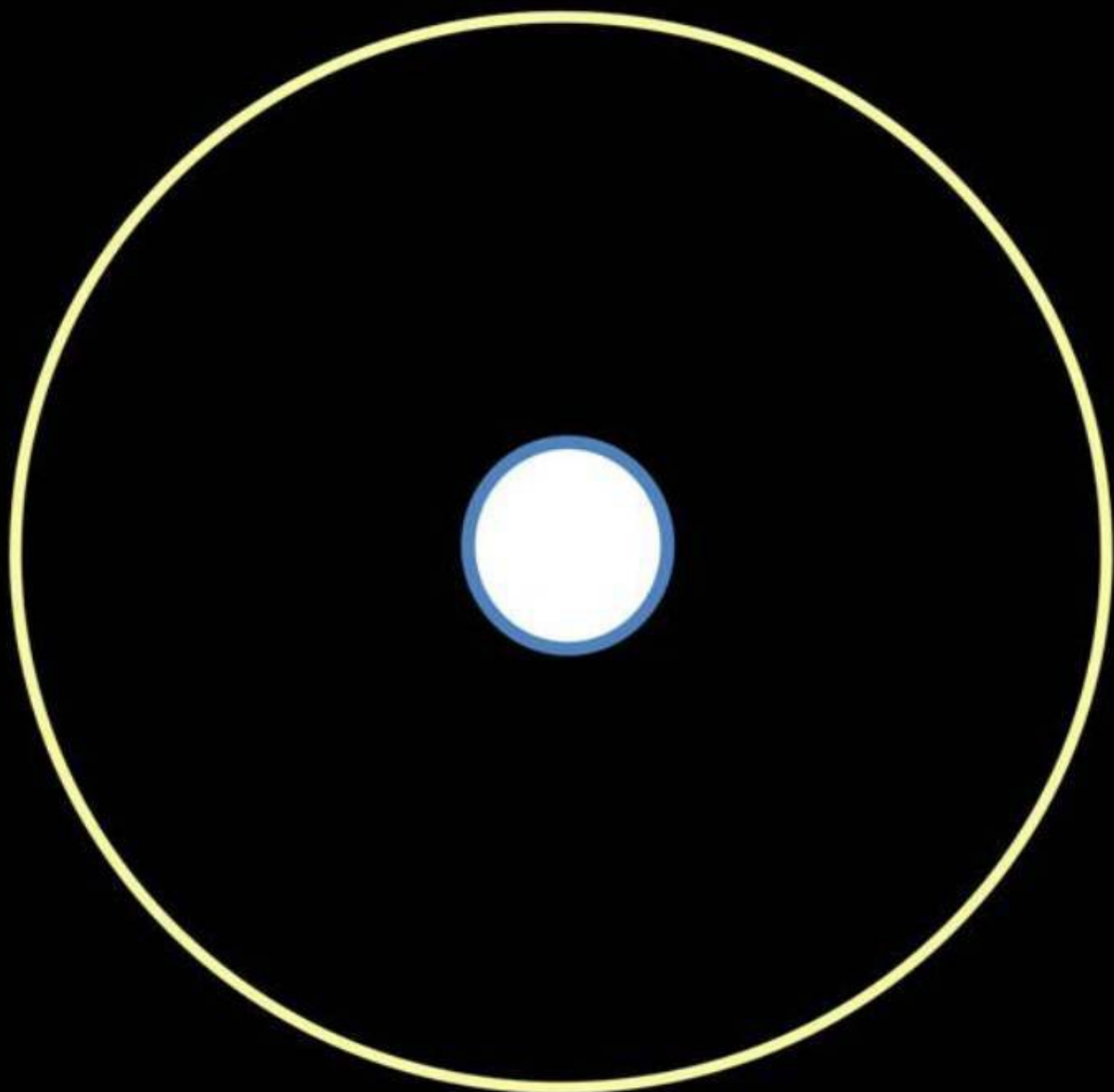


**BLACKISH WHITE CIRCLE**



**VITADUSHA GEHEIMNIS**

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*The source of Aura*

*By*

*Vitadusha Geheimnis*

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***Dedication:***

*“To the invisible-wandering mystics”*

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Reach me at [vitadushag@gmail.com](mailto:vitadushag@gmail.com) Appreciate your feedback and opinions.

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# PREFACE

Dear Reader,

This is a cross between Adult fiction and reality fiction.

The Novel starts off with young people studying in school, but don't mistake this as a book for youngsters. The seniors or the thirty plus age group will be pleasantly surprised when the book travels into higher & deeper subjects.

Dwyeth leads a normal school life, until a strange thing happens while playing a game. The game leads to searching the research department in the university. This further leads to a world of mystery, and invisible forces. A natural phenomenon assists him in discovering the Source which shows him **"Where do the dead go?"** It shows him the **scientific art of "Recycling Humans"** by Nature.

Seniors and Adults above eighteen, who like to know the passage of the dead and their subsequent recycling by Nature can enjoy the read.

The story takes place in the fictional west and the present day India. This is the first in the series - 'Linking the Invisible mystics'.

You'll come across many situations in India; some of which probably the developed nations would have been through earlier. There are important global ideas which everyone should appreciate. The author is not a native English speaker and speaks an Indian language. The story and perspectives provide a scientific proof of the ancient Indian philosophies.

# PART -1

# CHAPTER 1

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## *THE GAME*

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“Where is the Sun?” asked Maya, lying on her bed.

“It’s night nine o’clock; the sun has gone to other countries. The Sun wants us to sleep; it has gone to the other side where people are getting up after their sleep,” said Dwyeth.

“When does the Sun sleep?”

“The Sun does not sleep. It’s always awake. It shares its light and heat with all on our rotating planet, so half of the earth is dark and the other half is light.”

Maya is seven years old and is Dwyeth’s only sister. Sometimes, Dwyeth reads a bed time story to her. Their mother is a home maker and their father works for a power generation utility. She’ll be starting on her second grade and Dwyeth his eighth; when their school reopens after a month. They study in Oxshire High School in Oxshire; a small town in the south of Voyla. Voyla is an island nation extending a thousand kilometers north of the equator and an eight hundred to the south. It has a tropical climate in the south and deciduous temperate climate in the north.

It’s been a month since the school closed for annual summer holidays. Dwyeth and Maya have one more month of holidays to play with friends. Maya has a friend next door and they play in each other’s house during the day; by evening they go to the community play area with their mothers. Dwyeth goes to an agri university a couple of kilometers away from his house to play with his friends. The ‘Oxshire Agricultural University’ has many playgrounds. But unlike previous holidays, this time they never use any of the playgrounds to play. They have invented a new game ‘Seeknhit’ which has made all of them crazy. Ashling and Nak are Dwyeth’s best friends and classmates in school. They too live near

Oxshire Agricultural University and come to the university to play this game.

It was nine in the morning. "Dwyeth... Dwyeth," yelled Nak, on his bicycle outside Dwyeth's house. Dwyeth sprang from his seat paused the video game and rushed out. It was like an electric pulse generated from Nak's yelling.

"Ma, I'm leaving. Bye Maya," he informed his mother, Margit, and ran out grabbing his cap, wrist band and his bicycle.

"Nice. Where did you get these?" asked Dwyeth.

"C-Tubes." Nak has fitted a couple of reflectors to the spokes and a new sticker on the cross bar. They both headed to the university.

The university is built on five thousand acres of land. There are many departments each at a distance of two kilometers from one another with various crops cultivated in every patch of land between the departments. One can find different types of plants and trees all across the university, with a small board in front of some; describing its biological name, the category, its uses, medicinal properties if any and its distribution across the globe. A small canal runs across the university. No one can miss the strange forms of trees and crops in the Research Department. The red colored beans, violet tomatoes and other odd shaped vegetables and plants, makes the research department a creepy place. Add to this the black sun flower planted on the land outside the department makes it look haunted. The boys and girls typically avoid the research department. A botanical garden adjacent to the Research Department is frequented by families and couples.

Dwyeth and Nak enter the university gate as if they were the opening batsmen entering the stadium to bat, as now the whole university is their playground. Their game is large and it cannot be played in the designated playgrounds. Once inside Dwyeth and Nak start planning to play the game.

"I am going to make Mike lose today. I am going to hide in the Horticulture Department; I haven't seen anyone come there searching,"

said Dwyeth.

“No, the best place to hide is Fertilizers; no one has a clue about this place. No one takes a left from the forestry to this place,” said Nak.

They share their strategies with Ashling as well.

They head straight to their meeting place – the university canteen. Ashling and other local area friends also gather there.

The game –Seeknhit can be played by any number of players. Everyone needs to have a bicycle. The roads in the agricultural university is their play ground. Almost no vehicular traffic and neatly laid roads makes the university campus the best place to play this game.

They meet Ashling and the rest at the canteen. The rest of the five friends were Mike, Rebecca, Sharon, Ed and Barry. Everyone had a bicycle and all were ready to start the game. The game is played by each one taking turns to be the hunter chasing the rest of them. The game is played on the university streets and the hunter must chase down every one and hit them with a rubber ball. The ball should either hit the person or his cycle. No one should go away from the streets to hide anywhere else. Players can use all the designated streets and departments to hide. Since the university is very large there is an element of hide and seek, before the hunter starts to hit and score. The Research Department is not included in the play area and no one goes beyond that. If someone is being closely chased and does not want to get hit by the ball, they can raise their hand and choose to voluntarily get hunted. The hunter must keep hunting one after another until he hits everyone with the ball. Seeknhit is played for the first one hour in the entire university campus. After the first hour the designated play area is reduced to five adjacent departments. So, during the second hour, the element of hiding is reduced and the hunter can ‘Seeknhit’ anyone quite easily. After the second hour the game is played in the maze area and it becomes a matter of chasing and hitting. The maze area is a cross section of many roads laid around and in between two play grounds. There is no element of hiding in the last thirty minutes. Every game gets over in two and half hours or when the hunter hunts down everyone. Every hunt made in the

first hour earns three points, the second hour two points and the last thirty minutes one point. The points are counted from the first game when they started it two weeks back. Everyone gets a chance to become the hunter and the game is continued and carried forward to the next day. They stop the game by six every day.

In the two weeks, which has gone by Mike has taken the lead. He is the fastest one on the pedal; Dwyeth trails him followed by Barry. Everyone knows Barry's power and aim in hitting a moving target with the ball. So everyone gives him a higher striking range and raises their hand if he gets within striking range. Today it was Barry's turn to become the hunter.

They start the game. Barry waits for five minutes until the seven of them disappear in different directions. Barry and Dwyeth are equally good at cycling and both take the second place after Mike for speed. Speed alone does not make one win the game. Barry has designed a specific strategy to hunt down the players. No one has a clue of his strategy yet. He follows a specific route which he has analyzed and plotted after he played the game on the first day. He spent a lot of time analyzing the map of the university and found the best possible route. He has chosen all the crossroads from where he can spot everyone without missing any place or department. Wasting no time, he starts pedaling down his path. When he reaches a junction or a cross road, he quickly sees all the connecting roads and if he does not locate anyone, he keeps going on his path. He usually takes down at least three of them in the first hour, and has hunted four of them once in the first hour - his best. Mike holds the record of hunting down five of them in the first hour. Dwyeth has hunted four of them a couple of times in the first hour.

Barry has been hunting for the past twenty-five minutes and still he has not sighted anyone. He keeps going fast on his path. On a cross road he finds Sharon, Rebecca and Ed riding towards the Forestry Department. Barry gets excited on seeing three of them in one place and pursued them. By the time the three of them realize being chased, it was too late. Barry was less than hundred meters away from them. The three panicked and start cycling fast, as anytime they can get hit. Ed's cycle gets struck by the ball; Barry aimed for it, making his first 'kill'. Barry got

down to collect the ball and got back on to chase Rebecca and Sharon. Meanwhile, Rebecca and Sharon have started off wildly on different paths. He decided to chase and hunt Rebecca down, first. Within seconds, he was in striking distance, and Rebecca raised her hand to avoid getting hit with the brutal force and got voluntarily hunted. Barry further chased Sharon and hunted her down. Now he has hunted three of them in the first thirty minutes. Now he planned to hunt down two of them in the next thirty minutes. Even if he managed to hunt down one of them, he will be on par with Dwyeth.

He eagerly gets back on his bike and pedals down his path. After cycling for fifteen minutes he saw Ashling, Nak and Mike in the canteen. Anybody can take a quick five minute water or rest room break. Barry gets excited and rushed to hunt them down. All three have parked their cycles at different places outside the canteen and have gone inside. As soon as they saw Barry, they ran towards their cycles to escape. Barry first targets Mike -the difficult one to catch. As Mike ran towards his cycle, Barry aimed and threw the ball. The ball went past Mike without hitting him. Mike relieved, gets on his cycle and sprinted away. Barry regretted the miss badly; he again regrets for not having aimed at Mike's parked bicycle. By the time Barry collected the ball, Nak and Ashling have gone away from the canteen. He did not have the trouble to choose between the two as both went in the same direction. It was difficult to chase Mike so that option was ruled out.

Barry furiously chased Ashling and Nak, with his frustration high on having missed an opportunity to hunt Mike down. He closed in on Ashling, who gave up in a couple of minutes. Barry continued to pursue Nak, who was ahead of Ashling. Barry upon bringing down the gap to less than fifty meters from Nak aimed and flung the ball. The ball struck him like a stone on his back. Nak managed to stop his cycle without falling down from the impact and rubbed his back vigorously. Barry felt elated as he has equaled Mike's record and claimed the second position for hunting down five of them in the first hour, getting ahead of Dwyeth. He collected the ball and looked around for Mike. Mike waved at Barry and disappeared into one of the lanes. The first hour was getting over and now he has to Seeknhit Dwyeth and Mike in the second hour.

The second hour began. Barry again had analyzed a strategic route for the second hour within the designated departments and began riding on that path. Barry wished to hunt down the two of them in the second hour, as this will make him the second person to Seeknhit all of them in the first two hours. Only Mike has hunted all seven of them in the first two hours three times. Filled with more vigor and energy, Barry went riding on his strategic route. In ten minutes, he saw Mike again and planned to intercept him at a junction using a different route. But then, on his new route he saw Dwyeth. Dwyeth was riding across the canal and had not yet seen Barry. Barry changed his target to Dwyeth and planned to hit him from across the canal. . After nearing Dwyeth and at a comfortable distance, he aimed and propelled the ball. The ball swung across the canal and caught Dwyeth unaware. It hit him on his ears and he fell down in shock. Dwyeth got angry and his face became red. But he raised his thumb appreciating the throw across the canal and threw the ball back to Barry. Barry caught the ball and went back on his strategic route to hunt down the last person, Mike.

Barry kept cycling for the next twenty minutes, after which he sighted Mike near the botanical garden. He pursued Mike and had twenty five minutes left in the second hour. Mike saw Barry and cycled away from him. Barry went on for a wild chase. Mike knew that he was the last one to be hunted and did not want Barry to make a score on par with him. It was ten minutes into the chase; Mike was still in sight and it looked like Barry was doing well on a long chase. Barry pursued with more vigor and with his lungs on fire gave a good fight to Mike. Mike, after fifteen minutes of straight chase, was surprised by Barry's physical stamina.

Dwyeth and the rest of the guys were all hooked on to the chase. They followed them and kept a watch on the chase.

"Looks like Barry will hunt down Mike any minute now," said Nak.

"He is closing in on Mike," said Ashling.

"No way, he is just teasing Barry. No one can hunt down Mike," said Dwyeth.



As Dwyeth said, Mike kept teasing Barry and kept him out of his striking range. This went on until the second hour got over.

