us to know.

AI Wetiko

This brings me to AI or artificial intelligence and something else Wetikos don't want us to know. What is AI *really*? I know about computer code algorithms and AI that learns from data input. These, however, are more diversions, the expeditionary force, for the real AI that they want to connect to the human brain as promoted by Silicon Valley Wetikos like Kurzweil. What is this AI? It is the frequency of *Wetiko*, the frequency of the Archons. The connection of AI to the human brain is the connection of the Wetiko frequency to create a Wetiko hive mind and complete the job of assimilation. The hive mind is planned to be controlled from Israel and China which are both 100 percent owned by Wetiko Sabbatians. The assimilation process has been going on minute by minute in the 'smart' era which fused with the 'Covid' era. We are told that social media is scrambling the minds of the young and changing their personality. This is true, but what is social media? Look more deeply at how it works, how it creates divisions and conflict, the hostility and cruelty, the targeting of people until they are destroyed. That's Wetiko. Social media is manipulated to tune people to the Wetiko frequency with all the emotional exploitation tricks employed by platforms like Facebook and its Wetiko front man, Zuckerberg. Facebook's Instagram announced a new platform for children to overcome a legal bar on them using the main site. This is more Wetiko exploitation and manipulation of kids. Amnesty International likened the plan to foxes offering to guard the henhouse and said it was incompatible with human rights. Since when did Wetiko or Zuckerberg (I repeat myself) care about that? Would Brin and Page at Google, Wojcicki at YouTube, Bezos at Amazon and whoever the hell runs Twitter act as they do if they were not channelling Wetiko? Would those who are developing technologies for no other reason than human control? How about those designing and selling technologies to kill people and Big Pharma drug and 'vaccine' producers who know they will end or devastate lives? Quite a thought for these people to consider is that if you are Wetiko in a human life you are Wetiko on the 'other side' unless your frequency

changes and that can only change by a change of perception which becomes a change of behaviour. Where Gates is going does not bear thinking about although perhaps that's exactly where he wants to go. Either way, that's where he's going. His frequency will make it so.

The frequency lair

I have been saying for a long time that a big part of the addiction to smartphones and devices is that a frequency is coming off them that entraps the mind. People spend ages on their phones and sometimes even a minute or so after they put them down they pick them up again and it all repeats. 'Covid' lockdowns will have increased this addiction a million times for obvious reasons. Addictions to alcohol overindulgence and drugs are another way that Wetiko entraps consciousness to attach to its own. Both are symptoms of low-vibrational psychological distress which alcoholism and drug addiction further compound. Do we think it's really a coincidence that access to them is made so easy while potions that can take people into realms beyond the simulation are banned and illegal? I have explored smartphone addiction in other books, the scale is mind-blowing, and that level of addiction does not come without help. Tech companies that make these phones are Wetiko and they will have no qualms about destroying the minds of children. We are seeing again with these companies the Wetiko perceptual combination of psychopathic enforcers and weak and meek unquestioning compliance by the rank and file.

The global Smart Grid is the Wetiko Grid and it is crucial to complete the Cult endgame. The simulation is radiation and we are being deluged with technological radiation on a devastating scale. Wetiko frauds like Elon Musk serve Cult interests while occasionally criticising them to maintain his street-cred. 5G and other forms of Wi-Fi are being directed at the earth from space on a volume and scale that goes on increasing by the day. Elon Musk's (officially) SpaceX Starlink project is in the process of putting tens of thousands of satellites in low orbit to cover every inch of the planet with 5G and other Wi-Fi to create Kurzweil's global 'cloud' to which the

human mind is planned to be attached very soon. SpaceX has approval to operate 12,000 satellites with more than 1,300 launched at the time of writing and applications filed for 30,000 more. Other operators in the Wi-Fi, 5G, low-orbit satellite market include OneWeb (UK), Telesat (Canada), and AST & Science (US). Musk tells us that AI could be the end of humanity and then launches a company called Neuralink to connect the human brain to computers. Musk's (in theory) Tesla company is building electric cars and the driverless vehicles of the smart control grid. As frauds and bullshitters go Elon Musk in my opinion is Major League.

5G and technological radiation in general are destructive to human health, genetics and psychology and increasing the strength of artificial radiation underpins the five-sense perceptual bubbles which are themselves expressions of radiation or electromagnetism. Freedom activist John Whitehead was so right with his 'databit by databit, we are building our own electronic concentration camps'. The Smart Grid and 5G is a means to control the human mind and infuse perceptual information into The Field to influence anyone in sync with its frequency. You can change perception and behaviour en masse if you can manipulate the population into those levels of frequency and this is happening all around us today. The arrogance of Musk and his fellow Cult operatives knows no bounds in the way that we see with Gates. Musk's satellites are so many in number already they are changing the night sky when viewed from Earth. The astronomy community has complained about this and they have seen nothing yet. Some consequences of Musk's Wetiko hubris include: Radiation; visible pollution of the night sky; interference with astronomy and meteorology; ground and water pollution from intensive use of increasingly many spaceports; accumulating space debris; continual deorbiting and burning up of aging satellites, polluting the atmosphere with toxic dust and smoke; and ever-increasing likelihood of collisions. A collective public open letter of complaint to Musk said:

We are writing to you ... because SpaceX is in process of surrounding the Earth with a network of thousands of satellites whose very purpose is to irradiate every square inch of the

Earth. SpaceX, like everyone else, is treating the radiation as if it were not there. As if the mitochondria in our cells do not depend on electrons moving undisturbed from the food we digest to the oxygen we breathe.

As if our nervous systems and our hearts are not subject to radio frequency interference like any piece of electronic equipment. As if the cancer, diabetes, and heart disease that now afflict a majority of the Earth's population are not metabolic diseases that result from interference with our cellular machinery. As if insects everywhere, and the birds and animals that eat them, are not starving to death as a result.

People like Musk and Gates believe in their limitless Wetiko arrogance that they can do whatever they like to the world because they own it. Consequences for humanity are irrelevant. It's absolutely time that we stopped taking this shit from these self-styled masters of the Earth when you consider where this is going.

Why is the Cult so anti-human?

I hear this question often: Why would they do this when it will affect them, too? Ah, but will it? Who is this *them*? Forget their bodies. They are just vehicles for Wetiko consciousness. When you break it all down to the foundations we are looking at a state of severely distorted consciousness targeting another state of consciousness for assimilation. The rest is detail. The simulation is the fly-trap in which unique sensations of the five senses create a cycle of addiction called reincarnation. Renegade Minds see that everything which happens in our reality is a smaller version of the whole picture in line with the holographic principle. Addiction to the radiation of smart technology is a smaller version of addiction to the whole simulation. Connecting the body/brain to AI is taking that addiction on a giant step further to total ongoing control by assimilating human incarnate consciousness into Wetiko. I have watched during the 'Covid' hoax how many are becoming ever more profoundly attached to Wetiko's perceptual calling cards of aggressive response to any other point of view ('There is no other god but me'), psychopathic lack of compassion and empathy, and servile submission to the narrative and will of authority. Wetiko is the psychopaths *and* subservience to psychopaths. The Cult of Wetiko is

so anti-human because it is *not* human. It embarked on a mission to destroy human by targeting everything that it means to be human and to survive as human. ‘Covid’ is not the end, just a means to an end. The Cult with its Wetiko consciousness is seeking to change Earth systems, including the atmosphere, to suit them, not humans. The gathering bombardment of 5G alone from ground and space is dramatically changing The Field with which the five senses interact. There is so much more to come if we sit on our hands and hope it will all go away. It is not meant to go away. It is meant to get ever more extreme and we need to face that while we still can – just.

Carbon dioxide is the gas of life. Without that human is over. Kaput, gone, history. No natural world, no human. The Cult has created a cock and bull story about carbon dioxide and climate change to justify its reduction to the point where Gates and the ignoramus Biden ‘climate chief’ John Kerry want to suck it out of the atmosphere. Kerry wants to do this because his master Gates does. Wetikos have made the gas of life a demon with the usual support from the Wokers of Extinction Rebellion and similar organisations and the bewildered puppet-child that is Greta Thunberg who was put on the world stage by Klaus Schwab and the World Economic Forum. The name Extinction Rebellion is both ironic and as always Wetiko inversion. The gas that we need to survive must be reduced to save us from extinction. The most basic need of human is oxygen and we now have billions walking around in face nappies depriving body and brain of this essential requirement of human existence. More than that 5G at 60 gigahertz interacts with the oxygen molecule to reduce the amount of oxygen the body can absorb into the bloodstream. The obvious knock-on consequences of that for respiratory and cognitive problems and life itself need no further explanation. Psychopaths like Musk are assembling a global system of satellites to deluge the human atmosphere with this insanity. The man should be in jail. Here we have two most basic of human needs, oxygen and carbon dioxide, being dismantled.

Two others, water and food, are getting similar treatment with the United Nations Agendas 21 and 2030 – the Great Reset – planning to

centrally control all water and food supplies. People will not even own rain water that falls on their land. Food is affected at the most basic level by reducing carbon dioxide. We have genetic modification or GMO infiltrating the food chain on a mass scale, pesticides and herbicides polluting the air and destroying the soil. Freshwater fish that provide livelihoods for 60 million people and feed hundreds of millions worldwide are being 'pushed to the brink' according the conservationists while climate change is the only focus. Now we have Gates and Schwab wanting to dispense with current food sources all together and replace them with a synthetic version which the Wetiko Cult would control in terms of production and who eats and who doesn't. We have been on the Totalitarian Tiptoe to this for more than 60 years as food has become ever more processed and full of chemical shite to the point today when it's not natural food at all. As Dr Tom Cowan says: 'If it has a label don't eat it.' Bill Gates is now the biggest owner of farmland in the United States and he does nothing without an ulterior motive involving the Cult. Klaus Schwab wrote: 'To feed the world in the next 50 years we will need to produce as much food as was produced in the last 10,000 years ... food security will only be achieved, however, if regulations on genetically modified foods are adapted to reflect the reality that gene editing offers a precise, efficient and safe method of improving crops.' Liar. People and the world are being targeted with aluminium through vaccines, chemtrails, food, drink cans, and endless other sources when aluminium has been linked to many health issues including dementia which is increasing year after year. Insects, bees and wildlife essential to the food chain are being deleted by pesticides, herbicides and radiation which 5G is dramatically increasing with 6G and 7G to come. The pollinating bee population is being devastated while wildlife including birds, dolphins and whales are having their natural radar blocked by the effects of ever-increasing radiation. In the summer windscreens used to be splattered with insects so numerous were they. It doesn't happen now. Where have they gone?