Now all of them came to the third part where the designated area was a maze of roads and everyone could see everyone. Those who were already hunted sat on the ground inside the maze of roads and the hunter resumed the hunt in the maze. Barry started chasing Mike. Barry tries out all routes to get close to Mike, while Mike tries to get far away from Barry. Barry aims the ball three times, trying to hit him, and hunts him on the fourth attempt. Usually, the third hour is favorable to the hunter and everyone gets hunted down.

Now it was Mike's turn to become the hunter. Before they start, all eight of them go to the canteen for some quick bites.

"That was a good throw across the canal. It shocked me," said Dwyeth.

"Thanks. Hope I didn't damage any part of your face."

"Luckily I am fine. Don't aim for the face, better aim for the cycle."

"You must always only aim for the cycle. No one likes to get hurt just because you have great power in your arms," added Mike.

All the eight of them enjoyed the game and went on with the game. They played it till evening six and went back home. End of the day they felt like they had gone cycling across the globe.

"I will also come with you tomorrow," said Maya as soon as Dwyeth got back home.

"Learn cycling, else how can I take you?"

"First go and take a shower, you are stinking sweat. Did you eat something?" asked Margit.

"Yes, I did."

All the eight were hooked on to the game. Even after getting home, they keep thinking of some strategy to play the game the next day.

# CHAPTER 2

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## *THE IMAGE*

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One day, while playing the game, Dwyeth crashed his cycle on the divider, on a turn near the lane which led to the Research Department. He hit the divider and fell from his cycle on to the other side of the road, landing on his knees. His knees were badly hurt; he sat on the road, unable to get up from the impact. A man stopped his car in front of him and offered help.

“Are you alright? You came a little too fast for the turn.”

“I’m fine.”

“You need any help? Do you want me to drop you with your cycle?”

“No. I am fine, thanks. I’ll sit for a couple of minutes and do some stretching.”

The man patted him on his shoulder and went back to his car. As soon he got in his car, Dwyeth saw the man getting covered with black smoke all around him inside the car. He doubted that his head had got messed after the fall and wondered if he was seeing or imagining what was happening. He felt there was something wrong with the car’s engine, but it wasn’t. The black fog formed around the man’s body and it was having the shape of a man. The man waved at Dwyeth and drove towards the Research Department. The black fog still forming grew larger and showed outside the car, as if it was sitting on the man’s shoulders. Dwyeth got terrified when the foggy image looked back at him from the roof top of the car. In spite of the pain, he stood up, picked up his cycle and got back on it. He again looked at the car and he could again see the black foggy image very clearly, still looking at him from the top of the car. Horrified, he rushed towards his friends and narrated the incident to Ashling and Nak.

“What?” asked Ashling “Makes no sense.”

“Where did he go?” asked Nak

“To the Research Department.”

“What car was he driving?”

“A black hatchback.”

“Come on let’s go and see,” said Nak.

“I am not coming,” said Dwyeth.

“Hey... There is nothing like ghosts. They just come in movies. Let’s go there and check it out. We have another thirty minutes for the first hour to get over. Also, no one will hunt us there, as no one has the guts to come to the Research Department. We can sneak in back into the second hour after that.”

Nak had not taken Dwyeth seriously. Ashling looked a little concerned, as she could see the shock in Dwyeth’s face.

“Come on.” Nak dragged them and all three went towards the Research Department.

Nak asked the security at the entrance for the man who came in the black hatch back.

“There is no black hatch in the Research Department,” said the security.

They thought that the car might have crossed the Research Department and gone somewhere into the university or may be just crossed the university and went out. There were many entrance gates to the university. Searching the whole university was not possible.

“Probably you imagined it after banging on the divider,” said Nak.

“Maybe,” said Ashling.

Dwyeth also starts disbelieving what he saw and went back to play the game.

A month went by and the holidays came to an end.

Dwyeth's eighth grade and Maya's second grade began on the first of June. They went to school in the school bus. Their school had two sections for each grade up to twelfth grade. There were two sections each for the lower and upper kindergartens as well. It was not a big school, and had a small playground. In school, Dwyeth, Nak and Ashling regularly spend time with their seniors who were in the tenth grade. They had all participated in cycle races as a team and had won at many events representing their school. The craziness they showed in the Seeknhit game helped them get selected for inter school competitions. The seniors considered these three to be the fastest on the pedal among the juniors. During the eight grade Nak, Dwyeth and Ashling participated in three inter school competitions and earned medals for their school. Later when they moved to the ninth and tenth grades, they participated in district and zonal competitions, and again all three earned medals. They and the seniors were a formidable cycling team from the south zone.

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Another year passed by, Dwyeth and his friends have moved to the eleventh grade. They have grown matured and looked like adults physically. Dwyeth, Nak and Ashling have become tall. Ashling became more mystical and looked as if she was constantly interacting with an unknown source. Nak, as usual, was adventurous and energetic. Dwyeth looked mature but seemed to be preoccupied with something all the time. Their visits to the university had reduced after their tenth exams, as they are playing less and less of Seeknhit. But they kept practicing to keep up their cycling stamina and strength; as they were determined to participate in the National and International competitions representing South zone and Voyla.

At school they missed the seniors who have graduated from school and moved to college. This was the first time they felt getting separated.

They have spent a lot of time together with the seniors and have been in the same school for twelve years. Few close ones are now not accessible and not seen.

It was a usual practice in Oxshire High School to welcome the new batch of school goers on the first day of the academic year. Now they saw the entire graduated batch of senior's of a hundred including both the sections, being replaced by a new batch of a hundred cuties in the kindergarten. They spent time with the new batch of kindergarteners.

Their first day in eleventh grade got over with these activities along with getting introduced to the new teachers and new subjects. But even on the second day Dwyeth and a few others kept thinking about the seniors and missed them.

A new girl, Brenda, was enrolled and admitted to their class. She was a great distraction for Dwyeth and the rest. Brenda was from another school and was transferred to Oxshire High School. She was lovely and attracted lot of eyeballs from all the boys in school. She was compact and had a toned body. Brenda brought some natural enthusiasm to the school. Dwyeth was no exception; he and the rest were happy to see something different than the usual, which all have been seeing for a decade. Brenda soon became a favorite in school. Also, a couple of male teachers also showed some life and more teeth when talking to her.

Brenda's entry into 'Oxshire high school' had kicked off a competition among guys to get introduced to her. There was a wave of infatuation in the entire school. Dwyeth also got in the race to get her attention and successfully jostled his way into her friends circle. He used every tide and opportunity to get close to her. He sensed a positive response from her.

A couple of months passed, and Brenda's crush wave abated in school.

"What are you doing these days?" asked Ashling, "Always with Brenda."

"He has become the new girl's shadow," said Nak.

"I have been talking to this girl for some time now. I am planning to invite her to my house this week end," said Dwyeth.

"Wow! That would be a good time to introduce her to me," said Nak.

"But what's so special about her?" asked Ashling.

"It's nothing but seeing a new girl, in our old blue and white uniform."

On Friday as planned Dwyeth invited her home.

Saturday morning Dwyeth got a message from Brenda on his phone.

"Brenda: Hi, started for your house. Will reach there by eleven."

She came on her bicycle to his house. He introduced her to his parents and Maya.

Brenda enjoyed every minute of her life. She had a natural curiosity and excitement for small things in life. She had a sassy attitude which made her more interesting.

"I have not come to any place near the Oxshire Agricultural University," said Brenda.

Dwyeth decides to take her around and they leave for the university.

"This is the one place where Ashling, Nak and I spent a lot of time." He gave her more information on the university while cycling along. "This is the Research Department. It's a freaky place."

"Why?"

"See to your left."

"I've never seen that. What are these?"

"I think those are drumsticks."

"Drumsticks! But these are round."

“Yes. It has become drums. They have removed the sticks out of it. That’s what these guys do here. They change the shape and color of all the fruits, veggies and plants. That’s their job.”

“It’s so cute.” She stopped to take a closer look at the fruits and plants.

“We are not supposed to touch them,” he said. “A couple of years back this was the most dreaded place for all of us. This place gave us a strange haunted feel. So we avoid this stretch completely.”

“Now you don’t?”

“I still avoid it, but completely forgot about it. I am going to take you to the botanical garden next to the Research Department. It’s a nice place with lot of great scenery, but a little bit of an uphill climb. From that elevation you can see the entire university and also get a good view of a canal running through the university.”

“Okay, sounds interesting.”

They reached the Botanical garden and bought the entry tickets. It was around one o’ clock. They walked around and saw the flower and fruit garden, the indoor glass house plants and the water plants. The variety of flora and trees attracted all kinds of birds and made it an ideal place for bird watching. Anyone visiting the garden learned to appreciate nature and its richness. The pleasant fragrance of the flowers and the plants brought a soothing effect on the senses.

They roamed around the garden and he took her to the mound where they could sit and have a good view of the university and the canal running across it. They sat on the bench and enjoyed the view. After some time it looked like they had nothing more to speak. He focused on her gorgeous looks and her charming smile. He looked at her lips, her eyes and her flushed face. Both were eager to explore each other. He moved close to her, held her hands and kissed them. He puts his hands around her and pulled her close to him and kissed her lips.

He ran his hands across her and they both get excited holding each other. They kissed and a great sense of passion flowed through their

bodies.

While completely immersed in pleasure with Brenda, Dwyeth hears a freak sound and gets distracted. He stopped kissing and looked around for the source of the sound. He again heard the strange noise and has never heard something like that before. All his attention turned towards the canal. He got up from the bench, abruptly.

“What happened?” she asked.

“Didn’t you hear that?”

“No. I heard nothing, but the sound of your lips and tongue.”

“I heard something,” he looked all around for the source, but nothing was around. He walked towards the canal to take a close look. As he walked towards it the wind filled the place with the fragrance of burnt lavender. He became conscious of the familiar scent. His memory ran through a lot of files, searching, and reached the first place and time where he got acquainted with this fragrance. The memory brought some images from his past. He saw the divider where he crashed his cycle and the man driving his black hatchback with a black image on his shoulders. Now, he could very well relate the scent and it bought the same fear back inside him. As his body and mind made sense of the scent, he was struck with horror when he saw a black image rising from the canal in front of him. He felt marooned and froze in front of it. It was the same image that he saw on the man near the Research Department on top of the car. It kept rising and came closer to him.

“What happened? What’s there?” Brenda asked and came towards him.

He didn’t reply.

The image fixed its gaze upon him. He saw the image right in front of him. It was like a black greasy cloud. It had the form of a very big man. He could see its stern stubborn face frowning at him.

After showing its anger at Dwyeth, it went back into the canal.



“Dwyeth... Dwyeth...” She shook him and shouted, “What’s wrong? What happened?”

He was sweating and trembling in fear and she took him back to the bench.

“You look as if you have seen a ghost. Talk to me.”

He lay down on the bench mumbling, “I think I saw one.”

“What?”

“You didn’t see it?” he asked.

“What? Where? No. I didn’t see anything”

“It was so big? How can you not see it?”

“Where did it come from?”

“From the canal; it again went back inside.”

“I saw nothing come from it nor going back into it. Are you doing some kind of prank? Let me tell you; I’ll not be fooled by it.”

“What? You didn’t see it? I have to go back. Let’s go back. Did you get the fragrance of burnt lavender?”

“No.”

He felt worse, as Brenda could not see it. He thought the black image had marked him and targeted him, as it was only visible to him.

On the way back, he told her about the previous time this thing happened.

“Who else saw it that time?”

“No one. I was alone.”

“Where did the image go?”

“It went towards the Research Department.”

It struck him now that this canal also runs through the research department and maybe that’s where this image lives.

He immediately called up Ashling and Nak and asked them to come down to the canteen.

They both came to the university canteen.

“I can see the same horrible look on your face,” said Ashling.

“Last time the image was riding on a man’s shoulder-” said Nak, “and this time it came alone.”

“Maybe the image lives near the Research Department. It seems to be visible only to me.”

“What did the man look like?” asked Nak.

“He looked to be in his early forties. He looked pleasant and friendly; and he offered me help.”

“Black hatch! I think we should do a little bit of research on the Research Department. Last time we stopped by the security gate and went back. But now we have to go in and look deeper,” said Nak.

“It is dangerous to follow it inside. It is enraged at me. Probably it is showing up to warn me about something. Maybe it doesn’t want me to come near the Research Department or even enter the Agri University. It looks like some evil or bad curse,” said Dwyeth.

“We are trying to get familiar with the Research Department. The canal doesn’t go inside the research department. So let’s go,” said Nak.

“No, it goes through the research department. I feel it’s not right to go in,” said Ashling.

“But trust me; we’ll get some good clues.”

“What clue? It was ready to attack me any time.”

Nak was very eager to take on this strange thing. He wanted to check it out and get to the root of this freakish episode. He again tries to convince Dwyeth. “There is nothing like any occult forces or ghosts. Most probably this image is an experiment conducted by the Research Department. There are many things happening in agricultural research. They are generating gas from agricultural waste and in turn they produce electricity. You have seen many strange things around the Research Department. So this must be one of those experiments.”

“No. You carry on with these two. I am going home or I’ll stay here in the canteen,” refused Dwyeth.

Nak didn’t give up, “We were born and brought up in this place. Any monster which stands against us will lose ground. Trust me. We rule the Oxshire Agriculture University. Not to worry. Just come along.”

Dwyeth got a bit convinced by those wonderful brave words and agreed. Ashling too agreed with a little bit of hesitation. Brenda was eager as she did not share any historical fear of the Research Department. All four of them decided to go into the Research Department.

They decided to go with Brenda’s suggestion. Her plan was to gain access under the pretence of meeting the HOD (Head of the Department) to request permission for a group visit from their school.

“That should be fine for gaining an entry. But in that case, we should actually meet the HOD,” said Ashling.

“The HOD would be the best person to meet and get information from on the Research Department. Let’s do it,” said Nak.

# CHAPTER 3

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## *THE RESEARCH DEPARTMENT*

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They reached the gates of the research department and were granted permission to meet the HOD. They enter the gate, parked their cycles and walked into the building.

On the way inside they saw more distorted plants and an unpleasant odor fills the air. "The odor here seems to be similar, but not burnt," said Dwyeth.

Once inside, the building looked creepy, and the people working inside looked weird. They wondered over what the HOD would look like. They thought it being a Saturday, there wouldn't be any one working. But the research department had its own time zones and working hours. They worked round the clock. They saw many unfamiliar names, sub-departments and sign boards. They came across one which read 'Levi-Roots'. Inside they saw potatoes and beets levitating above the soil, with the shoot of the plant, its branches and leaves underground.

Dwyeth was already worried, and every odd specimen made him more worried and terrible. Dwyeth thought may be someone from the research department has chosen him to be a specimen for trying out some logic defying experiments. All sorts of possible sinful experiments ran through his head.

The four of them walked ahead and saw another signboard on a door which read 'No Smoking'. "Oh, it seems there are many smokers inside the Research Department," said Brenda. They tried to open the door, but it seemed to be closed from inside. They walked ahead. They became curious and eager to see the next strange thing. But there was nothing special, just a dimly lit long passage, end of which led to a staircase to the top floor. There was also a sign, –"HOD", near the stairs with an arrow pointing upwards. Dwyeth and Ashling walked behind Brenda and Nak.