Synthetic everything

The Cult is introducing genetically-modified versions of trees, plants and insects including a Gates-funded project to unleash hundreds of millions of genetically-modified, lab-altered and patented male mosquitoes to mate with wild mosquitoes and induce genetic flaws that cause them to die out. Clinically-insane Gates-funded Japanese researchers have developed mosquitos that spread vaccine and are dubbed 'flying vaccinators'. Gates is funding the modification of weather patterns in part to sell the myth that this is caused by carbon dioxide and he's funding geoengineering of the skies to change the atmosphere. Some of this came to light with the Gates-backed plan to release tonnes of chalk into the atmosphere to 'deflect the Sun and cool the planet'. Funny how they do this while the heating effect of the Sun is not factored into climate projections focussed on carbon dioxide. The reason is that they want to reduce carbon dioxide (so don't mention the Sun), but at the same time they do want to reduce the impact of the Sun which is so essential to human life and health. I have mentioned the sun-cholesterol-vitamin D connection as they demonise the Sun with warnings about skin cancer (caused by the chemicals in sun cream they tell you to splash on). They come from the other end of the process with statin drugs to reduce cholesterol that turns sunlight into vitamin D. A lack of vitamin D leads to a long list of health effects and how vitamin D levels must have fallen with people confined to their homes over 'Covid'. Gates is funding other forms of geoengineering and most importantly chemtrails which are dropping heavy metals, aluminium and self-replicating nanotechnology onto the Earth which is killing the natural world. See *Everything You Need To Know, But Have Never Been Told* for the detailed background to this.

Every human system is being targeted for deletion by a force that's not human. The Wetiko Cult has embarked on the process of transforming the human body from biological to synthetic biological as I have explained. Biological is being replaced by the artificial and synthetic – Archontic 'countermimicry' – right across human society. The plan eventually is to dispense with the human body altogether

and absorb human consciousness – which it wouldn't really be by then – into cyberspace (the simulation which is Wetiko/Yaldabaoth). Preparations for that are already happening if people would care to look. The alternative media rightly warns about globalism and 'the globalists', but this is far bigger than that and represents the end of the human race as we know it. The 'bad copy' of prime reality that Gnostics describe was a bad copy of harmony, wonder and beauty to start with before Wetiko/Yaldabaoth set out to change the simulated 'copy' into something very different. The process was slow to start with. Entrapped humans in the simulation timeline were not technologically aware and they had to be brought up to intellectual speed while being suppressed spiritually to the point where they could build their own prison while having no idea they were doing so. We have now reached that stage where technological intellect has the potential to destroy us and that's why events are moving so fast. Central American shaman Don Juan Matus said:

Think for a moment, and tell me how you would explain the contradictions between the intelligence of man the engineer and the stupidity of his systems of belief, or the stupidity of his contradictory behaviour. Sorcerers believe that the predators have given us our systems of beliefs, our ideas of good and evil; our social mores. They are the ones who set up our dreams of success or failure. They have given us covetousness, greed, and cowardice. It is the predator who makes us complacent, routinary, and egomaniacal.

In order to keep us obedient and meek and weak, the predators engaged themselves in a stupendous manoeuvre – stupendous, of course, from the point of view of a fighting strategist; a horrendous manoeuvre from the point of those who suffer it. They gave us their mind. The predators' mind is baroque, contradictory, morose, filled with the fear of being discovered any minute now.

For 'predators' see Wetiko, Archons, Yaldabaoth, Jinn, and all the other versions of the same phenomenon in cultures and religions all over the world. The theme is always the same because it's true and it's real. We have reached the point where we have to deal with it. The question is – how?

Don't fight – walk away

I thought I'd use a controversial subheading to get things moving in terms of our response to global fascism. What do you mean 'don't fight'? What do you mean 'walk away'? We've got to fight. We can't walk away. Well, it depends what we mean by fight and walk away. If fighting means physical combat we are playing Wetiko's game and falling for its trap. It wants us to get angry, aggressive, and direct hate and hostility at the enemy we think we must fight. Every war, every battle, every conflict, has been fought with Wetiko leading both sides. It's what it does. Wetiko wants a fight, anywhere, any place. Just hit me, son, so I can hit you back. Wetiko hits Wetiko and Wetiko hits Wetiko in return. I am very forthright as you can see in exposing Wetikos of the Cult, but I don't hate them. I refuse to hate them. It's what they want. What you hate you become. What you *fight* you become. Wokers, 'anti-haters' and 'anti-fascists' prove this every time they reach for their keyboards or don their balaclavas. By walk away I mean to disengage from Wetiko which includes ceasing to cooperate with its tyranny. Paul Levy says of Wetiko:

The way to 'defeat' evil is not to try to destroy it (for then, in playing evil's game, we have already lost), but rather, to find the invulnerable place within ourselves where evil is unable to vanquish us – this is to truly 'win' our battle with evil.

Wetiko is everywhere in human society and it's been on steroids since the 'Covid' hoax. Every shouting match over wearing masks has Wetiko wearing a mask and Wetiko not wearing one. It's an electrical circuit of push and resist, push and resist, with Wetiko pushing *and* resisting. Each polarity is Wetiko empowering itself. Dictionary definitions of 'resist' include 'opposing, refusing to accept or comply with' and the word to focus on is 'opposing'. What form does this take – setting police cars alight or 'refusing to accept or comply with'? The former is Wetiko opposing Wetiko while the other points the way forward. This is the difference between those aggressively demanding that government fascism must be obeyed who stand in stark contrast to the great majority of Pushbackers. We saw this clearly with a march by thousands of Pushbackers against lockdown in London followed days later by a Woker-hijacked

protest in Bristol in which police cars were set on fire. Masks were virtually absent in London and widespread in Bristol. Wetiko wants lockdown on every level of society and infuses its aggression to police it through its unknowing stooges. Lockdown protesters are the ones with the smiling faces and the hugs, The two blatantly obvious states of being – getting more obvious by the day – are the result of Wokers and their like becoming ever more influenced by the simulation Field of Wetiko and Pushbackers ever more influenced by The Field of a far higher vibration beyond the simulation. Wetiko can't invade the heart which is where most lockdown opponents are coming from. It's the heart that allows them to see through the lies to the truth in ways I will be highlighting.

Renegade Minds know that calmness is the place from which wisdom comes. You won't find wisdom in a hissing fit and wisdom is what we need in abundance right now. Calmness is not weakness – you don't have to scream at the top of your voice to be strong. Calmness is indeed a sign of strength. 'No' means I'm not doing it. NOOOO!!! doesn't mean you're not doing it even more. Volume does not advance 'No – I'm not doing it'. You are just not doing it. Wetiko possessed and influenced don't know how to deal with that. Wetiko wants a fight and we should not give it one. What it needs more than anything is our *cooperation* and we should not give that either. Mass rallies and marches are great in that they are a visual representation of feeling, but if it ends there they are irrelevant. You demand that Wetikos act differently? Well, they're not going to do it. They are Wetikos. We don't need to waste our time demanding that something doesn't happen when that will make no difference. We need to delete the means that *allows* it to happen. This, invariably, is our cooperation. You can demand a child stop firing a peashooter at the dog or you can refuse to buy the peashooter. If you provide the means you are cooperating with the dog being smacked on the nose with a pea. How can the authorities enforce mask-wearing if millions in a country refuse? What if the 74 million Pushbackers that voted for Trump in 2020 refused to wear masks, close their businesses or stay in their homes. It would be unenforceable. The

few control the many through the compliance of the many and that's always been the dynamic be it 'Covid' regulations or the Roman Empire. I know people can find it intimidating to say no to authority or stand out in a crowd for being the only one with a face on display; but it has to be done or it's over. I hope I've made clear in this book that where this is going will be far more intimidating than standing up now and saying 'No' – I will not cooperate with my own enslavement and that of my children. There might be consequences for some initially, although not so if enough do the same. The question that must be addressed is what is going to happen if we don't? It is time to be strong and unyieldingly so. No means no. Not here and there, but *everywhere* and *always*. I have refused to wear a mask and obey all the other nonsense. I will not comply with tyranny. I repeat: Fascism is not imposed by fascists – there are never enough of them. Fascism is imposed by the population acquiescing to fascism. *I will not do it.* I will die first, or my body will. Living meekly under fascism is a form of death anyway, the death of the spirit that Martin Luther King described.

Making things happen

We must not despair. This is not over till it's over and it's far from that. The 'fat lady' must refuse to sing. The longer the 'Covid' hoax has dragged on and impacted on more lives we have seen an awakening of phenomenal numbers of people worldwide to the realisation that what they have believed all their lives is not how the world really is. Research published by the system-serving University of Bristol and King's College London in February, 2021, concluded: 'One in every 11 people in Britain say they trust David Icke's take on the coronavirus pandemic.' It will be more by now and we have gathering numbers to build on. We must urgently progress from seeing the scam to ceasing to cooperate with it. Prominent German lawyer Reiner Fuellmich, also licenced to practice law in America, is doing a magnificent job taking the legal route to bring the psychopaths to justice through a second Nuremberg tribunal for crimes against humanity. Fuellmich has an impressive record of

beating the elite in court and he formed the German Corona Investigative Committee to pursue civil charges against the main perpetrators with a view to triggering criminal charges. Most importantly he has grasped the foundation of the hoax – the PCR test not testing for the ‘virus’ – and Christian Drosten is therefore on his charge sheet along with Gates frontman Tedros at the World Health Organization. Major players must be not be allowed to inflict their horrors on the human race without being brought to book. A life sentence must follow for Bill Gates and the rest of them. A group of researchers has also indicted the government of Norway for crimes against humanity with copies sent to the police and the International Criminal Court. The lawsuit cites participation in an internationally-planned false pandemic and violation of international law and human rights, the European Commission’s definition of human rights by coercive rules, Nuremberg and Hague rules on fundamental human rights, and the Norwegian constitution. We must take the initiative from hereon and not just complain, protest and react.

There are practical ways to support vital mass non-cooperation. Organising in numbers is one. Lockdown marches in London in the spring in 2021 were mass non-cooperation that the authorities could not stop. There were too many people. Hundreds of thousands walked the London streets in the centre of the road for mile after mile while the Face-Nappies could only look on. They were determined, but calm, and just *did it* with no histrionics and lots of smiles. The police were impotent. Others are organising group shopping without masks for mutual support and imagine if that was happening all over. Policing it would be impossible. If the store refuses to serve people in these circumstances they would be faced with a long line of trolleys full of goods standing on their own and everything would have to be returned to the shelves. How would they cope with that if it kept happening? I am talking here about moving on from complaining to being pro-active; from watching things happen to making things happen. I include in this our relationship with the police. The behaviour of many Face-Nappies

has been disgraceful and anyone who thinks they would never find concentration camp guards in the ‘enlightened’ modern era have had that myth busted big-time. The period and setting may change – Wetikos never do. I watched film footage from a London march in which a police thug viciously kicked a protestor on the floor who had done nothing. His fellow Face-Nappies stood in a ring protecting him. What he did was a criminal assault and with a crowd far outnumbering the police this can no longer be allowed to happen unchallenged. I get it when people chant ‘shame on you’ in these circumstances, but that is no longer enough. They *have* no shame those who do this. Crowds needs to start making a citizen’s arrest of the police who commit criminal offences and brutally attack innocent people and defenceless women. A citizen’s arrest can be made under section 24A of the UK Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act of 1984 and you will find something similar in other countries. I prefer to call it a Common Law arrest rather than citizen’s for reasons I will come to shortly. Anyone can arrest a person committing an indictable offence or if they have reasonable grounds to suspect they are committing an indictable offence. On both counts the attack by the police thug would have fallen into this category. A citizen’s arrest can be made to stop someone:

- Causing physical injury to himself or any other person
- Suffering physical injury
- Causing loss of or damage to property
- Making off before a constable can assume responsibility for him

A citizen’s arrest may also be made to prevent a breach of the peace under Common Law and if they believe a breach of the peace will happen or anything related to harm likely to be done or already done in their presence. This is the way to go I think – the Common Law version. If police know that the crowd and members of the public will no longer be standing and watching while they commit

their thuggery and crimes they will think twice about acting like Brownshirts and Blackshirts.

Common Law – common sense

Mention of Common Law is very important. Most people think the law is the law as in one law. This is not the case. There are two bodies of law, Common Law and Statute Law, and they are not the same. Common Law is founded on the simple premise of do no harm. It does not recognise victimless crimes in which no harm is done while Statute Law does. There is a Statute Law against almost everything. So what is Statute Law? Amazingly it's the law of the sea that was brought ashore by the Cult to override the law of the land which is Common Law. They had no right to do this and as always they did it anyway. They had to. They could not impose their will on the people through Common Law which only applies to do no harm. How could you stitch up the fine detail of people's lives with that? Instead they took the law of the sea, or Admiralty Law, and applied it to the population. Statute Law refers to all the laws spewing out of governments and their agencies including all the fascist laws and regulations relating to 'Covid'. The key point to make is that Statute Law is *contract law*. It only applies between *contracting* corporations. Most police officers don't even know this. They have to be kept in the dark, too. Long ago when merchants and their sailing ships began to trade with different countries a contractual law was developed called Admiralty Law and other names. Again it only applied to *contracts* agreed between *corporate* entities. If there is no agreed contract the law of the sea had no jurisdiction *and that still applies to its new alias of Statute Law*. The problem for the Cult when the law of the sea was brought ashore was an obvious one. People were not corporations and neither were government entities. To overcome the latter they made governments and all associated organisations corporations. All the institutions are *private corporations* and I mean governments and their agencies, local councils, police, courts, military, US states, the whole lot. Go to the

Dun and Bradstreet corporate listings website for confirmation that they are all corporations. You are arrested by a private corporation called the police by someone who is really a private security guard and they take you to court which is another private corporation.

Neither have jurisdiction over you unless you consent and *contract* with them. This is why you hear the mantra about law enforcement policing by *consent* of the people. In truth the people 'consent' only in theory through monumental trickery.

Okay, the Cult overcame the corporate law problem by making governments and institutions corporate entities; but what about people? They are not corporations are they? Ah ... well in a sense, and *only* a sense, they are. Not people exactly – the illusion of people. The Cult creates a corporation in the name of everyone at the time that their birth certificate is issued. Note birth/ *berth* certificate and when you go to court under the law of the sea on land you stand in a *dock*. These are throwbacks to the origin. My Common Law name is David Vaughan Icke. The name of the corporation created by the government when I was born is called Mr David Vaughan Icke usually written in capitals as MR DAVID VAUGHAN ICKE. That is not me, the living, breathing man. It is a fictitious corporate entity. The trick is to make you think that David Vaughan Icke and MR DAVID VAUGHAN ICKE are the same thing. *They are not*. When police charge you and take you to court they are prosecuting the corporate entity and not the living, breathing, man or woman. They have to trick you into identifying as the corporate entity and contracting with them. Otherwise they have no jurisdiction. They do this through a language known as legalese. Lawful and legal are not the same either. Lawful relates to Common Law and legal relates to Statute Law. Legalese is the language of Statue Law which uses terms that mean one thing to the public and another in legalese. Notice that when a police officer tells someone why they are being charged he or she will say at the end: 'Do you understand?' To the public that means 'Do you comprehend?' In legalese it means 'Do you stand under me?' Do you stand under my authority? If you say

yes to the question you are unknowingly agreeing to give them jurisdiction over you in a contract between two corporate entities.

This is a confidence trick in every way. Contracts have to be agreed between informed parties and if you don't know that David Vaughan Icke is agreeing to be the corporation MR DAVID VAUGHAN ICKE you cannot knowingly agree to contract. They are deceiving you and another way they do this is to ask for proof of identity. You usually show them a driving licence or other document on which your corporate name is written. In doing so you are accepting that you are that corporate entity when you are not. Referring to yourself as a 'person' or 'citizen' is also identifying with your corporate fiction which is why I made the Common Law point about the citizen's arrest. If you are approached by a police officer you identify yourself immediately as a living, breathing, man or woman and say 'I do not consent, I do not contract with you and I do not understand' or stand under their authority. I have a Common Law birth certificate as a living man and these are available at no charge from commonlawcourt.com. Businesses registered under the Statute Law system means that its laws apply. There are, however, ways to run a business under Common Law. Remember all 'Covid' laws and regulations are Statute Law – the law of *contracts* and you do not have to contract. This doesn't mean that you can kill someone and get away with it. Common Law says do no harm and that applies to physical harm, financial harm etc. Police are employees of private corporations and there needs to be a new system of non-corporate Common Law constables operating outside the Statute Law system. If you go to davidicke.com and put Common Law into the search engine you will find videos that explain Common Law in much greater detail. It is definitely a road we should walk.

With all my heart

I have heard people say that we are in a spiritual war. I don't like the term 'war' with its Wetiko dynamic, but I know what they mean. Sweep aside all the bodily forms and we are in a situation in which two states of consciousness are seeking very different realities.

Wetiko wants upheaval, chaos, fear, suffering, conflict and control. The other wants love, peace, harmony, fairness and freedom. That's where we are. We should not fall for the idea that Wetiko is all-powerful and there's nothing we can do. Wetiko is not all-powerful. It's a joke, pathetic. It doesn't have to be, but it has made that choice for now. A handful of times over the years when I have felt the presence of its frequency I have allowed it to attach briefly so I could consciously observe its nature. The experience is not pleasant, the energy is heavy and dark, but the ease with which you can kick it back out the door shows that its real power is in persuading us that it has power. It's all a con. Wetiko is a con. It's a trickster and not a power that can control us if we unleash our own. The con is founded on manipulating humanity to give its power to Wetiko which recycles it back to present the illusion that it has power when its power is *ours* that we gave away. This happens on an energetic level and plays out in the world of the seen as humanity giving its power to Wetiko authority which uses that power to control the population when the power is only the power the population has handed over. How could it be any other way for billions to be controlled by a relative few? I have had experiences with people possessed by Wetiko and again you can kick its arse if you do it with an open heart. Oh yes – the *heart* which can transform the world of perceived 'matter'.

We are receiver-transmitters and processors of information, but what information and where from? Information is processed into perception in three main areas – the brain, the heart and the belly. These relate to thinking, knowing, and emotion. Wetiko wants us to be head and belly people which means we think within the confines of the Matrix simulation and low-vibrational emotional reaction scrambles balance and perception. A few minutes on social media and you see how emotion is the dominant force. Woke is all emotion and is therefore thought-free and fact-free. Our heart is something different. It *knows* while the head *thinks* and has to try to work it out because it doesn't know. The human energy field has seven prime vortexes which connect us with wider reality ([Fig 23](#)). Chakra means

'wheels of light' in the Sanskrit language of ancient India. The main ones are: The crown chakra on top of the head; brow (or 'third eye') chakra in the centre of the forehead; throat chakra; heart chakra in the centre of the chest; solar plexus chakra below the sternum; sacral chakra beneath the navel; and base chakra at the bottom of the spine. Each one has a particular function or functions. We feel anxiety and nervousness in the belly where the sacral chakra is located and this processes emotion that can affect the colon to give people 'the shits' or make them 'shit scared' when they are nervous. Chakras all play an important role, but the Mr and Mrs Big is the heart chakra which sits at the centre of the seven, above the chakras that connect us to the 'physical' and below those that connect with higher realms (or at least should). Here in the heart chakra we feel love, empathy and compassion – 'My heart goes out to you'. Those with closed hearts become literally 'heart-less' in their attitudes and behaviour (see Bill Gates). Native Americans portrayed Wetiko with what Paul Levy calls a 'frigid, icy heart, devoid of mercy' (see Bill Gates).