As they walked along the passage they saw an iron window grill on the dark left side of the dimly lit passage; nothing was visible inside. They stopped abruptly as they hear a rustling sound. It was similar to the sound of branches and leaves in a storm. Nak asked "Is it becoming windy outside" and looked back at Ashling and said, "This sound seems to be coming from behind the grills and it looks like they have a wild breed inside," and walked ahead. As he took a step forward, a dark image came from behind the grills, got hold of Nak and pulled him inside. All of them got scared and shouted, seeing this specter from the dark. But for the iron grills, Nak would have disappeared into the darkness. He was lifted above the ground and the dark image held him and strained his neck. All three screamed for help and tried to pull back Nak. They couldn't see the specter fully in the darkness. They could only see it spreading all over his body, covering him and pulling him from everywhere. Dwyeth, in a panic, shouted, "This is the image I was talking about. You guys didn't believe me." For a moment, Dwyeth is relieved as everyone could see it. But the next moment he felt bad as now Nak had become a target. He didn't want Nak to get involved in this. He sprang upon Nak and the dark image and tried to set Nak free. He thrust himself with all his might against the image and tried to fight it -only to get himself entangled along with Nak. A door opened behind them and a man came out and switched on the lights. The light was blinding. Nak and Dwyeth fell to the ground. The bright light made the image release them from its clutches. It took a moment for things to become visible for Brenda and Ashling. They saw the image inside the grilled enclosure; all curled around the bright light. The man attended to Nak and Dwyeth who were lying on the floor. Dwyeth stood up while Nak regained his consciousness. They saw a monstrous tree behind the grilled enclosure. It was not dark or black; but it was a plant with brown twirling branches and green and yellow leaves. The plant was very big and looked like a tree.

"Why did you guys come here? Whom did you come along with?" asked the man and explained that it was a tree-plant which gets attracted to heat and light. "That's why the passage is dimly lit on one side and we have caged the tree-plant on the other side."

Nak shivering from the experience, “This damn thing could have killed me.”

“We have sign boards all across this place. You have missed all of them. This is a restricted area,” the man shouted. “There are sign boards on the floor everywhere, indicating where you have to walk. Like, in this passage there is a green paint away from the grills. And it’s all red up to the grill. The green paint is the place where one needs to walk. Similarly every place has directions in paint. It’s like an airport, indicating where and which way one should walk. Who gave you permission to enter?”

The man tried to reach for the security, who had by then come running towards them.

The man further explained, “They sense your body vibration and get attracted to movement and heat. Didn’t you read the sign ‘Near-me-not’ or ‘Heat-zone’?”

“We saw ‘No-smoking’ on that door,” said Brenda.

“That one is for reminding this in a funny way to those who work here - our staff. Do you think we researchers actually smoke inside the university? Of course there are some drug addicts, but nothing inside the campus.”

He then ordered the security to escort them to the HOD.

Dwyeth again felt lonely after a brief companionship with Nak and others. Now again he felt he was the only one and there was no one else, who has seen it. His worried state returned.”

The security took them along the passage and asked them to walk on the green line one behind the other. They all bid goodbye to the tree-plant, still curled on to the light, absorbing the heat generated by it.

Nak was able to walk and hugged Dwyeth and said, “Wasn’t that a great adventure?”

“Hmm...”

“You must have thought that it was the black image?”

“Yes. I did!”

“We too thought it was the dark image,” said Ashling.

“I got a feel of its texture when it lifted me and I could sense that it was a tree,” said Nak.

On the way they saw another sign board which read ‘Color Zones.’

Nak, who had lost none of his adventure spirit, enquired with the security personnel about the sign.

“The guys in this department produce all the veggies and plants in a particular color,” said the security.

“In one color?” asked Brenda.

“All the colors – Blue, White, yellow, green, purple, brown, black, red and orange.”

They peeped in at each of the color zones and it was filled with plants and veggies in one color.

Nak asked, “Do you know of any research going on involving a black image like thing? A foggy-greasy image.”

“What black image?”

“Something like a black shadow kind of thing?”

“No. There is a black zone inside the color zone which we just crossed, but no black shadow.”

“Looks like your shadow could be an experiment – a top secret experiment,” said Nak.

“But he said there is no shadow,” said Ashling.

“They have literally hidden this tree-plant away from the sunlight deep inside the building. I am sure we’ll find the black image here,” said Nak.

After seeing all these things and hearing Nak, a corner of Dwyeth’s heart again wished the Black image to be a strange experiment from a weird researcher.

They reached the HOD’s cabin and they saw the HOD’s name hanging outside. ‘Mr. Burgess Pollock’.

“Excuse me, sir,” asked the security.

“Yes come in,” answered Mr. Pollock.

He was a well built man in his late forties. He had a black beard covering the entire bottom half of his face and his chest. He looked like a scientist from the eighteenth-century. He asked them to sit, while the security waited out.

“Looks like you made an entry to meet me twenty minutes back and you have entered a restricted zone and made lot of observations which are punishable by policies,” said Mr. Pollock.

They were all seated in front of him, “We are sorry, you have exciting things there,” said Nak, “We missed some of the sign boards.”

“Hmm... What brings you to me?”

“We’d like to know if you are doing any research on a black shadow kind of thing, which swims and travels on car roofs or on men’s shoulders,” asked Nak.

They all have forgotten what they had planned to ask initially.

“What?” He starts laughing and says “No. We are not doing anything like that yet. Our plants can only move a little bit, but never travel or swim. But it’s interesting to think of plant travelling on car roofs. I will ask if the car manufacturers are interested in such a thing like having a



plant which travels on car roofs and perhaps which can also swim. They may be interested to fund such a research."

Nak, upon realizing what he had blurted to the HOD, looked at Ashling and Brenda and signaled, "Time for us to leave."

"Ok children, what else?"

"Nothing sir."

"So you came to enquire about the black shadow? That's it, nothing else?" The HOD was visibly surprised. "Here, take some chewing gum. These are a hybrid variety. You can chew them for fifty hours and every hour you'll get a different flavor and taste. You can store this back into this case until it expires after fifty hours of chewing. After fifty hours of chewing the chewing gum will become a seed. Finally, when you spit it out, it starts growing into a plant. I must warn you not to keep it in your mouth and sleep. You'll have a plant in your mouth with roots deep into your throat, the next morning," he again laughed and called the security to escort them out.

They all thanked him for the chewing gum.

Dwyeth observed Mr. Pollock's smile and voice. After hearing his last sentence, he sensed that he had met this person somewhere before.

They all thanked him and got up to leave, with the security ready to escort them out. Dwyeth, before leaving again looked at the HOD, and recalled that it was the HOD who carried the black image on his shoulder in his car. But he did not see the image today. He waited a moment to see if the image appeared but it didn't. The black image seemed to be hiding in his beard.

On the way out, he said this to his friends and they all went back to the canteen.

"Good. Your initiative has given us a wild-dreadful experience, and also some information on the black image," said Brenda.

“Thanks.”

“Me, too. But for you, we would not have stepped into that dreaded place,” said Ashling and asked, “So where do we go from here?”

Dwyeth said “I think we should follow Mr. Pollock to his house and try to know more about him. I’d like to keep a check on him to see if he carried the image anywhere.”

“Maybe he is doing some research and hiding it from you. It’s already four, I should be going home,” said Brenda, “Call me anytime for any other adventures.”

Brenda left and Ashling also decided to leave.

“Is it okay to have the chewing gum or should we throw it back into the research compound?” asked Nak.

“No keep it, we should try it out,” said Ashling and left.

Dwyeth and Nak decided to wait and follow the HOD to his place. After an hour, they saw the HOD come out of the research building.

“Do you see something on him now?” asked Nak.

“No there is nothing.”

An official car, a white sedan picked him up. They start following him. They kept following the car for four kilometers outside the university until it entered Peach Drive. They follow it inside the locality and finally, the car stopped and the HOD walked into a house. Again Dwyeth did not see any shadow or image on him. Dwyeth and Nak take a close look at his house and they saw the black hatchback parked inside the house. They see his name plate in the letter box and confirm that it was his residence.

“You make it a point to come and check him out a couple of times,” said Nak and they both went home.

Dwyeth spied on Mr. Pollock three times in his house and a couple of times in the university over the next two weeks. But he didn’t see the

image anywhere. They all decide to put it to rest.

At home, he chose not to tell anything about the image to his parents.

Everyone tried the chewing gum and it gave a different flavor after every hour, for fifty hours. After which it started looking like a seed and it began sprouting.

# CHAPTER 4

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## *THE DINOSAUR*

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A year passed by and now Dwyeth and his friends were all in the twelfth grade and the senior most in the school. They liked being the senior most in a place where they were once the youngest.

Dwyeth, Brenda, Ashling and Nak met for lunch.

"I wish we all study in the same college," said Brenda.

"I, too, hope so," said Nak.

"I have been having a bad headache and was not able to sleep properly at night," said Ashling.

"Do you want me to buy some pills for you?" asked Dwyeth.

"No, I have them."

"What happened?" asked Brenda.

"I don't know. I kept seeing a dinosaur in my sleep and at one point I couldn't make out if it was a dream or it was happening for real."

"What did the dinosaur do?"

"It chased me into our Agri University. Dwyeth, Nak and Mike were there, but it chased only me. "

"Thank god it didn't chase Dwyeth; as he was already chased in the university by the black image" said Nak.

"I guess it's been a year. Did you see the image again?" asked Ashling.

"No. If I had seen that I would have called you guys."

"We decided to check out more information and details about Mr. Pollock, but never thought about it." asked Nak.

"I saw him many times but there was no image anywhere on him. We should still do that," said Dwyeth.

They went back to their classes.

Ashling had trouble sitting in class and was not able to concentrate. As soon as she reached home after school at around four, she went straight to her room. She popped a couple of pills and went to bed. She slept for three hours and got up at around seven. After getting up, she felt better and spent some time on the internet before having dinner at nine. After dinner, she went back to her room and spent some more time on the internet and went to bed at ten and tried to sleep. In her sleep, she again saw the dinosaur. She also found Dwyeth, Mike and Nak searching for something on the ground in the university. She calls out for them but her voice doesn't reach them. She tried again and yelled at them to caution them of the approaching dinosaur, but still they didn't seem to notice. By then, the dinosaur had come very close, and again, it ignored others and charged towards Ashling. She panicked and started off speeding in her cycle. She kept cycling and the dinosaur followed her. She ran into a department building and climbed to the top floor to hide. The dinosaur didn't chase her into the building. She went to the terrace and looked out for the dinosaur. She saw the dinosaur far away near a tree. It was digging the ground near a tree and circled the tree like a dog.

"I saw the dinosaur again today," said Ashling at school.

"Why does it keep coming back?" asked Dwyeth.

"Don't know, I didn't even think of it nor did I see a dinosaur movie recently."

"When did you last see a dinosaur movie?" asked Brenda

"Three years back. You might remember, I cried a lot on losing my bracelet in the university."

“Yes, we searched for it and didn’t find it,” said Nak.

“That day evening, after going home, my dad took me to a dinosaur movie. That’s the one I remember.”

“How did the dinosaur know about our Agri University?” asked Dwyeth.

“Maybe the dinosaur has come to tell you something. Maybe it’ll help you find your lost bracelet,” said Nak.

“That would be so nice of the dinosaur. I will go to bed hoping the dinosaur comes again in my dream to help me find the bracelet.”

Back at home, Ashling took Nak’s joke seriously and was waiting to go to bed with the hope of the dinosaur helping her find the lost bracelet. As usual, after dinner she went to bed. And around three in the morning, she got up and messaged to their group of Dwyeth, Nak and Brenda.

“Ashling: It came again and it is the same building and tree.”

That day at school they all met to discuss this.

“So you had the same dream again and the dinosaur again ended up circling a tree and you were watching it from a building terrace?” asked Dwyeth.

“May be there is something about the tree,” said Nak.

“We should search for that tree in the university,” said Ashling.

“How do we search for a tree which came in your dream? It’s unrealistic. It was just a dream. Are you suggesting we search all the five thousand acres for a tree – a dream-tree?” asked Brenda.

“Guys, it is not the entire five thousand acres. We already have some information. It is a tree near a building. So we should look out for similar structures and then we can find the tree quite easily,” said Dwyeth.

“Okay. So tomorrow is Saturday. We can do this,” said Ashling

“Why not today? We can go there after school at four,” asked Nak.

At four, all four set out to the university in search of the dream-tree. They searched around the buildings in the university. They began their search by four and kept searching till sun set, but she couldn't find it.

“Let's go home, and come back tomorrow,” said Brenda.

“I think you should spend more time in your dream; if you get it today. Try to see and remember more things. Normally, every one forgets all the dreams, but you are able to recollect them,” said Nak.

“Not only recollect, but she is also able to reconnect to the same dream again and again every night,” said Dwyeth.

That night Ashling went to bed and slept anticipating the dinosaur.

The next day morning at half past nine, Dwyeth, Nak and Brenda were waiting outside Ashling's house. They were eager to hear from her about any more information from her dream. They were ready to pick her up and go to the university and search for the tree.

Brenda called Ashling. “We couldn't wait to hear from you. We didn't get any response for the messages; hence we decided to come down. We are waiting outside, come out.”

Ashling came out running and called them in.

“I went to bed yesterday as usual, eagerly. I woke up once at three and went back to sleep. Then my mom called me to wake me up at seven and then again at eight. I was dead tired and I couldn't get out of the bed and continued to sleep. And now it is half past nine and you guys woke me up.”

“We woke you up! So what happened?”

“As usual it came and it was running around the same tree. When my mom woke me up the second time, I saw something written starting with 'A'. Again I tried to sleep and you guys woke me up now.”

“So your dream has progressed and you have new information today. The letter A,” said Nak.

“I think it could be someone’s name or your own name, which also starts with A,” said Dwyeth.

“That’s the clue, we’ll go searching for a building starting with ‘A’ or a department starting with A,” said Brenda.

“Wow... How Brenda?” asked Dwyeth.

“That’s good. Let’s go,” said Nak.

They all left for the university to search all the departments starting with letter ‘A’. They went to see the map of the university and found four departments starting with A: Agronomy, Animal Husbandry, Agricultural Microbiology and Agro-climate Research. They started off with excitement, hoping that Ashling would identify the building and the tree. First they went to the Agronomy department.

“Go and see every tree inside this building compound and try to identify the tree,” said Nak.

“I have never searched for a tree before.”

“You should think like a smuggler or a carpenter who sees the worth of a tree,” said Dwyeth.

She searched the department for thirty minutes. But she couldn’t relate to any tree. They moved to the next one. But that also was not the one. They searched the other two departments as well, but couldn’t find the tree. Their hopes were down and they went to the canteen. It was a quarter to one.

“Our entire search went for a waste. At last there is no dinosaur and there is no tree,” said Brenda.

“May be you should go back to your dream and try to see more details,” said Nak.



“That’ll happen by default tonight,” said Dwyeth.

“It was all same except this time there was board starting with A behind the dinosaur.” She quickly recollected all the images of the tree, the dinosaur and the letter A and said, “I saw the letter A. It was behind the tree and the dinosaur from the building where I saw it from.” She gave a broad smile and said, “We made a small mistake. We should look outside the departments and not inside. The tree was on the opposite side of the building starting with the letter A.”

“Okay.” Everyone again became energised at this possibility.

Their excitement returned, at an even higher rate. They again start off to search all the places on the opposite side of the four departments.

“Hope we see the tree this time,” said Ashling.

They reached the first department and began searching.

“Search in all the angles, go walking from this side first and then come walking back from the other side. Also look for the specific features of the tree. The size might be very different from what you saw in your dream. The dream distorts the size,” said Dwyeth.

“You must start from the angle which you saw it from the terrace. Like when you walk down your path you should be covering all the angles where you can see the signboard of the department in the back ground,” said Nak.

She walked across all the angles but couldn’t find any in three of them. Agronomy was the only one left and they started their search there.