Figure 23: The chakra system which interpenetrates the human energy field. The heart chakra is the governor – or should be.

Wetiko trembles at the thought of heart energy which it cannot infiltrate. The frequency is too high. What it seeks to do instead is close the heart chakra vortex to block its perceptual and energetic influence. Psychopaths have 'hearts of stone' and emotionally-damaged people have 'heartache' and 'broken hearts'. The astonishing amount of heart disease is related to heart chakra

disruption with its fundamental connection to the ‘physical’ heart. Dr Tom Cowan has written an outstanding book challenging the belief that the heart is a pump and making the connection between the ‘physical’ and spiritual heart. Rudolph Steiner who was way ahead of his time said the same about the fallacy that the heart is a pump. *What?* The heart is not a pump? That’s crazy, right? Everybody knows that. Read Cowan’s *Human Heart, Cosmic Heart* and you will realise that the very idea of the heart as a pump is ridiculous when you see the evidence. How does blood in the feet so far from the heart get pumped horizontally up the body by the heart?? Cowan explains in the book the real reason why blood moves as it does. Our ‘physical’ heart is used to symbolise love when the source is really the heart vortex or spiritual heart which is our most powerful energetic connection to ‘out there’ expanded consciousness. That’s why we feel *knowing* – intuitive knowing – in the centre of the chest. Knowing doesn’t come from a process of thoughts leading to a conclusion. It is there in an instant all in one go. Our heart knows because of its connection to levels of awareness that *do* know. This is the meaning and source of intuition – intuitive *knowing*.

For the last more than 30 years of uncovering the global game and the nature of reality my heart has been my constant antenna for truth and accuracy. An American intelligence insider once said that I had quoted a disinformor in one of my books and yet I had only quoted the part that was true. He asked: ‘How do you do that?’ By using my heart antenna was the answer and anyone can do it. Heart-centred is how we are meant to be. With a closed heart chakra we withdraw into a closed mind and the bubble of five-sense reality. If you take a moment to focus your attention on the centre of your chest, picture a spinning wheel of light and see it opening and expanding. You will feel it happening, too, and perceptions of the heart like joy and love as the heart impacts on the mind as they interact. The more the chakra opens the more you will feel expressions of heart consciousness and as the process continues, and becomes part of you, insights and knowings will follow. An open

heart is connected to that level of awareness that knows all is *One*. You will see from its perspective that the fault-lines that divide us are only illusions to control us. An open heart does not process the illusions of race, creed and sexuality except as brief experiences for a consciousness that is all. Our heart does not see division, only unity (Figs 24 and 25). There's something else, too. Our hearts love to laugh. Mark Twain's quote that says 'The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter' is really a reference to the heart which loves to laugh with the joy of knowing the true nature of infinite reality and that all the madness of human society is an illusion of the mind. Twain also said: 'Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.' This is so true of Wetiko and the Cult. Their insecurity demands that they be taken seriously and their power and authority acknowledged and feared. We should do nothing of the sort. We should not get aggressive or fearful which their insecurity so desires. We should laugh in their face. Even in their no-face as police come over in their face-nappies and expect to be taken seriously. They don't take themselves seriously looking like that so why should we? Laugh in the face of intimidation. Laugh in the face of tyranny. You will see by its reaction that you have pressed all of its buttons. Wetiko does not know what to do in the face of laughter or when its targets refuse to concede their joy to fear. We have seen many examples during the 'Covid' hoax when people have expressed their energetic power and the string puppets of Wetiko retreat with their tail limp between their knees. Laugh – the world is bloody mad after all and if it's a choice between laughter and tears I know which way I'm going.



Figure 24: Head consciousness without the heart sees division and everything apart from everything else.



Figure 25: Heart consciousness sees everything as One.

Vaccines' and the soul

The foundation of Wetiko/Archon control of humans is the separation of incarnate five-sense mind from the infinite 'I' and closing the heart chakra where the True 'I' lives during a human life. The goal has been to achieve complete separation in both cases. I was interested therefore to read an account by a French energetic healer of what she said she experienced with a patient who had been given the 'Covid' vaccine. Genuine energy healers can sense information and consciousness fields at different levels of being which are referred to as 'subtle bodies'. She described treating the patient who later returned after having, without the healer's knowledge, two doses of the 'Covid vaccine'. The healer said:

I noticed immediately the change, very heavy energy emanating from [the] subtle bodies. The scariest thing was when I was working on the heart chakra, I connected with her soul: it was detached from the physical body, it had no contact and it was, as if it was floating in a state of total confusion: a damage to the consciousness that loses contact with the physical body, i.e. with our biological machine, there is no longer any communication between them.

I continued the treatment by sending light to the heart chakra, the soul of the person, but it seemed that the soul could no longer receive any light, frequency or energy. It was a very powerful experience for me. Then I understood that this substance is indeed used to detach consciousness so that this consciousness can no longer interact through this body that it possesses in life, where there is no longer any contact, no frequency, no light, no more energetic balance or mind.

This would create a human that is rudderless and at the extreme almost zombie-like operating with a fractional state of consciousness at the mercy of Wetiko. I was especially intrigued by what the healer said in the light of the prediction by the highly-informed Rudolf Steiner more than a hundred years ago. He said:

In the future, we will eliminate the soul with medicine. Under the pretext of a 'healthy point of view', there will be a vaccine by which the human body will be treated as soon as possible directly at birth, so that the human being cannot develop the thought of the existence of soul and Spirit. To materialistic doctors will be entrusted the task of removing the soul of humanity.

As today, people are vaccinated against this disease or that disease, so in the future, children will be vaccinated with a substance that can be produced precisely in such a way that people, thanks to this vaccination, will be immune to being subjected to the 'madness' of spiritual life. He would be extremely smart, but he would not develop a conscience, and that is the true goal of some materialistic circles.

Steiner said the vaccine would detach the physical body from the etheric body (subtle bodies) and 'once the etheric body is detached the relationship between the universe and the etheric body would become extremely unstable, and man would become an automaton'. He said 'the physical body of man must be polished on this Earth by spiritual will – so the vaccine becomes a kind of aryanique (Wetiko) force' and 'man can no longer get rid of a given materialistic feeling'. Humans would then, he said, become 'materialistic of constitution and can no longer rise to the spiritual'. I have been writing for years about DNA being a receiver-transmitter of information that connects us to other levels of reality and these 'vaccines' changing DNA can be likened to changing an antenna and what it can transmit and receive. Such a disconnection would clearly lead to changes in personality and perception. Steiner further predicted the arrival of AI. Big Pharma 'Covid vaccine' makers, expressions of Wetiko, are testing their DNA-manipulating evil on children as I write with a view to giving the 'vaccine' to babies. If it's a soul-body disconnecter – and I say that it is or can be – every child would be disconnected from 'soul' at birth and the 'vaccine' would create a closed system in which spiritual guidance from the greater self would play no part. This has been the ambition of Wetiko all

along. A Pentagon video from 2005 was leaked of a presentation explaining the development of vaccines to change behaviour by their effect on the brain. Those that believe this is not happening with the ‘Covid’ genetically-modifying procedure masquerading as a ‘vaccine’ should make an urgent appointment with Naivety Anonymous. Klaus Schwab wrote in 2018:

Neurotechnologies enable us to better influence consciousness and thought and to understand many activities of the brain. They include decoding what we are thinking in fine levels of detail through new chemicals and interventions that can influence our brains to correct for errors or enhance functionality.

The plan is clear and only the heart can stop it. With every heart that opens, every mind that awakens, Wetiko is weakened. Heart and love are far more powerful than head and hate and so nothing like a majority is needed to turn this around.

Beyond the Phantom

Our heart is the prime target of Wetiko and so it must be the answer to Wetiko. We *are* our heart which is part of one heart, the infinite heart. Our heart is where the true self lives in a human life behind firewalls of five-sense illusion when an imposter takes its place – *Phantom Self*; but our heart waits patiently to be set free any time we choose to see beyond the Phantom, beyond Wetiko. A Wetikoed Phantom Self can wreak mass death and destruction while the love of forever is locked away in its heart. The time is here to unleash its power and let it sweep away the fear and despair that is Wetiko. Heart consciousness does not seek manipulated, censored, advantage for its belief or religion, its activism and desires. As an expression of the One it treats all as One with the same rights to freedom and opinion. Our heart demands fairness for itself no more than for others. From this unity of heart we can come together in mutual support and transform this Wetikoed world into what reality is meant to be – a place of love, joy, happiness, fairness, justice and freedom. Wetiko has another agenda and that’s why the world is as

it is, but enough of this nonsense. Wetiko can't stay where hearts are open and it works so hard to keep them closed. Fear is its currency and its food source and love in its true sense has no fear. Why would love have fear when it knows it is *All That Is, Has Been, And Ever Can Be* on an eternal exploration of all possibility? Love in this true sense is not the physical attraction that passes for love. This can be an expression of it, yes, but Infinite Love, a love without condition, goes far deeper to the core of all being. It is the core of all being. Infinite reality was born from love beyond the illusions of the simulation. Love infinitely expressed is the knowing that all is One and the swiftly-passing experience of separation is a temporary hallucination. You cannot disconnect from Oneness; you can only perceive that you have and withdraw from its influence. This is the most important of all perception trickery by the mind parasite that is Wetiko and the foundation of all its potential for manipulation.