There were close to hundred trees on the opposite side of the department. There were many varieties of trees. She walked down from all the angles, where the signboard Agronomy was visible in the background.

After twenty minutes at one angle she looked at something similar to what she saw in her dream. She again changed her angle and saw the

tree from different angles. She was shocked to see the same tree which the dinosaur circled around.

She had found the dream-tree.

“Are you sure of this?” asked Dwyeth.

“Yes.” She said with wonder and excitement.

They all were surprised at Ashling actually finding the tree and stood looking at the tree in wonder.

“This is crazy,” said Brenda “How can this be true?”

“This establishes Ashling as a special gifted person among us. She is a dream-catcher, and this is her dream-tree,” said Nak.

“Now we have found it. What next?” asked Brenda.

They did the thing – The universal thing. They decide to take some pictures and group selfies with the tree and posted it in social media; with the caption ‘Dream-tree’ and shared it with their groups.

“But, Why did the dinosaur circle it?” asked Dwyeth.

“Maybe it actually came to tell you about your lost bracelet. Now don’t ask all of us to dig around the tree,” said Nak.

By the next minute everyone was digging around the tree. They dig with rocks and sticks. But they found nothing. They again took snaps of the tree and posted it as ‘Digging dream-tree’.

“Now you should go and try to get the dream again,” said Nak and decided to climb the tree to take a selfie from the top, “I’m going to test my climbing skills.”

The tree stood at a height of thirty-five feet. Its main trunk was at a height of fifteen feet from the ground and branched out in all the directions from there.

With all the cheer and motivation he managed to climb fifteen feet and took selfies from there.

Nak saw something shining on the tree. He picked it up and was startled to see that it looked like a bracelet.

He threw it down to Ashling. All of them were shocked at finding this and looked for Ashling's reaction.

"This is mine. This is the one which I lost three years back."

"That's super crazy," shouted Brenda in disbelief. "Is this for real or are you all trying to prank me?" asked Brenda.

Nobody replied. Everybody had this question for each other. They had found the tree but now finding this bracelet puzzled everyone.

"How did the bracelet reach here? How can the dinosaur know this?" asked Nak.

"I am not playing and I am equally surprised at this. Trust me. I am seeing this bracelet after three years. I didn't make up anything."

"There is something crazy happening in this university; first Dwyeth saw the images and now you have the dinosaur," said Brenda.

All went home with a sense of doubt, wonder and confusion. Nak, Dwyeth and Brenda also had a sense of disbelief in the whole thing.

Ashling's story was met with equal disbelief at home from her parents.

After contemplating for a week, all of them considered Ashling with some powers in her dreams. They called her the 'Dream-catcher'.

# CHAPTER 5

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## *THE NEIGHBOUR*

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Weeks passed by and one evening after school, Dwyeth got down from the school bus along with Maya and was walking towards home. Dwyeth lived in a community where the houses were lined up on either sides of the street and all of them were individual houses. Some of them had two stories.

Dwyeth's new neighbours were moving in and were unpacking their things. Dwyeth was hungry and eager to get home and dig on some snacks. A chill breeze swept through his face as he was getting into his house. He shuddered when the breeze brought with it the scent of burnt lavender. He started shivering and his heart pounding. He slowly turned around, expecting to see the image. He couldn't find anything from his house and went out to the street. He saw the man his new neighbor, unpacking and moving things, carried the image on his shoulders. The image looked at him and it was the same black image.

He ran inside and told his parents about this incident. Also he told them about the instances when this had happened twice before.

"What are you saying? Let me see. I saw them moving in. They are a couple who are moving in," asked Dwyeth's father, surprised at his statement.

His parents went out to see the neighbours. They could find nothing of what Dwyeth described.

Margit said, "I will take you to them, let's go and speak to them. There is no shadow or image. I think you are imagining."

"No. I am not coming. It keeps staring at me."

"I just met Mr. Andrew Clarke and Ms. Susan Clarke. They have moved from north. They have got transferred from Brytshore Agri University to our Oxshire Agri University." said Dwyeth's Father.

After seeing his message, Nak came to meet Dwyeth.

"What is he saying? He is shell shocked. When did he see this image for the first time? Have you seen it before?" Margit streamed a lot of questions at Nak.

Nak answered her questions and went out for a walk with her to see the newly moved in couple. He has never seen the image and was eager to see it. They both walked down the road and saw the couple still busy unpacking and moving things from the truck. They couldn't see any image anywhere.

Dwyeth felt horrible as now the image has moved closer to him permanently.

"Just don't think about it. We will talk about this tomorrow," said Nak and left.

"What happened?" asked Maya, without a clue.

"Nothing Maya, he is not feeling well today," Margit replied and advised Dwyeth not to tell anything to Maya.

It was eleven and Dwyeth went to bed. He closed all the windows and didn't want the image or its scent to reach him in his room. He asked his dad to sleep with him and Maya moved in with her mother.

"Don't worry, just pray to god and go to sleep. Give me a shout whenever you feel like it," said Dwyeth's father.

Dwyeth was not getting any sleep. He got a message from Ashling in their group chat.

"Ashling: Don't worry, just sleep."

"Nak: I feel the image will not harm you, as it has already come twice."

“Brenda: Yes I too feel the same.”

“Nak: I am sure it has something got to do with the university.”

“Ashling: Why?”

“Nak: This couple also worked in another agri university up north.”

“Dwyeth: Yes. They are also linked to the university. I think I should move out of this place to some place far off from the university.”

“Nak: Find out if they work in the Research Department.”

“Dwyeth: Hmm.”

Dwyeth kept browsing in his phone and searched for ghosts, demons, black magic and kept reading blogs on those before falling asleep.

Next day, he got up at around nine; he had a lot of messages from his friends on his mobile.

“Did that image come to disturb you?” asked his Dad.

“No. You didn’t go to office?”

“I was waiting for you to get up. Are you going to school?”

“Yes, I am.”

“Get ready. I’ll drop you.”

He got ready and hesitated to come out of the house. He became nervous to face the image again. His mother comforted him, telling him that the neighbour, Mr. Clarke had left for office and was not there in his house. Dwyeth peacefully stepped out of the house and his father dropped him at school.

“Call me when you need me. We will meet a doctor by evening,” said his dad and left.

In school during the lunch break, he got to speak to his friends.

“So, what can we do now? The image has become your neighbour. I think we should go back to the Research Department and find out something,” said Nak.

“Yes. I too feel we should collect more information about the HOD?” said Brenda.

“So the canal, the Research Department and also the whole of the Agri University must be under our radar and we should collect all information about these,” said Nak.

“We will go to the university this week end,” said Ashling.

By evening after getting down from the school bus along with Maya, Dwyeth called his mom. He waited to get her confirmation that Mr. Clarke was not outside the house. As soon as his mom gave him the clearance, he quickly rushed into the house. He went to see Dr. Peter Moody, a psychologist with his dad, who advised him to talk to the image and find out what it wanted, upon seeing it next time.

The next day, Dwyeth spoke to his friends and told them about meeting the doctor.

“Do you believe what I am saying? Or you have any doubts that I am fooling around or I am imagining things. Because, I think that is how the doctor took what I said. So please tell me if you guys also think like that.”

“Well... I have seen you the first time and the second time when it happened. I remember the shock on your face, and I completely trust what you say,” said Ashling.

“Me, too. I saw what you went through and I believe you,” said Brenda.

“Some things happen only to some of us. Rest of them might not have a clue of what you are going through. So someone believing you or not does not change your reality. I stand with you, and you are my best friend. I would say you don’t share this with anyone whom you don’t

trust,” said Nak.

“Thanks guys, this means a lot to me. It is good to speak to someone who trusts what you say.”

Dwyeth tried to be brave and tried to follow the advice given by Dr. Peter Moody, but he couldn't. Dwyeth continued to avoid Mr. Clarke and came home only after confirming that he was not seen around. He kept doing this for the next three months until his exams got over.

Though he and his friends had decided to go and do some search in the university, they didn't get time, as the exams were near.

He was determined to leave Oxshire and join a college somewhere else. Camford was the biggest city in the south of Voyla, and he decided on moving to Camford to pursue his studies. He decided this purely based on his fear of images and staying away from the Agri University.

As soon as he finished his last exam, Dwyeth moved out of Oxshire to his uncle's house in Camford. Camford was around two hundred kilometers from Oxshire.

Nak, Ashling and Brenda wished him good luck on moving to Camford.

“We have planned to do some search in the university on the image, and also some research on the HOD and this new neighbour of yours. We have time until college begins,” said Nak.

“Thanks Guys. Love you all.”

Dwyeth in Camford felt happy and free, as he was away from the image and the Agricultural University. Camford was a cosmopolitan city and was one of the best cities in Voyla. The city appreciated enterprising individuals and corporates by providing the platform and infrastructure for them to bring out the best goods and services for the city's dwellers. It also had a great night life to appease the nocturnal beings. The city was bright during night, and also had its share of dingy places. He was enjoying the fast pace of city life and was exploring the city and making new friends.



Back in Oxshire Nak, Brenda and Ashling decided to collect information on their subjects. They came to know from Dwyeth's parents that their neighbour worked in the Horticulture Department. Ashling, Brenda and Nak get introduced to Dwyeth's neighbour, Mr. Clarke and spend time with him. They do this in the pretext of understanding about career paths to choose in agriculture and collected some personal details about him. He was from the coastal town of Brytshore in the north coast. He got married five years back and was thirty-five years of age. He has done his studies from Brytshore Agriculture University and had worked there before getting transferred here. His wife had also studied at and worked in Brytshore Agri University, and now works for the Microbiology Department.

"Mr. Clarke seems to be a nice man, I don't know why the shadow is on him," said Ashling.

"Horticulture is something got to do with gardening. Is there a link with the Botanical garden and the Research Department," asked Brenda.

"That's a possibility," said Ashling.

"Let's check out the HOD, Mr. Burg. What's his full name?" asked Nak

"Mr. Burgess Pollock, – the ex-image host," said Brenda.

They all went to Mr. Pollock's house in Peach Drive, again under the pretence of enquiring about career options in agriculture and collect some details. He lives along with his family, his wife and two children; a son and a daughter. His wife works for a bank. Their children study in Oxshire Public School. The information, that he was a native of Brytshore and also studied at and worked in Brytshore Agri University before moving to Oxshire was a shock to all of them. They messaged this to Dwyeth in their group chat.

"Dwyeth: Thanks Guys. So, Brytshore and Brytshore Agri University is the common link between both of them."

"Nak: To my knowledge, Brytshore Agri University is the best of all the agri universities in Voyla."

“Ashling: Anyone, been to Brytshore? Or have any contacts in Brytshore?”

No one knew anyone there. It was a thousand five hundred kilometers away from their place.

“Dwyeth: @Ashling, can you try some magic in your dreams, like your dinosaur and the tree?”

“Ashling: I will surely try. The dinosaur just came in my dream once, and again the second day. After that, I tried to visualise it again and again and it worked. But on this one, where should I begin?”

“Nak: That sounds scary. What if Ashling becomes the host for the image when she tries to do her dream stuff?”

“Dwyeth: Oh, yes, that is a possibility.”

“Ashling: I don’t want to run away from Oxshire.”

“Nak: I was just kidding; you can give it a try. You can start with what we have. That’s it. Do the same thing what you did for the dinosaur.”

“Ashling: But there is big difference between a dinosaur which goes around a tree like a dog and an image which looks like a ghost.”

“Brenda: No guarantee that’ll work. Don’t get into this stuff. Forget it. Let’s wait if it is required.”

“Dwyeth: That’s fine... I am away from that university and there aren’t any agri universities in this place. I think we can put it to rest.”

All enjoyed their holidays and were eagerly waiting for the results and admissions to their chosen courses.

Dwyeth got into Journalism in Camford University. Nak took Microbiology; Ashling opted for Mathematics and Brenda pursued Computer science. All three were again together in Oxshire University.

Dwyeth made friends in his college and enjoyed every step he took to

become a journalist. Within a couple of months, he had made many friends; networking was on the top of his syllabus. He liked his university and moved to the university hostel from his uncle's house. He also kept in touch with his best friends from school, and their chat group was very active.

Time ran by and Dwyeth finished his first year. His university followed the semester system. He spent a lot of time learning the tricky aspects of journalism, and was already building opinions on different types of journalism.

In Oxshire Nak, Ashling and Brenda were also having a great time in college.

Dwyeth kept visiting the library and during one such visit, he saw a girl who grabbed all his attention. She was searching books and he walked towards her to take a closer look at her. She had a calm and strong aura. He felt something different about this girl. He saw her amidst books and the fragrance of books and paper. She picked two books from the rack and sat down to read. His mystic non-stop DNA and chromosome kicked off his crush and infatuation on this beauty with a graceful body. This was not happening for the first time. He had kick started the mystic DNA many times in the past including once for Brenda. But it looked like it keeps switching on until it had found the one: the one for a life time.

He saw her at different places in the college. They kept running into each other, and finally they get acquainted. Her name was Demi, a third year psychology student. She was from Brytshore. A lot of things surfaced in his mind on hearing her say -Brytshore. This also brought back his fear of the image and its relation to Brytshore. Sometimes, he thought of staying away from her, but at other times, he was interested to know her and also get to know Brytshore. Even his friends back in Oxshire advised him to befriend her. Her father worked in Brytshore University and was also a native of Brytshore. Dwyeth felt this was bound to happen and decided to spend more time with her.

"Tell me something about Brytshore," he asked.

“There is nothing there, except for a very famous agri university and a beautiful beach.”

“Anything special or odd about your place?”

“Odd? Nothing odd. If you like to see it, come with me, when I go there.”

“Let me know when you plan to go.”

He went around exploring the city with Demi and they spent a lot of time together. Demi was a brilliant girl and he felt that she was reading and exploring his mind. She always visited the library and kept reading a lot of books on psychology. Once they met in the library on a weekend and she invited him to her home. She lived near the university along with three friends; her classmates. He came to know that she was a painter, and he saw her paintings hung around in her room. She has painted a lot of things and decorated the walls with them.

One of her abstract paintings made him sick. It looked very much like the dreaded black image. He also got a whiff of the lavender ash after seeing it. He was not sure if the fragrance was just a memory thing, or he actually sensed the smell. The memories of the image again became fresh in his mind.

Demi noticed a change in his temperament.

“Are you alright? Anything wrong?”

“I am fine”

“You look troubled. Sometimes, you seem to get into a parallel thought process? There is something taking your attention away from the present moment. I have noticed that many times,” asked Demi.

“I wonder if you’ll believe what I say. It might not seem real. But I am telling the truth.”

“Trust me. Go ahead.”

He narrated the encounters he had with the image and its possible relationship with Brytshore.

“That is strange. I have never heard of anything like this before.”

“Look, I understand you didn’t grow up with me, nor were you there when these things happened. So I am totally fine if you don’t believe what I say.”

“Would you be okay if I do some research on any such events or any conditions recorded in psychology? If you don’t mind!”

“I am absolutely fine; as long as you don’t come and tell me that I am imagining things.”

“Sure.”

“I am perfectly fine if anytime you feel uncomfortable and you want to end the relationship. Maybe when you start feeling that you are spending time with a strange guy; in your language – a subject or a psycho.”

“We like our subjects and we like psychos. Thank you. And if I feel that you are becoming a vampire or a werewolf, I will ask you to leave. So don’t worry. I am sorry; my painting has awakened your bad past.”

“It’s alright. I am connected with Brytshore, I should only find out how.”

“Possible. There is nothing else apart from the university there; it’s the best in Voyla.”

“Hmm... That is the only common point which we could conclude from the data gathered on my neighbor and the HOD.”