If we open our hearts, open the sluice gates of the mind, and redefine self-identity amazing things start to happen. Consciousness expands or contracts in accordance with self-identity. When true self is recognised as infinite awareness and label self – Phantom Self – is seen as only a series of brief experiences life is transformed. Consciousness expands to the extent that self-identity expands and everything changes. You see unity, not division, the picture, not the pixels. From this we can play the long game. No more is an experience something in and of itself, but a fleeting moment in the eternity of forever. Suddenly people in uniform and dark suits are no longer intimidating. Doing what your heart knows to be right is no longer intimidating and consequences for those actions take on the same nature of a brief experience that passes in the blink of an infinite eye. Intimidation is all in the mind. Beyond the mind there is no intimidation.

An open heart does not consider consequences for what it knows to be right. To do so would be to consider not doing what it knows to be right and for a heart in its power that is never an option. The Renegade Mind is really the Renegade Heart. Consideration of consequences will always provide a getaway car for the mind and

the heart doesn't want one. What is right in the light of what we face today is to stop cooperating with Wetiko in all its forms and to do it without fear or compromise. You cannot compromise with tyranny when tyranny always demands more until it has everything. Life is your perception and you are your destiny. Change your perception and you change your life. Change collective perception and we change the world.

*Come on people ... One human family, One heart, One goal ...
FREEEEEDOM!*

We must settle for nothing less.

Postscript

The big scare story as the book goes to press is the ‘Indian’ variant and the world is being deluged with propaganda about the ‘Covid catastrophe’ in India which mirrors in its lies and misrepresentations what happened in Italy before the first lockdown in 2020.

The *New York Post* published a picture of someone who had ‘collapsed in the street from Covid’ in India in April, 2021, which was actually taken during a gas leak in May, 2020. Same old, same old. Media articles in mid-February were asking why India had been so untouched by ‘Covid’ and then as their vaccine rollout gathered pace the alleged ‘cases’ began to rapidly increase. Indian ‘Covid vaccine’ maker Bharat Biotech was funded into existence by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (the pair announced their divorce in May, 2021, which is a pity because they so deserve each other). The Indian ‘Covid crisis’ was ramped up by the media to terrify the world and prepare people for submission to still more restrictions. The scam that worked the first time was being repeated only with far more people seeing through the deceit. Davidicke.com and Ickonic.com have sought to tell the true story of what is happening by talking to people living through the Indian nightmare which has nothing to do with ‘Covid’. We posted a letter from ‘Alisha’ in Pune who told a very different story to government and media mendacity. She said scenes of dying people and overwhelmed hospitals were designed to hide what was really happening – genocide and starvation. Alisha said that millions had already died of starvation during the ongoing lockdowns while government and media were lying and making it look like the ‘virus’:

Restaurants, shops, gyms, theatres, basically everything is shut. The cities are ghost towns. Even so-called 'essential' businesses are only open till 11am in the morning. You basically have just an hour to buy food and then your time is up.

Inter-state travel and even inter-district travel is banned. The cops wait at all major crossroads to question why you are traveling outdoors or to fine you if you are not wearing a mask.

The medical community here is also complicit in genocide, lying about hospitals being full and turning away people with genuine illnesses, who need immediate care. They have even created a shortage of oxygen cylinders.

This is the classic Cult modus operandi played out in every country. Alisha said that people who would not have a PCR test not testing for the 'virus' were being denied hospital treatment. She said the people hit hardest were migrant workers and those in rural areas. Most businesses employed migrant workers and with everything closed there were no jobs, no income and no food. As a result millions were dying of starvation or malnutrition. All this was happening under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a 100-percent asset of the Cult, and it emphasises yet again the scale of pure anti-human evil we are dealing with. Australia banned its people from returning home from India with penalties for trying to do so of up to five years in jail and a fine of £37,000. The manufactured 'Covid' crisis in India was being prepared to justify further fascism in the West. Obvious connections could be seen between the Indian 'vaccine' programme and increased 'cases' and this became a common theme. The Seychelles, the most per capita 'Covid vaccinated' population in the world, went back into lockdown after a 'surge of cases'.

Long ago the truly evil Monsanto agricultural biotechnology corporation with its big connections to Bill Gates devastated Indian farming with genetically-modified crops. Human rights activist Gurcharan Singh highlighted the efforts by the Indian government to complete the job by destroying the food supply to hundreds of millions with 'Covid' lockdowns. He said that 415 million people at the bottom of the disgusting caste system (still going whatever they say) were below the poverty line and struggled to feed themselves every year. Now the government was imposing lockdown at just the

time to destroy the harvest. This deliberate policy was leading to mass starvation. People may reel back at the suggestion that a government would do that, but Wetiko-controlled ‘leaders’ are capable of any level of evil. In fact what is described in India is in the process of being instigated worldwide. The food chain and food supply are being targeted at every level to cause world hunger and thus control. Bill Gates is not the biggest owner of farmland in America for no reason and destroying access to food aids both the depopulation agenda and the plan for synthetic ‘food’ already being funded into existence by Gates. Add to this the coming hyper-inflation from the suicidal creation of fake ‘money’ in response to ‘Covid’ and the breakdown of container shipping systems and you have a cocktail that can only lead one way and is meant to. The Cult plan is to crash the entire system to ‘build back better’ with the Great Reset.

'Vaccine' transmission

Reports from all over the world continue to emerge of women suffering menstrual and fertility problems after having the fake ‘vaccine’ and of the non-‘vaccinated’ having similar problems when interacting with the ‘vaccinated’. There are far too many for ‘coincidence’ to be credible. We’ve had menopausal women getting periods, others having periods stop or not stopping for weeks, passing clots, sometimes the lining of the uterus, breast irregularities, and miscarriages (which increased by 400 percent in parts of the United States). Non-‘vaccinated’ men and children have suffered blood clots and nose bleeding after interaction with the ‘vaccinated’. Babies have died from the effects of breast milk from a ‘vaccinated’ mother. Awake doctors – the small minority – speculated on the cause of non-‘vaccinated’ suffering the same effects as the ‘vaccinated’. Was it nanotechnology in the synthetic substance transmitting frequencies or was it a straight chemical bioweapon that was being transmitted between people? I am not saying that some kind of chemical transmission is not one possible answer, but the foundation of all that the Cult does is frequency and

this is fertile ground for understanding how transmission can happen. American doctor Carrie Madej, an internal medicine physician and osteopath, has been practicing for the last 20 years, teaching medical students, and she says attending different meetings where the agenda for humanity was discussed. Madej, who operates out of Georgia, did not dismiss other possible forms of transmission, but she focused on frequency in search of an explanation for transmission. She said the Moderna and Pfizer 'vaccines' contained nano-lipid particles as a key component. This was a brand new technology never before used on humanity. 'They're using a nanotechnology which is pretty much little tiny computer bits ... nanobots or hydrogel.' Inside the 'vaccines' was 'this sci-fi kind of substance' which suppressed immune checkpoints to get into the cell. I referred to this earlier as the 'Trojan horse' technique that tricks the cell into opening a gateway for the self-replicating synthetic material and while the immune system is artificially suppressed the body has no defences. Madej said the substance served many purposes including an on-demand ability to 'deliver the payload' and using the nano 'computer bits' as biosensors in the body. 'It actually has the ability to accumulate data from your body, like your breathing, your respiration, thoughts, emotions, all kinds of things.'

She said the technology obviously has the ability to operate through Wi-Fi and transmit and receive energy, messages, frequencies or impulses. 'Just imagine you're getting this new substance in you and it can react to things all around you, the 5G, your smart device, your phones.' We had something completely foreign in the human body that had never been launched large scale at a time when we were seeing 5G going into schools and hospitals (plus the Musk satellites) and she believed the 'vaccine' transmission had something to do with this: '... if these people have this inside of them ... it can act like an antenna and actually transmit it outwardly as well.' The synthetic substance produced its own voltage and so it could have that kind of effect. This fits with my own contention that the nano receiver-transmitters are designed to connect people to the

Smart Grid and break the receiver-transmitter connection to expanded consciousness. That would explain the French energy healer's experience of the disconnection of body from 'soul' with those who have had the 'vaccine'. The nanobots, self-replicating inside the body, would also transmit the synthetic frequency which could be picked up through close interaction by those who have not been 'vaccinated'. Madej speculated that perhaps it was 5G and increased levels of other radiation that was causing the symptoms directly although interestingly she said that non-'vaccinated' patients had shown improvement when they were away from the 'vaccinated' person they had interacted with. It must be remembered that you can control frequency and energy with your mind and you can consciously create energetic barriers or bubbles with the mind to stop damaging frequencies from penetrating your field. American paediatrician Dr Larry Palevsky said the 'vaccine' was not a 'vaccine' and was never designed to protect from a 'viral' infection. He called it 'a massive, brilliant propaganda of genocide' because they didn't have to inject everyone to get the result they wanted. He said the content of the jabs was able to infuse any material into the brain, heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, sperm and female productive system. 'This is genocide; this is a weapon of mass destruction.' At the same time American colleges were banning students from attending if they didn't have this life-changing and potentially life-ending 'vaccine'. Class action lawsuits must follow when the consequences of this college fascism come to light. As the book was going to press came reports about fertility effects on sperm in 'vaccinated' men which would absolutely fit with what I have been saying and hospitals continued to fill with 'vaccine' reactions. Another question is what about transmission via blood transfusions? The NHS has extended blood donation restrictions from seven days after a 'Covid vaccination' to 28 days after even a sore arm reaction.

I said in the spring of 2020 that the then touted 'Covid vaccine' would be ongoing each year like the flu jab. A year later Pfizer CEO, the appalling Albert Bourla, said people would 'likely' need a 'booster dose' of the 'vaccine' within 12 months of getting 'fully

'vaccinated' and then a yearly shot. 'Variants will play a key role', he said confirming the point. Johnson & Johnson CEO Alex Gorsky also took time out from his 'vaccine' disaster to say that people may need to be vaccinated against 'Covid-19' each year. UK Health Secretary, the psychopath Matt Hancock, said additional 'boosters' would be available in the autumn of 2021. This is the trap of the 'vaccine passport'. The public will have to accept every last 'vaccine' they introduce, including for the fake 'variants', or it would cease to be valid. The only other way in some cases would be continuous testing with a test not testing for the 'virus' and what is on the swabs constantly pushed up your noise towards the brain every time?

'Vaccines' changing behaviour

I mentioned in the body of the book how I believed we would see gathering behaviour changes in the 'vaccinated' and I am already hearing such comments from the non-'vaccinated' describing behaviour changes in friends, loved ones and work colleagues. This will only increase as the self-replicating synthetic material and nanoparticles expand in body and brain. An article in the *Guardian* in 2016 detailed research at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville which developed a new method for controlling brain circuits associated with complex animal behaviour. The method, dubbed 'magnetogenetics', involves genetically-engineering a protein called ferritin, which stores and releases iron, to create a magnetised substance – 'Magneto' – that can activate specific groups of nerve cells from a distance. This is claimed to be an advance on other methods of brain activity manipulation known as optogenetics and chemogenetics (the Cult has been developing methods of brain control for a long time). The ferritin technique is said to be non-invasive and able to activate neurons 'rapidly and reversibly'. In other words, human thought and perception. The article said that earlier studies revealed how nerve cell proteins 'activated by heat and mechanical pressure can be genetically engineered so that they become sensitive to radio waves and magnetic fields, by attaching them to an iron-storing protein called ferritin, or to inorganic

paramagnetic particles'. Sensitive to radio waves and magnetic fields? You mean like 5G, 6G and 7G? This is the human-AI Smart Grid hive mind we are talking about. The *Guardian* article said:

... the researchers injected Magneto into the striatum of freely behaving mice, a deep brain structure containing dopamine-producing neurons that are involved in reward and motivation, and then placed the animals into an apparatus split into magnetised and non-magnetised sections.

Mice expressing Magneto spent far more time in the magnetised areas than mice that did not, because activation of the protein caused the striatal neurons expressing it to release dopamine, so that the mice found being in those areas rewarding. This shows that Magneto can remotely control the firing of neurons deep within the brain, and also control complex behaviours.

Make no mistake this basic methodology will be part of the 'Covid vaccine' cocktail and using magnetics to change brain function through electromagnetic field frequency activation. The Pentagon is developing a 'Covid vaccine' using ferritin. Magnetics would explain changes in behaviour and why videos are appearing across the Internet as I write showing how magnets stick to the skin at the point of the 'vaccine' shot. Once people take these 'vaccines' anything becomes possible in terms of brain function and illness which will be blamed on 'Covid-19' and 'variants'. Magnetic field manipulation would further explain why the non-'vaccinated' are reporting the same symptoms as the 'vaccinated' they interact with and why those symptoms are reported to decrease when not in their company. Interestingly 'Magneto', a 'mutant', is a character in the Marvel Comic *X-Men* stories with the ability to manipulate magnetic fields and he believes that mutants should fight back against their human oppressors by any means necessary. The character was born Erik Lehnsherr to a Jewish family in Germany.

Cult-controlled courts

The European Court of Human Rights opened the door for mandatory 'Covid-19 vaccines' across the continent when it ruled in a Czech Republic dispute over childhood immunisation that legally

enforced vaccination could be ‘necessary in a democratic society’. The 17 judges decided that compulsory vaccinations did not breach human rights law. On the face of it the judgement was so inverted you gasp for air. If not having a vaccine infused into your body is not a human right then what is? Ah, but they said human rights law which has been specifically written to delete all human rights at the behest of the state (the Cult). Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights relates to the right to a private life. The crucial word here is ‘*except*’:

There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right EXCEPT such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others [My emphasis].

No interference *except* in accordance with the law means there *are no* ‘human rights’ *except* what EU governments decide you can have at their behest. ‘As is necessary in a democratic society’ explains that reference in the judgement and ‘in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others’ gives the EU a coach and horses to ride through ‘human rights’ and scatter them in all directions. The judiciary is not a check and balance on government extremism; it is a vehicle to enforce it. This judgement was almost laughably predictable when the last thing the Cult wanted was a decision that went against mandatory vaccination. Judges rule over and over again to benefit the system of which they are a part. Vaccination disputes that come before them are invariably delivered in favour of doctors and authorities representing the view of the state which owns the judiciary. Oh, yes, and we have even had calls to stop putting ‘Covid-19’ on death certificates within 28 days of a ‘positive test’ because it is claimed the practice makes the ‘vaccine’ appear not to work. They are laughing at you.

The scale of madness, inhumanity and things to come was highlighted when those not ‘vaccinated’ for ‘Covid’ were refused evacuation from the Caribbean island of St Vincent during massive volcanic eruptions. Cruise ships taking residents to the safety of another island allowed only the ‘vaccinated’ to board and the rest were left to their fate. Even in life and death situations like this we see ‘Covid’ stripping people of their most basic human instincts and the insanity is even more extreme when you think that fake ‘vaccine’-makers are not even claiming their body-manipulating concoctions stop ‘infection’ and ‘transmission’ of a ‘virus’ that doesn’t exist. St Vincent Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves said: ‘The chief medical officer will be identifying the persons already vaccinated so that we can get them on the ship.’ Note again the power of the chief medical officer who, like Whitty in the UK, will be answering to the World Health Organization. This is the Cult network structure that has overridden politicians who ‘follow the science’ which means doing what WHO-controlled ‘medical officers’ and ‘science advisers’ tell them. Gonsalves even said that residents who were ‘vaccinated’ after the order so they could board the ships would still be refused entry due to possible side effects such as ‘wooziness in the head’. The good news is that if they were woozy enough in the head they could qualify to be prime minister of St Vincent.

Microchipping freedom

The European judgement will be used at some point to justify moves to enforce the ‘Covid’ DNA-manipulating procedure. Sandra Ro, CEO of the Global Blockchain Business Council, told a World Economic Forum event that she hoped ‘vaccine passports’ would help to ‘drive forced consent and standardisation’ of global digital identity schemes: ‘I’m hoping with the desire and global demand for some sort of vaccine passport – so that people can get travelling and working again – [it] will drive forced consent, standardisation, and frankly, cooperation across the world.’ The lady is either not very bright, or thoroughly mendacious, to use the term ‘forced consent’.

You do not ‘consent’ if you are forced – you *submit*. She was describing what the plan has been all along and that’s to enforce a digital identity on every human without which they could not function. ‘Vaccine passports’ are opening the door and are far from the end goal. A digital identity would allow you to be tracked in everything you do in cyberspace and this is the same technique used by Cult-owned China to enforce its social credit system of total control. The ultimate ‘passport’ is planned to be a microchip as my books have warned for nearly 30 years. Those nice people at the Pentagon working for the Cult-controlled Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) claimed in April, 2021, they have developed a microchip inserted under the skin to detect ‘asymptomatic Covid-19 infection’ before it becomes an outbreak and a ‘revolutionary filter’ that can remove the ‘virus’ from the blood when attached to a dialysis machine. The only problems with this are that the ‘virus’ does not exist and people transmitting the ‘virus’ with no symptoms is brain-numbing bullshit. This is, of course, not a ruse to get people to be microchipped for very different reasons. DARPA also said it was producing a one-stop ‘vaccine’ for the ‘virus’ and all ‘variants’. One of the most sinister organisations on Planet Earth is doing this? Better have it then. These people are insane because Wetiko that possesses them is insane.

Researchers from the Salk Institute in California announced they have created an embryo that is part human and part monkey. My books going back to the 1990s have exposed experiments in top secret underground facilities in the United States where humans are being crossed with animal and non-human ‘extraterrestrial’ species. They are now easing that long-developed capability into the public arena and there is much more to come given we are dealing with psychiatric basket cases. Talking of which – Elon Musk’s scientists at Neuralink trained a monkey to play Pong and other puzzles on a computer screen using a joystick and when the monkey made the correct move a metal tube squirted banana smoothie into his mouth which is the basic technique for training humans into unquestioning compliance. Two Neuralink chips were in the monkey’s skull and

more than 2,000 wires ‘fanned out’ into its brain. Eventually the monkey played a video game purely with its brain waves. Psychopathic narcissist Musk said the ‘breakthrough’ was a step towards putting Neuralink chips into human skulls and merging minds with artificial intelligence. *Exactly.* This man is so dark and Cult to his DNA.

World Economic Fascism (WEF)

The World Economic Forum is telling you the plan by the statements made at its many and various events. Cult-owned fascist YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki spoke at the 2021 WEF Global Technology Governance Summit (see the name) in which 40 governments and 150 companies met to ensure ‘the responsible design and deployment of emerging technologies’. Orwellian translation: ‘Ensuring the design and deployment of long-planned technologies will advance the Cult agenda for control and censorship.’ Freedom-destroyer and Nuremberg-bound Wojcicki expressed support for tech platforms like hers to censor content that is ‘technically legal but could be harmful’. Who decides what is ‘harmful’? She does and they do. ‘Harmful’ will be whatever the Cult doesn’t want people to see and we have legislation proposed by the UK government that would censor content on the basis of ‘harm’ no matter if the information is fair, legal and provably true. Make that *especially* if it is fair, legal and provably true. Wojcicki called for a global coalition to be formed to enforce content moderation standards through automated censorship. This is a woman and mega-censor so self-deluded that she shamelessly accepted a ‘free expression’ award – *Wojcicki* – in an event sponsored by her own *YouTube*. They have no shame and no self-awareness.