“We can take a couple of days off and go to Brytshore.”

“We can go there on a weekend.”

Dwyeth introduced Demi to his Oxshire friends and added her in the chat group.

“Ashling: Welcome Demi. Good to have you in the group. Good to see that Dwyeth has got a friend in Camford.”

“Demi: Thanks, we are planning to visit Brytshore very soon. If any of you are interested you can join us. Let me know.”

# CHAPTER 6

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## *BRYTSHORE VISIT*

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Dwyeth spent a lot of time in the university swimming pool. He spent close to two hours every day and four on weekends. Demi and Dwyeth were always together and shared everything about them with each other. Time went by and Dwyeth completed his second year in Camford and Demi her third. Demi planned to continue her masters in psychology in the same university. Demi decides to go to Brytshore for a week, a week before her master's program began. Dwyeth also packed his bag to go with her.

"Nak: Have a nice time and do ping us if you find something about the image."

"Dwyeth: Sure."

They took a flight on Friday evening to the nearest airport to Brytshore. From there, they took a taxi to Brytshore, a couple of hours' drive. Dwyeth's excitement grew as he entered the Brytshore district. It was night and he couldn't see anything of Brytshore.

They reached Demi's house at around ten. Her parents and brother were waiting for them. After dinner, Dwyeth spent some time with her family before going to bed."

The next day morning, Dwyeth got up and looked around her house. He had his first daylight view of Brytshore. Even though the house was small, the area around it made it look very big. There were many houses nearby, but because of the dense trees nothing except one was visible from her house. As planned, they had breakfast and started off towards the university, which was ten kilometers away from Demi's house. They took her dad's scooter and rode to the university.

It was greener than any other place he had ever seen. The tall trees made the place look exotic.

“No wonder this agri university tops the list of best agri universities in Voyla.”

“You’ll find the university more interesting.”

“I will certainly find this place interesting, even if it was a desert,” said Dwyeth.

As they approached the university, the trees and the vegetation became dense.

“At the next turn, we have the main entrance.”

They entered the university. Dwyeth riding pillion, felt like being inside a forest and he felt some distress and unpleasantness. She took him along the major routes covering all the departments finally stopping for a coffee in the cafeteria.

“How do you find the place?”

“Interesting... I have never seen such a dark place, even when you have the sun right above you.” Dwyeth concealed his worry and kept looking out for any strange events and the ghastly greasy image.

“That’s because we have a lot of banyan trees here. The hanging roots make the place very shady. These are found the most in this district.”

“Trees in horror movies,” said Dwyeth.

“We used to play here,” said Demi, “In the next twenty minutes I am going to surprise you with something. You know this very well, but would have literally forgotten about it.”

“Let’s go.”

They came across the Research Department.



“Are you going inside Research?”

“No. Do you want me to?”

Feeling relieved, he said, “No, It’s usually a freaky place with strange stuff.”

“Yes. We are heading straight.”

Demi kept going along the road for another ten minutes and took a sharp left turn on a mound. A blinding, bright white thing hit him. He thought that the black image has now become white and almost shouted in fear. It was sunlight which hit him suddenly. The trees ended right at the place where Demi took a turn near the mound and on the other side there was the bare ocean which beamed the bright light.

He relaxed sitting behind on seeing the sunlight and the sea. She took him towards the shore.

“This place is a contrast zone. Both the sides from this mound are totally different. One is dark and the other bright. You don’t find this anywhere. You’ll see a glimpse of the ocean before you hit the shore. But here, you won’t have a clue of the ocean until its bang in front of you. I thought it was a nice surprise.”

“Yes, it was.”

They took a snap and posted it to the group.

“Dwyeth: Nothing unusual about this university so far! It’s a dense and dark place with a bright ocean at the end of land.”

“Nak: Great. Have a nice time”

“Ashling: Enjoy”

“Brenda: Beautiful place. I’m in for the next visit.”

They spent some time on the beach and headed back. He wondered if the black image was hiding; or maybe it is not there and there is no

connection with Brytshore.

It was Saturday evening and there was a small fair in Brytshore. He went with her family and spent the evening there. He enjoyed the time with her family and they came back home after having dinner.

The next day morning, he got up from bed thinking about Demi. Her room was filled with proverbs. Though these were the usual ones he liked all of them and liked her even more. He felt she was built on a strong foundation, and was prepared for anything life throws at her. He went near her and pulled her on to the bed.

Demi looked at him and kissed him. They both kissed each other commencing a lifelong bond. They both slowly stripped and got naked. He hugged and kissed her soft body lying on the bed and had sex. A noise from the staircase disturbed them; it was her mother coming upstairs and they got ready.

Dwyeth had a pleasant feeling on finding his life partner. He had thought of a couple of girls in school as a potential match; this one seemed to be graduated to the next level. He was filled with joy on finding the love of his life. As planned, he packed up to return to Camford. He had his return flight at four in the afternoon.

He thanked Demi's family and left for the airport at noon. On the flight, he got a window seat. After takeoff, he peeped through the window to see the aerial view of Brytshore. It was black and green. He laughed to himself and sat back and relaxed. His mind kept replaying the pleasant memories of the past two days.

His thoughts and his state of joy were interrupted by the cracking of the window glass in the plane. It was a very small crack. He thought he should inform the air crew about this immediately. He tested the crack and ran his fingers over the glass. As he decided to get up and inform the aircrew, the crack widened and a black liquid oozed out of it. It came in with great force and he understood that it was the black image. The black greasy image poured in from the window and made its way to a guy sitting in front of him. The image took a seat on the man's shoulder. As

usual, it kept looking and frowning at him, and it was the same image. He wondered how this image flew from Oxshire to Brytshore and got into a plane in the sky. He has seen the image three times in the past, but never so close and for such an extended period of time. He hung his face down and closed his eyes. He did nothing for the rest of the journey and made no movements and never got up from the seat. He looked up a couple of times only to see the image still staring at him. The flight landed in Camford. He was relieved when the man in front of him got up to disembark. The image went along with the man, riding on his shoulder.

Dwyeth relaxed in his seat and didn't get out until the cabin crew asked him, "Sir we have arrived at Camford. Do you need any help?"

"No, thank you" he got up from his seat and walked out of the plane. He wondered what this image wanted from him. It just keeps frowning and was very hostile once, when it came from the canal. Why does it show up? He walked out of the plane along the connecting bridge with these thoughts in his mind. As he walked out of the bridge into the airport, he saw the image again, but now on a different man. He looked around for the man on whom it was earlier riding inside the plane. He mustered all his guts and decided to follow the image. He followed this new man on whom it was riding on now. The man was in his late twenties, and Dwyeth decided to go and speak to him. As he followed this man, he was shocked to see another man carrying the image. Now he could see two images. This was the first time he was seeing two images. He stopped and saw both the images and both looked alike, but they had varying degree of anger in them. He then saw another couple of images in a liquor shop, riding on two other men. He was now seeing four images inside the airport. He did not know what to do and came out of the airport. Outside the airport, he looked all around and he could see many more images all over the place, perched on all types of men. He stopped counting the images.

He immediately messaged the Oxshire group about this.

# CHAPTER 7

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## *IMAGE ANALYSIS*

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“Dwyeth: Guys, now it is not only our agricultural university or Brytshore. It is everywhere. And there is not one image, but many. I am not able to count.”

“Nak: Come down. Did you see it coming in from the window on a flight?”

“Yes it did. I am coming.” He messaged back, and went to his hostel. On the way he saw more and more images riding on random men: big, small, tall, short, old, young, thin and fat. Inside the hostel, the images were not seen.

After having seen this seven years back, for the first time during his seventh grade summer holidays, he was going crazy without having any clue of this thing. It’s a pretty long time to reason out something. He messaged to the group “Ashling, need your help very badly. Did you try out your dream technique for me?”

He waited for her reply and packed for Oxshire. He got a bus to Oxshire from the bus stand, and there he could see some images. Luckily, he didn’t find any image in the bus. As soon as the bus travelled away from Camford, the images became scarce. He felt relieved on reaching Oxshire, as he didn’t see any images there. As he neared his house, he came across his neighbour, Mr. Clarke. But he didn’t have any image riding on him now.

“Ashling: Hi sure, I’ll try out my dream stuff. We’ll be coming to meet you tomorrow morning.”

Demi called him after seeing the message.

The next day Nak, Ashling and Brenda went to Dwyeth's home. After spending some time at his home, they went to the university. Nak had bought his dad's car and all of them went to the canteen.

"It is great to be here back with all of you. You are the only ones I can talk to about this. Thank you for coming down," said Dwyeth.

"Anytime... We should have kept following the HOD and your neighbour," said Nak.

"Yes. We should start it right now," said Brenda.

"I tried the dream stuff many times but it's not working. I will keep trying and let you know if I see something."

Dwyeth thanked Ashling and said, "You're the best in finding lost items. And now I am completely lost."

"Please do the dinosaur magic again," said Nak.

"We now have images everywhere, riding on random men. And we know a couple of men who had this image riding on them in the past – Mr. Pollock and Mr. Clarke. They can swim, fly and also reach a flying plane in the sky to ride on a shoulder. We don't know where they come from and where they go, but they may ride on men for a specific duration and then disappear," said Dwyeth.

"Also, the image was riding on the HOD during our seventh summer holidays, and my neighbour two years back before our twelfth exams. And the image was alone during the start of our eleventh grade when it came from the canal," he added.

"We should go back to the HOD and your neighbour. I and Brenda will go to the HOD's house and try to get some clues," said Nak and they all started out.

Ashling and Dwyeth got dropped at his home. They talked to his mother Margit, and got more info on the neighbor, Mr. Clarke.

Nak came back in an hour to Dwyeth's house and they all went back to the university.

"We spoke to Mr. Pollock's wife. The first thing we saw was they still use the same black hatchback. We got details about him and what all he did and what all happened since 2007. She was friendly, as we have already met her once," said Nak.

"In 2007 June, they moved from Brytshore to Oxshire and rented a house in Dugham. And you saw him with the image on his shoulders driving in his wife's car in 2008 May, our seventh summers. Two months later in 2008 July, he becomes a father to a baby girl. In 2010 January, he got promoted as the HOD of the Research Department. Their son joined school in 2010 Jun. They moved to a new house in Peach Drive in 2010 December. In 2011 August you again saw the image in the canal and we all met him that day. They went on a vacation to Mongolia in 2012 Dec. They bought a new dog in 2013 January. We three go and meet him after our twelfth exams in 2013 May. Every year, he spends one month in Brytshore University. Even now, he is in Brytshore. He is there over the past two weeks."

"Interesting, it's again something got to do with Brytshore. How did you manage to get this info?" asked Dwyeth.

"Last time we went under the pretence of career guidance before joining college. This time we told her what was happening to you, and we made you a patient. A patient, getting diagnosed for mental illness; and collected the information," said Brenda.

"Great. Fact is stranger than fiction and I believe I will soon become a patient."

Laughing with the rest, he gave out details he got from his mom. "Mr. Clarke moves to our colony in 2012 Dec and I see the image on him. He also works in the Research Department. He was temporarily asked to work in Horticulture, but moved back to Research in 2014 June. He bought a dog in 2014 July. His wife passed away in 2014 December. Every year, he spends one month in Brytshore University. He is also in

Brytshore now, and is there for the past two weeks.”

“I think you should go back to Brytshore,” said Brenda.

“Both are in research; both are now in Brytshore; and finally, both have bought a dog,” said Nak.

“I think we can forget the dog,” said Brenda.

“No, we don’t forget anything. We find what we can find and eliminate one by one,” said Nak.

“I am wondering if I should go back to Camford and find more about the images, so I can draw more similarities very easily from the flood of images that I am seeing there.”

“Hmm... That is the best thing to do. Spend time with the images and study them. Study their behaviour and occurrence and collect data. Collect every possible data points about them. The data will show us the past and the future,” said Ashling.

“That’s right. We can later do data mining and find relationships. Maybe you should go there after Demi comes back from Brytshore” said Brenda.

“I will go back on Wednesday morning. Demi will be back in Camford by then.”

They all left and again met on Tuesday in the canteen.

“I am thinking of the facts every night before I sleep, and also asked for help from the dinosaur. But nothing has worked yet. I’ll keep trying,” said Ashling.

Dwyeth thanked Ashling and discussed his data analysis strategy when he gets back to Camford the next day morning.

Nak suggested collecting data in the usual places which he visits every day; like the university, the hostel and places nearby. And to use the weekends to go to an entirely different place.

“That would be a good start, also, you must start speaking to all of them, right when the image is riding on them,” said Brenda.

“You must not be afraid as it has not harmed you so far; even though it looks horrifying. If it can come into a plane in flight, then it can do anything if it had wanted to,” said Ashling.

All of them gave suggestions to Dwyeth. “Thanks guys. Where would I be without all of you?” said Dwyeth and left.

The next day morning at five Dwyeth left for Camford by bus. He could find one shadow in the bus. As usual, it kept looking at him with anger. Dwyeth didn’t look at it until he reached Camford by seven. It was a bright day in Camford and he was all set to collect data. He met Demi who was waiting for him in his hostel.

She hugged him and said “I feel bad that the Brytshore visit has brought this upon you.”

“This was supposed to happen. It was just a matter of time,” said Dwyeth.

As planned, they decide to first collect data from their university itself. His university had students from junior college up till post graduation and there was a small group of fellow researchers attending a program for researchers. Demi carried a notepad with her, so she could quickly write down what he sees. They went to the university at eight and stood by the entrance gate. There was no one there, as the college begins only at nine. They sit down near the entrance and wait for students to come. Their college was constructed like a big circle around a big ground at the centre of the building. All the departments were arranged in the circle. Outside the building, there were many gardens, food courts and indoor stadiums. Its structure was considered to be the best planned architecture in Camford. It was a quarter past eight and some students start coming in for the day. At half past eight, the first image appeared, Dwyeth kept looking at it, and that guy walked into the second year physics masters class. He asked Demi to note it down. She also takes a nice look at the guy. After five minutes, another person with an image



walked into the staff room. That was a lecturer. After that, the crowd increased. He kept seeing and passing on information to Demi and they recorded all the images. 'One microbiology masters second year', 'One bachelors management first year', 'One journalism masters first year', 'One fellow researcher', 'One chemistry bachelors third year', 'Two bachelors commerce second year', 'One masters computer science first year', "One masters engineering second year'.

It was time for class and they went to their lectures. Dwyeth's third year and Demi's first began. There was no image in Dwyeth's class and they meet again during lunch break.

"Did you find any in your class?" asked Demi.

"No. There is one in Masters Journalism first year, but I don't know him."

"Even I don't know anyone whom we saw in the morning," said Demi.

"How was your first day?"

"There are five whom I already know; my classmates from the Bachelors Program. The session was good."

Dwyeth and Demi remembered everyone they had seen carrying the images. They tried to make sense of the data they had collected. They had a total of ten images. But they didn't know what to read from the data. It was quite a mixed lot of data and they decide to collect more data. They decide to create a nice table with rows and columns to make the data analysis easy. They manage to record five more images during their lunch break. Again none of them were known to Demi or Dwyeth. Now they had a total of fifteen records.

They messaged the data they had collected to the group.

"Nak: Okay. Now go to other familiar places where you usually go. Like your hostel or swimming pool or a club."

"Dwyeth: Okay"

“Ashling: No. Go to a place where you can find lot of people. We need a place similar to the Airport.

“Nak: That’s better; you may get more varied data.”

“Brenda: But, what did you make from the fifteen records?”

“Dwyeth: We have one lecturer, one researcher, seven studying masters and six in bachelors.”

“Brenda: Okay. What else?”