You know that ‘Covid’ is a scam and Wojcicki a Cult operative when YouTube is censoring medical and scientific opinion purely on the grounds of whether it supports or opposes the Cult ‘Covid’ narrative. Florida governor Ron DeSantis compiled an expert panel with four professors of medicine from Harvard, Oxford, and Stanford Universities who spoke against forcing children and

vaccinated people to wear masks. They also said there was no proof that lockdowns reduced spread or death rates of 'Covid-19'. Cult-gofer Wojcicki and her YouTube deleted the panel video 'because it included content that contradicts the consensus of local and global health authorities regarding the efficacy of masks to prevent the spread of Covid-19'. This 'consensus' refers to what the Cult tells the World Health Organization to say and the WHO tells 'local health authorities' to do. Wojcicki knows this, of course. The panellists pointed out that censorship of scientific debate was responsible for deaths from many causes, but Wojcicki couldn't care less. She would not dare go against what she is told and as a disgrace to humanity she wouldn't want to anyway. The UK government is seeking to pass a fascist 'Online Safety Bill' to specifically target with massive fines and other means non-censored video and social media platforms to make them censor 'lawful but harmful' content like the Cult-owned Facebook, Twitter, Google and YouTube. What is 'lawful but harmful' would be decided by the fascist Blair-created Ofcom.

Another WEF obsession is a cyber-attack on the financial system and this is clearly what the Cult has planned to take down the bank accounts of everyone – except theirs. Those that think they have enough money for the Cult agenda not to matter to them have got a big lesson coming if they continue to ignore what is staring them in the face. The World Economic Forum, funded by Gates and fronted by Klaus Schwab, announced it would be running a 'simulation' with the Russian government and global banks of just such an attack called Cyber Polygon 2021. What they simulate – as with the 'Covid' Event 201 – they plan to instigate. The WEF is involved in a project with the Cult-owned Carnegie Endowment for International Peace called the WEF-Carnegie Cyber Policy Initiative which seeks to merge Wall Street banks, 'regulators' (I love it) and intelligence agencies to 'prevent' (arrange and allow) a cyber-attack that would bring down the global financial system as long planned by those that control the WEF and the Carnegie operation. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace sent an instruction to First World

War US President Woodrow Wilson not to let the war end before society had been irreversibly transformed.

The Wuhan lab diversion

As I close, the Cult-controlled authorities and lapdog media are systematically pushing ‘the virus was released from the Wuhan lab’ narrative. There are two versions – it happened by accident and it happened on purpose. Both are nonsense. The perceived existence of the never-shown-to-exist ‘virus’ is vital to sell the impression that there is actually an infective agent to deal with and to allow the endless potential for terrifying the population with ‘variants’ of a ‘virus’ that does not exist. The authorities at the time of writing are going with the ‘by accident’ while the alternative media is promoting the ‘on purpose’. Cable news host Tucker Carlson who has questioned aspects of lockdown and ‘vaccine’ compulsion has bought the Wuhan lab story. ‘Everyone now agrees’ he said. Well, I don’t and many others don’t and the question is *why* does the system and its media suddenly ‘agree’? When the media moves as one unit with a narrative it is always a lie – witness the hour by hour mendacity of the ‘Covid’ era. Why would this Cult-owned combination which has unleashed lies like machine gun fire suddenly ‘agree’ to tell the truth??

Much of the alternative media is buying the lie because it fits the conspiracy narrative, but it’s the *wrong* conspiracy. The real conspiracy is that *there is no virus* and that is what the Cult is desperate to hide. The idea that the ‘virus’ was released by accident is ludicrous when the whole ‘Covid’ hoax was clearly long-planned and waiting to be played out as it was so fast in accordance with the Rockefeller document and Event 201. So they prepared everything in detail over decades and then sat around strumming their fingers waiting for an ‘accidental’ release from a bio-lab? *What??* It’s crazy. Then there’s the ‘on purpose’ claim. You want to circulate a ‘deadly virus’ and hide the fact that you’ve done so and you release it down the street from the highest-level bio-lab in China? I repeat – *What??*

You would release it far from that lab to stop any association being made. But, no, we'll do it in a place where the connection was certain to be made. Why would you need to scam 'cases' and 'deaths' and pay hospitals to diagnose 'Covid-19' if you had a real 'virus'? What are sections of the alternative media doing believing this crap? Where were all the mass deaths in Wuhan from a 'deadly pathogen' when the recovery to normal life after the initial propaganda was dramatic in speed? Why isn't the 'deadly pathogen' now circulating all over China with bodies in the street? Once again we have the technique of tell them what they want to hear and they will likely believe it. The alternative media has its 'conspiracy' and with Carlson it fits with his 'China is the danger' narrative over years. China *is* a danger as a global Cult operations centre, but not for this reason. The Wuhan lab story also has the potential to instigate conflict with China when at some stage the plan is to trigger a Problem-Reaction-Solution confrontation with the West. Question everything – *everything* – and especially when the media agrees on a common party line.

Third wave ... fourth wave ... fifth wave ...

As the book went into production the world was being set up for more lockdowns and a 'third wave' supported by invented 'variants' that were increasing all the time and will continue to do so in public statements and computer programs, but not in reality. India became the new Italy in the 'Covid' propaganda campaign and we were told to be frightened of the new 'Indian strain'. Somehow I couldn't find it within myself to do so. A document produced for the UK government entitled 'Summary of further modelling of easing of restrictions – Roadmap Step 2' declared that a third wave was inevitable (of course when it's in the script) and it would be the fault of children and those who refuse the health-destroying fake 'Covid vaccine'. One of the computer models involved came from the Cult-owned *Imperial College* and the other from Warwick University which I wouldn't trust to tell me the date in a calendar factory. The document states that both models presumed extremely high uptake

of the ‘Covid vaccines’ and didn’t allow for ‘variants’. The document states: ‘The resurgence is a result of some people (mostly children) being ineligible for vaccination; others choosing not to receive the vaccine; and others being vaccinated but not perfectly protected.’ The mendacity takes the breath away. Okay, blame those with a brain who won’t take the DNA-modifying shots and put more pressure on children to have it as ‘trials’ were underway involving children as young as six months with parents who give insanity a bad name. Massive pressure is being put on the young to have the fake ‘vaccine’ and child age consent limits have been systematically lowered around the world to stop parents intervening. Most extraordinary about the document was its claim that the ‘third wave’ would be driven by ‘the resurgence in both hospitalisations and deaths … dominated by *those that have received two doses of the vaccine*, comprising around 60-70% of the wave respectively’. The predicted peak of the ‘third wave’ suggested 300 deaths per day with 250 of them *fully ‘vaccinated’ people*. How many more lies do acquiescers need to be told before they see the obvious? Those who took the jab to ‘protect themselves’ are projected to be those who mostly get sick and die? So what’s in the ‘vaccine’? The document went on:

It is possible that a summer of low prevalence could be followed by substantial increases in incidence over the following autumn and winter. Low prevalence in late summer should not be taken as an indication that SARS-CoV-2 has retreated or that the population has high enough levels of immunity to prevent another wave.

They are telling you the script and while many British people believed ‘Covid’ restrictions would end in the summer of 2021 the government was preparing for them to be ongoing. Authorities were awarding contracts for ‘Covid marshals’ to police the restrictions with contracts starting in July, 2021, and going through to January 31st, 2022, and the government was advertising for ‘Media Buying Services’ to secure media propaganda slots worth a potential £320 million for ‘Covid-19 campaigns’ with a contract not ending until March, 2022. The recipient – via a list of other front companies – was reported to be American media marketing giant Omnicom Group

Inc. While money is no object for ‘Covid’ the UK waiting list for all other treatment – including life-threatening conditions – passed 4.5 million. Meantime the Cult is seeking to control all official ‘inquiries’ to block revelations about what has really been happening and why. It must not be allowed to – we need Nuremberg jury trials in every country. The cover-up doesn’t get more obvious than appointing ultra-Zionist professor Philip Zelikow to oversee two dozen US virologists, public health officials, clinicians, former government officials and four American ‘charitable foundations’ to ‘learn the lessons’ of the ‘Covid’ debacle. The personnel will be those that created and perpetuated the ‘Covid’ lies while Zelikow is the former executive director of the 9/11 Commission who ensured that the truth about those attacks never came out and produced a report that must be among the most mendacious and manipulative documents ever written – see *The Trigger* for the detailed exposure of the almost unimaginable 9/11 story in which Sabbatians can be found at every level.

Passive no more

People are increasingly challenging the authorities with amazing numbers of people taking to the streets in London well beyond the ability of the Face-Nappies to stop them. Instead the Nappies choose situations away from the mass crowds to target, intimidate, and seek to promote the impression of ‘violent protestors’. One such incident happened in London’s Hyde Park. Hundreds of thousands walking through the streets in protest against ‘Covid’ fascism were ignored by the Cult-owned BBC and most of the rest of the mainstream media, but they delighted in reporting how police were injured in ‘clashes with protestors’. The truth was that a group of people gathered in Hyde Park at the end of one march when most had gone home and they were peacefully having a good time with music and chat. Face-Nappies who couldn’t deal with the full-march crowd then waded in with their batons and got more than they bargained for. Instead of just standing for this criminal brutality the crowd used their numerical superiority to push the Face-Nappies out of the

park. Eventually the Nappies turned and ran. Unfortunately two or three idiots in the crowd threw drink cans striking two officers which gave the media and the government the image they wanted to discredit the 99.9999 percent who were peaceful. The idiots walked straight into the trap and we must always be aware of potential agent provocateurs used by the authorities to discredit their targets.

This response from the crowd – the can people apart – must be a turning point when the public no longer stand by while the innocent are arrested and brutally attacked by the Face-Nappies. That doesn't mean to be violent, that's the last thing we need. We'll leave the violence to the Face-Nappies and government. But it does mean that when the Face-Nappies use violence against peaceful people the numerical superiority is employed to stop them and make citizen's arrests or Common Law arrests for a breach of the peace. The time for being passive in the face of fascism is over.

We are the many, they are the few, and we need to make that count before there is no freedom left and our children and grandchildren face an ongoing fascist nightmare.

COME ON PEOPLE – IT'S TIME.

One final thought ...