“Demi: We just collected which class they went into.”

“Brenda: Okay. Do you remember anything specific about the image carriers when you saw them in the airport or today?

“Dwyeth: I am not able to recollect anything specific.”

“Brenda: Guys, we need more data. You need to think ‘Big data’. Not rows and columns. Damn it! Collect every possible information of everyone with the image.

“Dwyeth: What all things should I look out for?”

“Brenda: You must think like an investigating agency. Look for all sorts of data points. Gather details about everything you see and segregate it. Like note down the height, weight, dress, dress color, belt, belt color, shoes, shoe color, skin color, eye color, hair color, hair length, beard, mustache, body build, age, things they carry, their body language and also anything odd which you feel like recording.”

“Demi: That’s Big Data.”

“Brenda: Also, take a snap.”

“Dwyeth: Yes. It never crossed my mind.”

“Brenda: And now you don’t remember a thing about what you saw in the Airport.”

“Nak: Great.”

“Ashling: Do everything of what she said.”

“It’s a great start. We can go right away to the Airport and collect the image occurrences there,” said Demi

“Are you suggesting skipping the post lunch session?”

“Yes.”

“Is it okay for you? You are in your Masters.”

“No problem, they don’t do anything important on the first day. Anyway, I’ll ask my friend to record the entire session.”

“We’ll head to the ‘Tangent Mall’. Airport is quite far.”

Dwyeth and Demi went to the mall to observe the diverse crowd. Being a weekday and it being working hours the crowd was less. But there were enough images for recording the details. They recorded every detail listed out by Brenda. Dwyeth observed all the characteristics and details. Based on Dwyeth’s and Demi’s assumption they guessed the age group of all the men. They also managed to take a snap of all the image carriers and gave a name to them. They observed and made a record of thirty six images in four hours and decide to go to Demi’s house and analyze the data. They entered the data in a spreadsheet and sent it to all in the Oxshire group.

“Nak: That’s a lot of data to analyze.”

After spending two hours at it Demi posted the first comment about the data in their group chat.

“Demi: Majority of images are either fuming or incensed with rage.”

“Brenda: I think the image carriers have long hair. About seventy percent of them do.”

“Dwyeth: And most of them have a visible belly.”

“Ashling: Maybe the image makes them lazy.”

“Demi: Most of them wore blue shirt.”

“Nak: Majority of them carry something along with them.”

“Brenda: I have downloaded a statistical program and have fed this data into it. It has given me some results. I am sending it to all of you.”

She sends them a five page report, along with a detailed predictive probability data analytical report on the last page.

“Nak: Big Data Analysis.”

“Brenda: There are three data patterns which are very clearly visible. Around ninety eight percent of them wear a different belt color from that of their shoes. Eighty percent of them have long hair. Seventy eight percent of them wear blue shirt.”

“Ashling: There is no data relating to agricultural universities.”

“Dwyeth: Should I thank god?”

“Brenda: You should thank god for everything; even for sending you the devil.”

“Ashling: You must get their background details like their profession or what they do.”

“Dwyeth: That’s the last option. I don’t want to talk to them now.”

“Nak: I need to study statistics to understand some of the reports.”

“Brenda: Me, too.”

“Nak: I am going to sleep. Good night.”

Next day morning Brenda had messaged the group asking Dwyeth to collect more data.

Dwyeth and Demi skip the classes and go to the airport along with their laptop. Airport is a long drive so they skip the whole day. Once there they collected data from the varied crowd. They recorded the data in the spreadsheet and sent it to the group before leaving the airport by evening. They have collected close to hundred records.

By around nine, Brenda sends the analysis report from her program.

Again they all kept studying the data. But today the belt event had become ten percent and has lost its prominence. The blue shirt is gone and cream and brown shirts topped the data. Long hair was gone and short hair was in.

Brenda again asks them to go and collect more and more of big random data.

Dwyeth and Demi decide to do it on the week end.

Friday evening by four they go to Infinity, the biggest mall in Camford; there they find a huge crowd. They collect two hundred and fifty records and send it to the group by nine.

“Brenda: Guys today we must crack this damn report. I am sending the report for today along with the cumulative report for the three days.”

“Nak: The cumulative report should do.”

“Brenda: The age of the carriers is showing a pattern.”

“Ashling: You are bang on it. The age group twenty to thirty-five has the highest occurrence of images. Eighty-five percent.”

“Brenda: Within that twenty-three to twenty-eight is the highest. Sixty-eight percent.”

“Demi: We have three image occurrences in the fifteen to twenty age group, and two in the fifty-five to sixty age group; the youngest and the oldest groups.”

“Ashling: We need to go to places with the age groups below twenty

and above sixty.”

“Nak: A school and an old age home.”

“Ashling: I think I got what it could be, but I need these two age groups data to confirm.”

“Dwyeth: Old age home... I’ll get it tomorrow and the school data on Monday. But what do you think it to be?”

“Ashling: First get me the data.”

Dwyeth and Demi went to an old age home the next day and were surprised to find no images. They searched and visited three more old age homes and found no images there as well. They pass this information to Ashling.

On Monday Dwyeth and Demi decide to skip the last lecture and go to ‘Victory Springs High School’ at three. It was near to their college. They reached Victory Springs High School and waited near the school exit gate. The bell rang and all the students swarmed out. Dwyeth couldn’t see a single image in the entire school.

They immediately post this to the group; and they leave to Demi’s house. Ashling replies for the message by seven in the evening.

“Ashling: I think the image seems to be riding on men in the reproductive age.”

“Dwyeth: You mean to say that the image rides only on those men in a reproductive age.”

“Demi: What could the images be doing on men in reproductive ages?”

“Ashling: They are the souls.”

“Nak: Do you believe in souls?”

“Ashling: If you are conscious then you will understand that you have not designed your body and you are just inside integrated with it. This

consciousness helps in segregating you from the body. That 'YOU' is the soul."

"Brenda: Do animals and plants have souls?

"Ashling: There are many humans who don't believe in souls. I don't know about plants. If you think that a dog can think, then it certainly has some amount of intelligence and consciousness."

"Nak: Forget the animals, plants and dogs. Let's talk about humans and Dwyeth."

"Dwyeth: But there is already a soul inside every man and why is he getting another one?"

"Nak: Maybe the soul protrudes out when he attains a reproductive age? Or he gets a different soul when he attains the reproductive age?"

"Ashling: Everyone is born with a soul and I don't think anyone can change it. Maybe it is their progeny soul.

"Brenda: Exactly! The images could be the souls of their children."

"Ashling: The men carry the souls and the women carry the body of the child they are going to give birth to."

"Nak: Did you girls get trained in witchcraft or black magic?"

"Demi: So the women carry the bodies and the men the souls!!!" Demi tried to understand.

"Dwyeth: I think I should meet an exorcist or a preacher. But, I see some of images are pissed and displeased while others are not. What do they want from me?"

"Ashling: We need more data to find out why they are displeased."

"Dwyeth: Yes, I'll do that. Any luck with your dream therapy???"

"Ashling: I forgot to say. Yesterday, I saw you and also recollected that

I have seen you in the dream, when I woke up. It's a good start. Now I need to see you in the dream every day."

"Dwyeth: Great Ashling... Thanks a lot."

"Do you believe in souls?" Dwyeth asked Demi.

"Yes. I didn't design my body and so I consider me as a soul inside my body."

"Now imagine that you are showing up to me as a soul. Why do you keep showing up to me?" asked Dwyeth.

"Hmm. Maybe I need some help from you, as you are the gifted one who can see me and my emotions."

"What way can I help a soul?"

"Going by what Ashling said, maybe the soul needs your help in getting inside a body."

"What do you think I can do to the body? I am not even a doctor or an exorcist."

"I think we should do more data analysis," said Demi.

"Hmm... That's going to be horrible. I don't think I am really interested in going and talking to those carrying the furious images or should I say soul carriers; and then spending time with a hundred of them and collect data about them. The thought itself is disgusting. Before doing that I am planning to go back to Oxshire this weekend and spend some time in the university; where this damn thing began."

"I am also coming with you. I have never been to Oxshire."

Demi massaged him and relaxed his body. She hugged him and kissed him all over his face. Dwyeth kissed her mouth and body and undressed her. Dwyeth wanted to divert his mind from the horrific unknown souls and images and gets immersed in sex. As they were involved Dwyeth gets the Lavender ash fragrance all across her room. He shudders and looks



around. He found the black image pouring out from a painting hung in her room. It was the same painting which once made him sick. He got up and stood in fear. It kept pouring in full force and the scent of lavender ash became stronger than ever before. He was unable to stand its color and scent, and ran out of the room and her house. He ran away from her house. He went inside his hostel room and locked his room. He waited to see if the image followed him there.

Demi came running behind him to his hostel and called him out. But he messaged her to meet tomorrow and didn't come out of his room.

Next day he explained what he saw in her room. That evening he again saw the image in her house. It looked as if the image had decided to permanently stay in her house. He felt the same way when the image was riding on his neighbor in Oxshire. But this time, it didn't ride on anyone but stayed back in her house. Dwyeth went straight to his hostel and decided never to visit her house again.

"Is it safe for me to go to my house? I am not feeling comfortable," asked Demi.

"You need not worry, they just ride on men."

"I am going to change my room and tear and burn down all my paintings."

Even after making these changes, she felt uncomfortable to live in her house.

# CHAPTER 8

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## *THE SOUL & BODY*

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On Friday evening, they left for Oxshire.

Dwyeth introduced Demi to his parents and Maya.

The next morning, he took Demi to the university to meet all his friends.

Dwyeth told them about another update from his mom that Mrs. Clarke was pregnant when she died.

“Great. We are right on track. The soul left Mr. Clarke because it didn’t have a body, which it was expecting to receive,” said Ashling.

“Yes, and in Mr. Pollock’s case, he had a baby and the soul got on to his child from his shoulders.” said Brenda.

“Have you seen the new born babies? Did you see any souls inside or outside them?” asked Nak.

“No. I have never seen that.”

“You cannot see them after they have entered the body. But you have to go to the pregnancy ward and see the images, I mean souls entering the babies before or after delivery,” said Ashling.

“That is what you should do. We can confirm that it’s the soul once you see it entering,” said Nak.

They all decided to check this out. They went to Oxshire general hospital in Nak’s car to check if they had any pregnant women. They reached the reception and enquired about any deliveries taking place. The hospital didn’t have anyone undergoing labour. They come to know

that there were two deliveries that took place that morning. They all ask Dwyeth to have a look at the babies.

Dwyeth slowly crept near the pregnancy ward and saw lot of babies in cradles. But he could not find any souls or images outside of the babies.

“We need a place where more pregnancies happen. So that you can get a chance to see them and ascertain that the souls are entering the new born,” said Nak.

“The best place would be Camford, as there you find lot of people and lot of pregnancies. It’s like a pregnancy market there. You can see many deliveries happening simultaneously,” said Ashling.

“Also, you can expect the hospital staff to easily accept your request or you can make them accept your request with a little something,” said Brenda.

They all went back to the university.

“Okay. Let’s agree that these are souls and they are entering the new born baby. What have I got to do with it?” asked Dwyeth.

While they kept talking Dwyeth was terribly petrified when a black soul flew down and sat on Nak’s shoulder.

Dwyeth was startled, but he remained calm and asked slowly, “Nak, are you all right?”

“What? Why now?”

Dwyeth looked at the soul and asked Nak, “You didn’t feel anything?”

“What am I supposed to feel?” asked Nak.

“I see one on you now. Just now!”

“What? Where? Are you serious? I didn’t feel a thing.”

“I am not joking.”

Nak stood up and started jumping. Everyone was shocked and moved away from the table.

Nak shook his back and rubbed himself on the wall, like a donkey. "How does it look? Intimidating? Wrathful? Normal?" He again kept jumping.

"Really? How does it look?" asked Brenda.

"It looks normal and not vexed or dreadful. But it doesn't budge even an inch. There is no point in you jumping. It has to ride on you." And added, "It is the calmest image I have ever seen."

"May be you are his friend and that's why the soul has also befriended you and it looks calm," said Ashling.

"Now we'll come to know everything about this soul from you," said Brenda.

"What will you come to know? I don't feel a thing of this soul sitting on me. I don't feel any difference," said Nak and sat still, without moving, as if a doctor was giving him an injection. Nak again asked, "Are you serious? I am not able to believe it."

"I am not in a mood for jokes. It will not disturb you. Just go about your life as usual," said Dwyeth.

"So you are going to father a child?" asked Ashling.

Nak laughed. "No."

"But that's what we were concluding with our logic on the souls entering the body."

"Well...Then, whatever we concluded is wrong. I have not even dreamt of becoming a father. That thought has never crossed my mind."

"But the image is riding on you to get into your child," asked Dwyeth.

Nak laughed again, "Guys, come on, I'll never become a father until I

near my forties. Trust me on this.”

“Okay. Tell us more of all the things that happened after I left Oxshire. Tell me everything after you joined college. Everything that you haven’t told me so far,” asked Dwyeth.

“What do you want to know?”

“Are you seeing someone or have you proposed to someone?”

“I like a girl, who is studying with me. I have been seeing her since the first year. I proposed to her some months back and got a confirmation yesterday. I never told anyone of you. I thought of letting you all know after I get a confirmation.”

“Wow congrats. What’s her name?” asked Brenda.

“Rita.”

“Good. I think I know her,” said Ashling.

“Congrats” wished Dwyeth, “Tell me about your sex life.”

Nak frowned at Dwyeth for asking it in front of everyone and replied hesitantly, “Sex life... A couple of times, in the first year.”

“Okay, with whom?” asked Dwyeth.

“Of course with Rita. I have not been so lucky to have many sex partners. I mean so far... Anything can happen tomorrow.”

“Okay. First year... and after that?”

“After that it never happened.”

“Why?”

“Because her cousin had advised her not to have sex too often. As having it too often will make you look old too soon.”

“Oh, really?” asked Brenda.

“Yes, even I have heard of that. Having sex too early and too often in life will make you look like a forty year old in your twenties, and a sixty year old in your forties,” said Ashling.

Brenda thought, “This doesn’t apply to me. But still from now on I should ask someone as to how old do I look.’

“So you did nothing in the recent past?” asked Dwyeth

“No. Yesterday she accepted my proposal and we kissed. A confirmation kiss – of our partnership unto death.”

“Why then is the image on you? It means you have some other affair going on?” persisted Dwyeth.

“Rita is the only one whom I had spent time with. There is no one else.”

“Why is the image riding on you?” Dwyeth again asked the same question.

“I don’t know. I am not stupid enough to become a parent now. I’m just twenty-one. I have set aside my forties for that kind of responsibilities. It is possible that our logic for souls entering the babies could be wrong.” Nak yelled at Dwyeth, “I am not going to have a baby for the next twenty years. It’s stupid for the soul to come and sit on my shoulders. Maybe the soul has made a mistake,” and shouted at the image, “Get out of me, I am not going to give you a body. Do you hear me? Get off me.”

After period of silence Ashling asked, “Can we add Rita to the group?”

“We can do that later.”

They all talked for a while, and left for home.

Although Dwyeth did not react, he was deeply moved by Nak getting the image on him.

Dwyeth took Demi to some places in Oxshire along with his parents and Maya.

They went back to Camford and continued to do data collection and analysis of the random images he saw.

They planned to go and see a live birth in a hospital. Their request got rejected in two hospitals. They received the same negative response from many hospitals. Finally, he bribed the right person in one of them and made an arrangement to be invited to see a delivery. He and Demi were excited about this as they had never seen a live delivery before. Dwyeth was even more anxious and curious at the possibility of seeing the soul entering the body. His contact in the hospital told him that there can be a delivery in the next two days. The contact said he would be calling Dwyeth if he gets a confirmation. He advised Dwyeth to come down immediately when he calls and to follow him silently inside the hospital.

Dwyeth made arrangements to rush to the hospital as soon as his contact called him. He got a motorbike from one of his friends and kept it with him for the next two days. He also informed the hostel security of the possibility of a need to leave the hostel at night for a couple of hours. He made all the arrangements and was waiting for the call. But he did not get any call on the first day. The next day at seven in the morning, he got a call from his contact, who asked him to come down at once. He rushed to the hospital, picking up Demi on the way.

As already planned, they both moved casually into the hospital and met their contact. He took them across the delivery ward to another room adjacent to it. On the way, they see a couple of men and a woman waiting outside the ward. His contact takes them inside the adjacent room and opens a shaded window from where they can see the delivery. Dwyeth enquired with his contact about the husband of the pregnant lady. His contact tells him that it was the man in blue shirt standing outside the delivery ward when they came in. Dwyeth was shocked as the man in blue shirt had no soul riding on him. He again went out and walked across the delivery ward to see the man again. He confirmed that the husband did not have an image on him and got back into the adjacent

room.

"This is crazy, I am not able to see the image on him," said Dwyeth in a hushed tone.

"Let's see the delivery first. Maybe it comes after sometime, or maybe it has already got into her body," said Demi.

"Oh, that is also a possibility."

They both peeped through the window and saw their first delivery. There were three nurses standing around the lady who was undergoing labour pain. She shouted and groaned in pain. Her husband, the man in the blue shirt, also walked in and stood beside her, holding her arms. The atmosphere inside heats up and everyone becomes tensed. After a long forty minutes, the baby was delivered. Dwyeth and Demi quietly close the window and leave the hospital.

"Oh God, that was...eww" said Demi, and asked "So nothing happened to the father or the baby? And there was no soul seen anywhere?"

"Nothing happened. Maybe, as you said, the soul had gotten into the body already. But I am worried for the mother and the baby. If you remember, my neighbour Mr. Clarke's wife died during pregnancy. Maybe, the soul left Mr. Clarke's body much earlier, when it came to know about Mrs. Clarke's impending death, as it would not be receiving a new live body."

"So the soul comes to know about the miscarriage or abortion long before the actual delivery happens and stops riding."

"Yes, it could be possible and here also, it could be the case. We should wait for some days and keep a track on the health of the baby and the mother. We should keep collecting this data," said Dwyeth.

"Collecting this data! You plan to come down here again?"

"Yes of course. We need more and more of all types of data" said Dwyeth. "We need everything we can get."



They passed this information on to the Oxshire group.

“Nak: As I said, the logic of the souls entering the body is wrong, because I must not have a soul on me.”

“Brenda: Yes, there is something more to it.”

“Ashling: I saw you again in my dream and what I saw is that you are going prepared to sleep and lie down on the bed.”

“Dwyeth: What do you mean prepared?”

“Ashling: You look serious and your body language looks like you have an agenda.”

“Dwyeth: Thanks a lot. Please see if you could get anything else, like... Where is the bed? Is it in Camford or Oxshire or Brytshore? Is it day or night? And anything more which you could see.”

“Ashling: Sure, I’ll keep trying.”

Demi and Dwyeth continue collecting random data and keep building up their database. Months go by and everyone gets busy until the exams get over. Dwyeth had already planned to look out for a job and spends time in job hunting. He gets in touch with all his networks. Dwyeth hoped to get a job in some publication house in Camford. He moved to a rented house away from Demi’s house and never visited her house.

Dwyeth and Demi decide to go to Oxshire on the week end.

They meet Ashling and Brenda. He had messaged Nak to come, and was curious to see the mood of the soul riding on him. Nak comes down along with Rita and the soul on his shoulder. Nak introduced Rita to everyone and adds her to their chatting group.

Dwyeth saw the soul riding on Nak. It was very calm and it never made its presence felt. It was as if it was not there at all. It was the calmest of all the souls he had ever seen.

They all spend some time in the canteen.

Ashling, Nak, Brenda & Rita have planned to continue with higher studies in the Oxshire University.

"I again saw you going prepared to bed and sleeping. Then after some time you start floating," said Ashling.

"Floating! Where? Like in air or water?"

"Actually I saw this many times. Didn't tell you as the exams were going on. I see you do that again and again. But I am not able to see anything beyond floating."

"How can I float or where can I float and go?"

"May be you should start doing it yourself. I think the first part of what I see is you are going prepared to bed and sleeping. So maybe you should also do that and then you can get the answers. You should think of all the facts before you go to bed," said Ashling.

"Okay I'll try it."

They were talking and Dwyeth got a call from his contact at the hospital. His contact gives an update on the delivery which they saw in the hospital. He tells him that the baby died, but the mother is fine. Dwyeth shares this info with all of them.

"So, I am right. The soul was not there on that day because it came to know that the baby is going to die," said Dwyeth.

"Ufff... I must say that your health has deteriorated," said Ashling, all of a sudden. Everyone looked at Ashling. She looked serious and said, "I know it's a difficult time for you, when such strange things happen. Keep thinking about these things as you go to sleep. You'll get an answer. I believe that the unknown dream in the unknown sleep will give you an answer to the unknown soul," said Ashling.

Dwyeth, Nak and Brenda became a bit concerned after hearing Ashling.

They all spend some more time together in the canteen and they all left.

Dwyeth and Demi decide to spend some time in the university and they decide to walk through the Research Department to the botanical garden.

“Ashling is a different kind. Isn’t she? After she said you look tired, I thought about it and she was a hundred percent right. Maybe she is seeing you after a long time and could make out the difference. On the other hand, I couldn’t, as I am seeing you every day,” said Demi.

“Oh, she is a mystic. She gets to know things which none of us can. And what she told today was based on what is about to come and not what has already happened.”

“What!” Demi worried, “She is telling the future?”

“Yes. She has either seen something in her dream or it is something she felt instinctively.”

They kept walking. They crossed the Research Department and walked towards the botanical garden.

# CHAPTER 9

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## *THE SOURCE*

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They both walked into the botanical garden.

“It’s been years since I came to this place. Last time I came, was during my eleventh grade. That’s when I saw the image for the second time rising from the canal.” He took her to the mound where he came along with Brenda.

He made Demi sit on the same bench holds her hair tightly and starts kissing her mouth. He lifts her and makes love with her.

As he gets involved with her, he gets the fragrance of Lavender ash. He stops kissing her and looks at her face and the canal. He felt some difference. Again, as he goes to kiss her mouth, he sensed the scent from her breath. He looked all around, and it was only her breath which carried the scent. After a moment the black image pours out of her mouth, nose, ears and eyes. The soul poured out of her and freaks him out; he moves away from her and the bench. He saw one more fly towards him from the sky.

He thought that the souls would then stare at him. But instead, they flew towards him to attack him. He starts running. This was the first time the souls attack him. The souls chased him and he madly ran in fear across the garden and jumped into the canal. Demi came running towards him. The two images stood near the canal and frowned at him. He was staggering and shivering standing in the canal with water flowing up to his chest. He had believed that they just ride on shoulders and frown, and never expected this physical assault. The souls then looked at Demi with hate and vengeance and swooped towards Demi and slapped her and squeezed her neck.

For the first time, he saw the images, trying to hurt someone else. But

Demi doesn't feel a thing, and she came towards Dwyeth. He saw that the souls could do nothing to her, but they showed their intention towards Demi. The souls after making their intention clear flew away and disappeared. Dwyeth managed to get out of the canal.

"Are you alright?" asked Dwyeth.

"Yes. I am. What did they do? Did the souls attack you?"

"I am not able to figure it out. I felt being pushed into the canal, but they wanted to hurt me. They attacked you and squeezed your neck."

"My neck! I didn't feel anything."

"They just let me know their intentions. But I am wondering if they overpowered me and pushed me, or I myself went and fell in fear. For a moment I thought that the soul was riding on you or rather inside you. One of the souls poured out of your nose, mouth and eyes.

"Out of my face!"

"Yes. Another one came flying."

Dwyeth went back and sat on the bench and tried to make sense of this. He contemplated and reviewed the occurrences from the beginning.

After some time he said, "They are stopping me from having sex. I think they don't want me to kiss you or have sex with you. Even last time in your house the same thing happened. They don't want me to have sex with you and an image has started living permanently in your house,"

"Also, the images multiplied after I had sex with you in Brytshore. Maybe, many souls have been given the same job; to prevent me from having sex."

"They don't want you to have sex with anyone," said Demi.

"Yes. And maybe that's why I have not got a soul riding on me yet."

"This is new information regarding the souls preventing you from

having sex,” said Demi.

“Nak got the soul on him after he kissed Rita,” said Dwyeth.

“No. Nak didn’t get it just for a kiss. It was for the confirmation between them for becoming life partners.” said Demi and asked, “But if that is the case even you should have got it?”

“I have not seen any on me yet. Or maybe it is actually riding on me, but I cannot see it.” Dwyeth contemplated and said, “Or may be the soul knew that I am not a successful carrier. May be the soul understood that there was no life getting created out of me or out of us and would have considered it a waste to ride on me,” A lot of doubts came to his mind and he asked, “Nak gets the soul, but why haven’t I got one yet? I am also in love with you? Why haven’t I got one yet?”

Demi also got worried by these questions. Random thoughts filled their minds.

He thought that either he or Demi were going to die. He worried that maybe, they were not made for each other and would get separated sometime in the future. He shared these thoughts with Demi and the group.

“Nak: If our logic is right, then you should have got it. So, our soul logic is wrong.”

“Ashling: Maybe they want to stop you from having sex, because if you get a soul on you, they might lose you.”

“Brenda: You mean they won’t be able to see Dwyeth?”

“Ashling: No. Dwyeth won’t be able to see them. They can see all of us. Dwyeth is the only one who can see them back.”

“Brenda: So they don’t want to change the current state.”

“Ashling: They need your help. They won’t lose you at any cost...”

Dwyeth and Demi left home and went back to Camford.

Dwyeth started off with the Ashling's dream machine. He kept facts he knew about the souls and kept thinking about them before going to sleep.

He joined a publication house as an Associate and gets occupied with his job. He loved his job. His personal horror filled life did not disturb him in doing his job; as he had got used to this stuff right from school, from seventh grade.

Two months passed by and they have started talking with the progeny soul carriers to collect data. Initially, Dwyeth hesitated to speak, but later he did. All of the soul carriers had found their life partners and some of them have started their journey to become parents. Demi also followed some people and collected information about them. Both were equally troubled about not knowing if they were made for each other.

One morning when Dwyeth woke up, his mind was cluttered with some images. He quickly sensed that he was able to recollect something from his sleep. He had dreamt of something which he remembered when he woke up. He recollected his dream, where he went to bed, slept and then floated.

He messaged Ashling, telling her that he had achieved her state and saw exactly what she had seen. He told her the things and colours what he had seen in the dream and she confirmed back the same. She messaged him to go further deep into the unknown to know more of the unknown every night.

"Sure. Thanks a lot. I'll keep you posted on this," he messaged back.

He did this daily and successfully got the same dream every day. He did this for one month and every time he got the same dream. He starts losing his health; he wakes up tired, even after sleeping for a full nine hours. He felt as if he had been slaving all night and wakes up out of slavery. He lost his appetite and his health.

Demi, seeing this became very concerned and discussed this issue with her HOD, Dr. Murthy, who ran his private psychological clinic. He outright dismissed all the souls and images talk; he asked her to bring him to the clinic. She took Dwyeth to Dr. Murthy, who examined his

condition. He called it a psychological disorder by name Scionyctophobia - a fear of darkness and shadows. He wrote a prescription of anti depressants, sleep inducing pills and a pill for easing his nerves. The doctor then asked Dwyeth to wait outside.

While waiting he was able to overhear Dr. Murthy advising Demi.

He said, "You must look at him like a patient and not believe anything of what he says about the images or souls. In the prescription the last item HypnXY is a hypnotic drug. It is not for the nerves. You must buy it and take precaution to give it in very low doses. You get five mg tablets and give one every night before he sleeps. Do this for a month. I didn't want to tell him because he may think I or we are looking down upon him as a patient."

"Okay, doctor. Are you planning to conduct a hypnotic therapy on him?" asked Demi.

"Yes. We can identify his past memory state and interact with it. When you come after a month, I'll give him HypnZ during the therapy and we will talk to his powerful subconscious. You must see him only as a patient and nothing else." Demi takes care of him as advised by Dr. Murthy.

At home, Dwyeth initially doubted, but later took the pills before sleep. He continued with Ashling's dream technique. But nothing has yet gone beyond the floating scene. He starts feeling that Demi was maintaining a distance from him and he gets agitated at this. He assumed that Dr. Murthy has said something about him because of which she is withdrawing from the relationship. He hallucinates a lot of things and loses his sleep.

He decides to put an end to this. He wanted to get these souls out of his life. Dwyeth makes a brave plan. He decides to stand up against the souls and fight them. He decides to have sex with her. Because that's what the souls or images keep stopping him from doing. He decides to have sex with her in the botanical garden in the same place.

On the week end they go to Oxshire. Saturday morning he takes Demi to the same place in the botanical garden. He went early at nine, as no



one would be there at that time in the garden. He starts having naked sex with her on the same bench. He anticipated the souls to appear and scare him. He looked at her eyes, nose, ears and mouth constantly, to see if the soul comes from her inside. He also looks out for souls to fly down and to threaten him away from his sexual activity. He was ready for any physical aggression or assault by the souls. After ten minutes, a couple of souls come flying, and they keep flying around in the sky like eagles. They don't come near them or try to scare him. After another ten minutes, he saw some more come and many more kept coming. He had never seen so many flying. At least twenty of them were flying above them. Dwyeth made up his mind and continued with his sexual activity. He did not step back from the plan on seeing the huge numbers. He continued to engage with Demi with more passion and excitement. They had sex for thirty minutes, but nothing happened and none of the souls came down to stop him or scare him or attack him or Demi. The souls just kept circling above. He stopped having sex and sat on the ground beside the bench and stared at the canal.

He roared and cried out at the souls flying above, "What the hell do you want? Why do you keep doing this to me? At least tell me what you want? It's been years? Why?"

Nothing happened, for the next one hour and they decided to leave. They walked back home. The images followed him, but did not disturb him or hurt him or even try to scare him.

On the way home, he saw his sister Maya, now in tenth grade, cycling into the university with her friend Jim. He waved at her as she passed by them. They crossed the university gate and walked towards home and the souls followed him above. After a couple of minutes, all of a sudden the sky became white and bright. The black souls disappeared and flew away towards north, as if they were being preyed upon by some thing. From the other side, south, he saw something which again put him in a state of terror. He saw a huge red cloud hovering in the sky, coming towards him. He saw that it was a red version of the same image. This one looked very scary, and was larger than the black ones. It had feminine characteristics and looked like a woman: A witch. Dwyeth started saying his prayers and mustered all his guts and strength to face

this huge red soul coming towards him. As it came closer, he trembled and closed his eyes and fell to the ground. He had never seen such a bad soul. The black souls seem to be nothing in front of this red soul. It spewed red smoke all around and the greasy red cloud was made of blood.

“What happened?” panicked Demi on seeing Dwyeth trembling and lying down on the ground. She worried if the black images had hurt him physically.

He slowly opened his eyes to see it again. The red soul was circling around him and after a couple of minutes, it went away from him.

He sat up and saw it flying away from him and got a feel of its enormous size. It was at least five times bigger than the black ones.