The power of love
A force from above
Cleaning my soul
Flame on burn desire
Love with tongues of fire
Purge the soul
Make love your goal

I'll protect you from the hooded claw
Keep the vampires from your door
When the chips are down I'll be around
With my undying, death-defying
Love for you

Envy will hurt itself
Let yourself be beautiful
Sparkling love, flowers
And pearls and pretty girls
Love is like an energy
Rushin' rushin' inside of me

This time we go sublime
Lovers entwine, divine, divine,
Love is danger, love is pleasure
Love is pure – the only treasure

I'm so in love with you
Purge the soul
Make love your goal

The power of love
A force from above
Cleaning my soul
The power of love
A force from above
A sky-scraping dove

Flame on burn desire
Love with tongues of fire
Purge the soul
Make love your goal

Frankie Goes To Hollywood

APPENDIX

Cowan-Kaufman-Morell Statement on Virus Isolation (SOVI)

Isolation: The action of isolating; the fact or condition of being isolated or standing alone; separation from other things or persons; solitariness

Oxford English Dictionary

The controversy over whether the SARS-CoV-2 virus has ever been isolated or purified continues. However, using the above definition, common sense, the laws of logic and the dictates of science, any unbiased person must come to the conclusion that the SARS-CoV-2 virus has never been isolated or purified. As a result, no confirmation of the virus' existence can be found. The logical, common sense, and scientific consequences of this fact are:

- the structure and composition of something not shown to exist can't be known, including the presence, structure, and function of any hypothetical spike or other proteins;
- the genetic sequence of something that has never been found can't be known;
- "variants" of something that hasn't been shown to exist can't be known;
- it's impossible to demonstrate that SARS-CoV-2 causes a disease called Covid-19.

In as concise terms as possible, here's the proper way to isolate, characterize and demonstrate a new virus. First, one takes samples (blood, sputum, secretions) from many people (e.g. 500) with symptoms which are unique and specific enough to characterize an illness. Without mixing these samples with ANY tissue or products that also contain genetic material, the virologist macerates, filters and ultracentrifuges i.e. *purifies* the specimen. This common virology technique, done for decades to isolate bacteriophages¹ and so-called giant viruses in every virology lab, then allows the virologist to demonstrate with electron microscopy thousands of identically sized and shaped particles. These particles are the isolated and purified virus.

These identical particles are then checked for uniformity by physical and/or microscopic techniques. Once the purity is determined, the particles may be further characterized. This would include examining the structure, morphology, and chemical composition of the particles. Next, their genetic makeup is characterized by extracting the genetic material directly from the purified particles and using genetic-sequencing techniques, such as Sanger sequencing, that have also been around for decades. Then one does an analysis to confirm that these uniform particles are exogenous (outside) in origin as a virus is conceptualized to be, and not the normal breakdown products of dead and dying tissues.² (As of May 2020, we know that virologists have no way to determine whether the particles they're seeing are viruses or just normal breakdown products of dead and dying tissues.)³

1 Isolation, characterization and analysis of bacteriophages from the haloalkaline lake Elmenteita, KenyaJuliah Khayeli Akhwale et al, PLOS One, Published: April 25, 2019.
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0215734> – accessed 2/15/21

2 "Extracellular Vesicles Derived From Apoptotic Cells: An Essential Link Between Death and Regeneration," Maojiao Li et al, Frontiers in Cell and Developmental Biology, 2020 October 2.
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcell.2020.573511/full> – accessed 2/15/21

3 "The Role of Extracellular Vesicles as Allies of HIV, HCV and SARS Viruses," Flavia Giannessi, et al, *Viruses*, 2020 May

If we have come this far then we have fully isolated, characterized, and genetically sequenced an exogenous virus particle. However, we still have to show it is causally related to a disease. This is carried out by exposing a group of healthy subjects (animals are usually used) to this isolated, purified virus in the manner in which the disease is thought to be transmitted. If the animals get sick with the same disease, as confirmed by clinical and autopsy findings, one has now shown that the virus actually causes a disease. This demonstrates infectivity and transmission of an infectious agent.

None of these steps has even been attempted with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, nor have all these steps been successfully performed for any so-called pathogenic virus. Our research indicates that a single study showing these steps does not exist in the medical literature.

Instead, since 1954, virologists have taken unpurified samples from a relatively few people, often less than ten, with a similar disease. They then minimally process this sample and inoculate this unpurified sample onto tissue culture containing usually four to six other types of material – all of which contain identical genetic material as to what is called a “virus.” The tissue culture is starved and poisoned and naturally disintegrates into many types of particles, some of which contain genetic material. Against all common sense, logic, use of the English language and scientific integrity, this process is called “virus isolation.” This brew containing fragments of genetic material from many sources is then subjected to genetic analysis, which then creates in a computer-simulation process the alleged sequence of the alleged virus, a so-called *in silico* genome. At no time is an actual virus confirmed by electron microscopy. At no time is a genome extracted and sequenced from an actual virus. This is scientific fraud.

The observation that the unpurified specimen — inoculated onto tissue culture along with toxic antibiotics, bovine fetal tissue, amniotic fluid and other tissues — destroys the kidney tissue onto which it is inoculated is given as evidence of the virus' existence and pathogenicity. This is scientific fraud.

From now on, when anyone gives you a paper that suggests the SARS-CoV-2 virus has been isolated, please check the methods sections. If the researchers used Vero cells or any other culture method, you know that their process was not isolation. You will hear the following excuses for why actual isolation isn't done:

1. There were not enough virus particles found in samples from patients to analyze.
2. Viruses are intracellular parasites; they can't be found outside the cell in this manner.

If No. 1 is correct, and we can't find the virus in the sputum of sick people, then on what evidence do we think the virus is dangerous or even lethal? If No. 2 is correct, then how is the virus spread from person to person? We are told it emerges from the cell to infect others. Then why isn't it possible to find it?

Finally, questioning these virology techniques and conclusions is not some distraction or divisive issue. Shining the light on this truth is essential to stop this terrible fraud that humanity is confronting. For, as we now know, if the virus has never been isolated, sequenced or shown to cause illness, if the virus is imaginary, then why are we wearing masks, social distancing and putting the whole world into prison?

Finally, if pathogenic viruses don't exist, then what is going into those injectable devices erroneously called "vaccines," and what is their purpose? This scientific question is the most urgent and relevant one of our time.

We are correct. The SARS-CoV2 virus does not exist.

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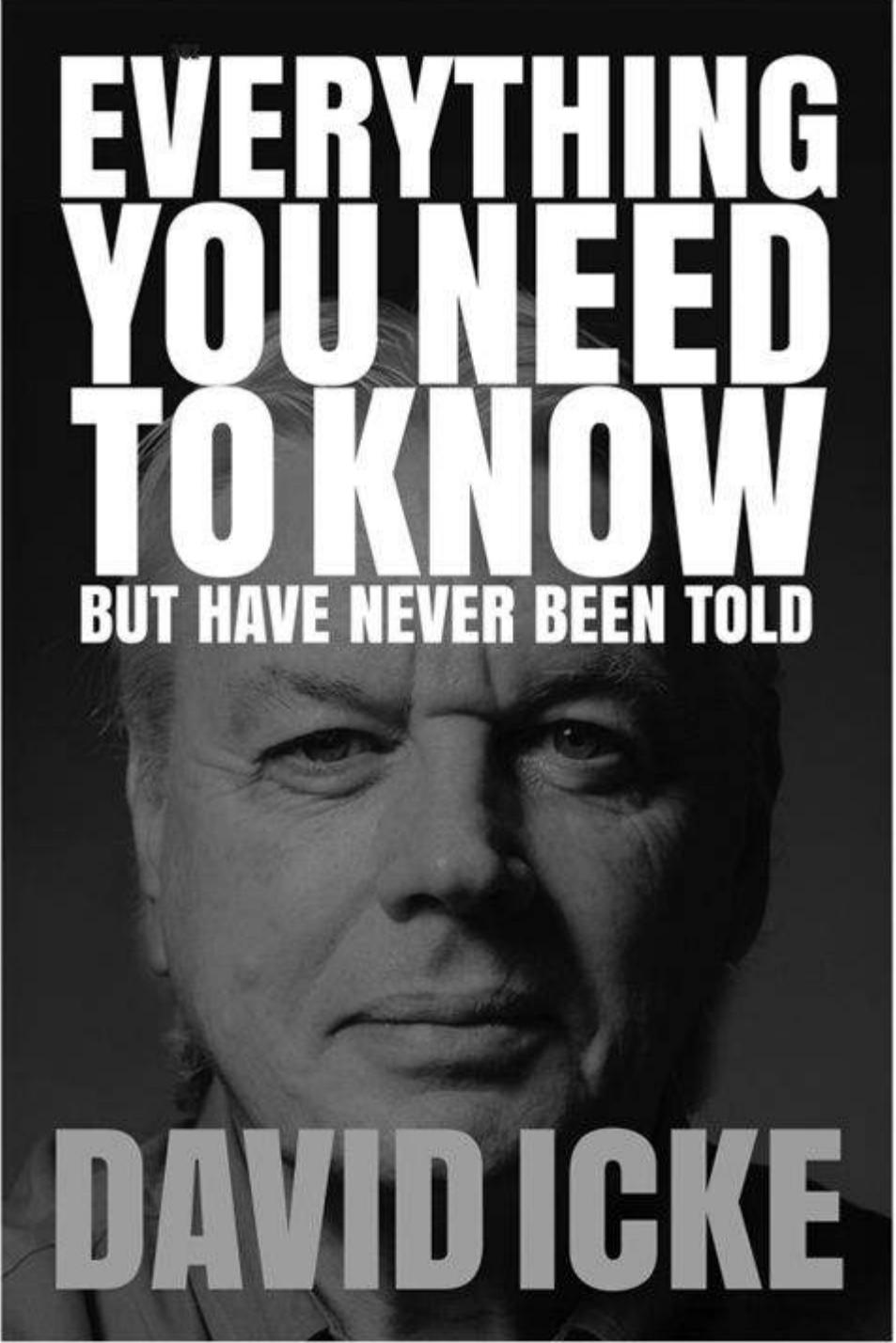
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RENEGADE

/'ren-i.gəd/

noun

A person who behaves in a rebelliously unconventional manner.

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