“Are you alright? Talk to me” said Demi. Dwyeth concentrated on the red soul.

It flew towards Maya, who was cycling along with her friend. Dwyeth was helpless and remained seated on the ground.

The red soul circled and whiffled above Maya and Jim. It then swooped down all of a sudden, grabbed Maya and Jim and tossed them on to an approaching truck. The truck driver rammed the brakes and stopped barely before running them over.

Dwyeth was horror struck on seeing that the red image could actually move things and cause damage and pain.

Demi ran towards Maya to help them. Dwyeth didn't go; he was in a state of shock after seeing what the red image did. Maya and Jim were hurt badly, and they did not have a clue of what had happened.

Meanwhile the red soul again circled above Maya and Jim. Demi helped Maya and Jim, and comforted them. The red soul frowned at Dwyeth and slowly descended upon Maya, finding a place on her shoulder, sitting ten feet tall.

He became paranoid and psychotic and did not want to see the red image, which had completely engulfed his sister, again.

He got up and ran towards home.

Demi returned home after some time. "She has badly hurt her knees. Why did you run away?" asked Demi.

They packed their bags and left for the bus stand. He had not yet spoken a word to Demi. In the Oxshire bus stand, they saw a man who looked like a beggar. He looked very different, and Dwyeth has never seen him before in the bus stand. They boarded the bus and the beggar kept looking at Dwyeth. The beggar had very pleasant and calm eyes. As the bus was about to start from the Oxshire bus station, the beggar spoke the words "Go hungry, thirsty and dead tired into sleep". He repeated the same words. "Go hungry, thirsty and dead tired into sleep". Dwyeth and Demi didn't have a clue and ignored him like the rest of the passengers did. The bus began to depart from the bus stand. The beggar again spoke the same words loudly looking at Dwyeth.

They reached his home in Camford and Dwyeth told about the red image to Demi. Demi understood Dwyeth's helplessness in front of the red soul.

Dwyeth again heard the echo of the beggar's words. He then realized that the beggar wanted him to go to sleep in that state; the state of being hungry, thirsty and dead tired. He believed that the beggar was helping him move on to the next stage in his sleep. Dwyeth immediately travelled back to Oxshire to meet the beggar. But he could not find the beggar there and he came back to Camford. He immediately followed what the beggar said. He went without eating for a couple of days. Demi got worried seeing this.

In sleep, Dwyeth kept getting the same sequence, where he would float asleep. A couple of weeks pass by. He kept on with it and one day he got up to find that he was floating away from earth. He clung on to the word dead from what the beggar said and tried to do that. His thoughts became erratic. He thought maybe he needs to die and release the soul

inside him to start floating. He decides to change his form into a soul and fly to the source. The source — where he would know the truth. He had taken HypnXY and the other tablets only on the first day when Demi was with him. From the second day onwards, he did not take those tablets while informing Demi that he did. Now he had twenty-nine tablets of HypnXY with him. He decides to pop them all together before going to sleep. But he again thought of Demi. If he lived he might not be able to save his sister, but if he was dead, he would have to leave Demi and all of them and go on a separate path; a path shown in the dream; a path which might help him solve the mystery of these souls and also maybe save Maya.

He thought that maybe this was the reason why he had not got a soul riding on him and maybe Demi was not his life partner. He kept thinking about these things for a week without sleep, food and water. He finally makes up his mind that he should start floating and solve the puzzle of the soul. He pops all the twenty-nine pills of HypnXY along with the sleeping pills and goes to bed.

Like other times, Dwyeth floated in air. He floated away from Camford. He then floated further away from Voyla and still further away from earth. He floated higher and higher. He saw all the other planets orbiting. The earth kept getting smaller and smaller as he kept floating away from it. Other planets also became smaller as he floated away from all of them. The earth now looked like a tiny dot in space. He kept floating even further and he loses sight of earth and the planets. He floated away from the solar system. After floating for some more distance, the sun starts looking like a star. He kept floating further and was not able to identify our sun from other stars. He just saw many stars. He suddenly felt getting sucked into a sphere of darkness, which looked like a deep passage. He felt a lot of turbulence and disturbance until he entered it. After entering the sphere, he felt the quietness inside. Everything became visible and he had entered a different dimensional energy zone. From there, he saw our earth, which looked like a cute blue ball. He looked all around inside the sphere and found nothing. He then saw a couple of objects coming his way from earth. He saw a couple of images. At first, he thought he was being chased by the souls into the sphere. But these souls

seem to be in a state of bliss, and they float into the zone. As a sign of approval, the souls smile and nod at Dwyeth as they enter the zone and go deep inside it.

Now he was eager to know "Where did the souls go?" As soon as he thought this, a screen popped in front of him, and showed him where the two images have gone. They had gone to a place where there were some more souls. All the souls seemed to be working inside. Then he wondered, "What is this place?" The screen showed him "Black hole." Dwyeth startled and doubted, "Is it – The Black Hole."

The screen flashed "Yes. This is —The Black Hole—"

He understood that this place can track his thoughts and respond back to his thoughts with answers. He felt it as an advanced version of search engine, where the doctors, scientists and researchers have worked in search engine companies and produced such a device.

The screen showed, "Much more advanced than that."

Then he thought, "What am I supposed to do now?"

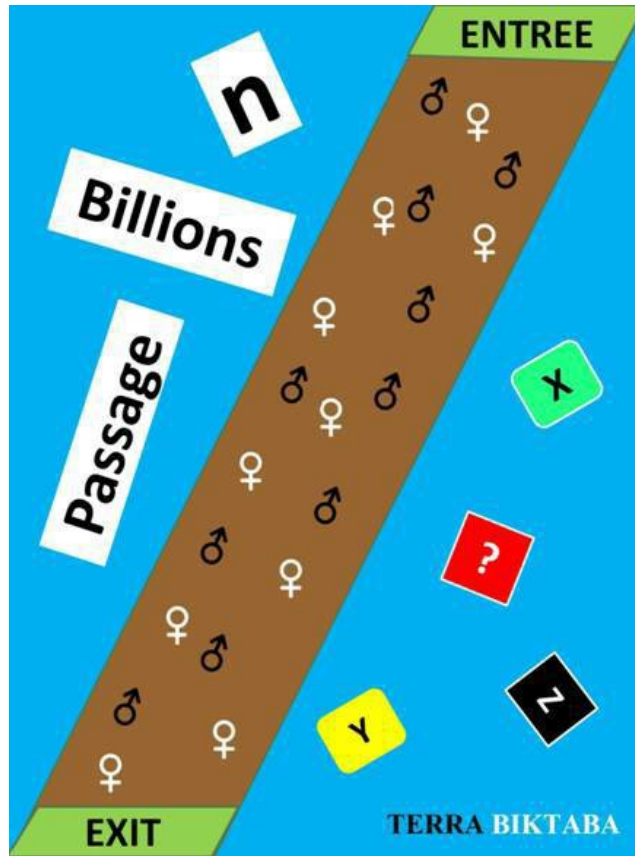
The screen flashed "n Billions passage xyz?" The screen showed him, "It's a book and you should read it."

Dwyeth wondered, "A book!!! What could be there in the book?"

The screen flashed, "It's the 'Book of Books', the 'Novel of Novels' and you'll come to know the 'Mystery of Mysteries' and the 'Mystery of Unknowns.'"

An eBook reading device and a physical book floated in front of him and he picked one to read.

## **PART – 2**



# **n Billions Passage XYZ?**

*Where do the dead go? What have they got to do  
with climate change?*

*By*

*Terra Biktaba*



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## **Dedication:**

“This work is dedicated to the advancement of  
the human race to the next stage”

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# PREFACE

Dear Reader,

This book is a result of reasoning and analysis made on nature and on understanding nature. Although it was easy to begin, this book has since been through several versions as I questioned and consolidated my ideas. The book can broadly be divided into two parts; the concepts from the first part serve the second. Some of the incidents mentioned have actually happened. The rest were born out of logical, analytical and critical reasoning, and analyzing the way we think and live. Mani is introduced in the first chapter as a consulting professional who meets a lady, who looks beyond the surface of life. Based on their individual experiences, they come up with some novel ideas about human society, life, birth and death. These concepts are used by other characters and they apply them to further discover more ideas using logic, science, reasoning and natural forces/elements/powers/phenomena.

The concepts are what make the story. The story provides a bird's eye view of human development and comprehension. The passage from birth to death is analyzed and an attempt is made to give a perspective on that journey, and our purpose on earth.

The narrative is set in the present, in India. As this land is the most probable place to have been most active in the passage of the dead. So many have passed away from this land that it can provide clues to the next stage, and guide us through the n billions passage discovery.

Cover image description:

The blue color depicts the blue ocean and the blue sky. The brown color depicts land. Humans are depicted in the male and female biology symbols passing over land. Everyone makes an entry and also an exit, through land. But there is no information about the stage before entry and the stage after exit. These are the ideas depicted in the cover image.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has been brought to its current shape with the help of those mentioned below.

I sincerely thank evolutionary sociology author, Sheila M Newman, for her encouragement and interest in my ideas and her appreciation of my Indian English writing style. She helped me with lot of ideas for the book as well as editing it. Sheila is also the editor of [candobetter.net](http://candobetter.net), a website for reform in democracy, environment, population, land-use planning and energy policy, based in Melbourne.

I extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Venkatesh Iyer (alias Venky) for helping me with a complete edit of my work. He helped me with a couple of brilliant ideas for the book. Venky is an author from Chennai and has written a couple of books and is busy shaping his upcoming novel.

Apart from these two, I also thank my teachers, cousins and friends, who also helped me with their valuable reviews, opinions and suggestions. I also thank all those strangers whom I met or saw or listened to briefly at different places.

# 1 – CHAPTER

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## *PEEP INTO THE DARK PLACE*

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It was 8:30 in the morning and Mani was ready and dressed for the office. He wore dark grey trousers with a light blue shirt. He checks his pant pockets for things that he usually forgets and comes back running for: his wallet, his phone, and his company access card. Before leaving his house, he does a quick energy booster; one exhausting round of non-stop push-ups. Usually he does around thirty, but some days it might only be five. He does this to increase his testosterone levels, and get the feel-good factor; to tackle the driving conditions, and not get affected by the noise and chaos. He then gulps eggs beaten in milk, starts his motorbike and leaves.

He doesn't drive a two wheeler without a helmet. While he very well understands the obvious protection, but also cares to save his pretty face, nose and eyes from getting soaked in the dust and pollution; as well as to avoid getting hit by filth, gravel, metal pieces and dried or fresh road-kill sausages of cats, rats and dogs.

In the past he never wore a helmet, but after coming to Chennai, he started wearing one. In the past it was considered unfashionable and stupid to wear a helmet, but now the pollution and dust across developing cities are forcing people to wear them: a good thing about pollution. The occasional blitz by transport authorities on helmets has made people to get accustomed to using them.

He had to drive eighteen kms from his house in Tiruvanmiyur to his office at Siruseri and wishes not to pick a fight with some x, y, z (random-unknown people in traffic). In Chennai, the vehicles are driven at a higher average speed than in Mani's home town. His home town is a second-tier city where the traffic is comparatively less. It took him a couple of weeks to get accustomed to the temper, mannerisms and

patience-level of commuters. He finds many zombies (scooters, motorbikes and cars) who keep honking as if they are driving a heavy container truck uphill, and if they are made to slow down, they'll have to down the gears and strain to bring the truck back to speed. Others behave as if they are driving an ambulance in an emergency. One definitely needs to honk as the traffic is quite chaotic, but there are some who think a horn should be used every single minute, and others derive pleasure out of honking whenever they drive. Mani observed lazy cab drivers save fuel, by minimally applying brakes, and making way by honking: a nonstop honking flight on wheels. He thinks people with a full-time driving job should be more professional instead of causing noise pollution and must start using a city friendly low decibel horn. Everyone can have two horns one for city driving and another for high ways and during emergencies.

Hence the push-ups, to rough up his immune system and maintain a carefree, non-judgmental attitude. He considers himself a yogi –a perfect and divine person, if he doesn't pick a fight with anyone and lets his mood get spoiled.

As usual he reaches office thirty minutes ahead of his reporting time and does some deep breathing to bring his testosterone level back to normal, lest he pick an ego clash with a coworker. Mani has moved to Chennai from his home town with a job offer, six months back. He has joined a Consulting Company specializing in the BFSI (Banking Financial Services and Insurance) space, located in a Special Economic Zone - SEZ.

Mani was previously a stockbroker, and had spent a lot of energy and time making and losing money in share trading. Many times, he had invested his personal funds and got caught with bad trades. He had dreamed of making it big in trading, but greed got the better of him. Mani served HNI clients - High Net-worth Individuals, who traded huge volumes. Typically a client would take huge Index positions for day trading with close decimal stop losses. He had been looking for a place to move out of this highly charged crazy environment, and immediately accepted an offer from a consulting company.

He works with a small team of sixteen members and contributes as a

functional consultant. There were six Java developers, a couple of DB specialists (Database), four testers, two functional consultants, a project lead and a project manager in the team. They were working on reengineering a trade booking system for an international bank. The team is happy that they are not working for an Asian client, as it would have meant longer hours every day.

The project lead or the project manager allocates Mani's work. Recently, Mani and Kamini, a senior Java technologist, have been asked to work on the MLI (Market Linked Instruments) module.

Everyone at work likes Kamini and she is lively. Her ability to communicate with each and every one in the office across different levels and types made her popular. In a way she positively boosts the morale and sets professional standards in the office.

Mani was smitten when he met Kamini on the first day six months back, when he moved into the project. Kamini was of his same age. She had such an effect on him that by the end of the first month he was already planning to propose her. But after the first month he came to know that she was already in a relationship with her college mate, Manoj. That day he felt heavily for wasting the entire month on something which was never there. He got drowned in a sea of emotions and it took a couple of bottles of vodka to bring him back to float, over the weekend. But soon after knowing the fact, he developed respect and friendship with Kamini and never let anyone know about his dreams for Kamini. His emotions for her got created and cremated deep inside his heart and memories.

But in the entire month that he wasted his strange mind thought that Kamini was also interested in him; may be because she flashed her lovely smile and hugged him a couple of times. His mind believed that she was aware of his emotions for her. But now, he had to say that love is blind and his own mind deceived him. He thanked god for sending back his mind to reality in a month's time.

But Kamini knew and understood Mani's emotions for her during the first month. She also liked him, but she was not available. And that's why



she started hugging him, and even now continues to give him a hug every now and then.

Mani and Kamini trust each other and have become very good work buddies. They frequently take coffee breaks, lunch breaks, or stroll around the SEZ Park together.

“There is an urgent requirement for my system to have a down time for four hours starting twelve noon. I want you to grant me access for the same and restart it by four. Do activate the alert message,” said Kamini in code and looked at Mani with a raised eyebrow.

“No worries, I can take care of that,” assured Mani, nodding his head.

Kamini had some personal work and needs to go out for four hours without permission- unnoticed. She wants Mani to swipe his access card when she leaves and to let her back in at four, and to inform her if anything comes up while she is away. This is what she said in their code language. They frequently help each other as and when required.

They both have to sit together today on a job that involves reading code, understanding and documenting, the existing logic and functionality in the MLI module, so that it gets signed-off by the client. They get help from the DB specialist when they come across a stored procedure in the code. Once this activity is complete the client will give the new requirements which have to be embedded in the existing code. The existing code was written eight years back by another company. So today they’ll have to stretch when Kamini comes back to office after finishing her personal work.

Mani usually goes to lunch late, at around three, as having it earlier would make him drowsy in front of the PC. After his lunch, he walks out of for a smoke to a little shop nearby; as he doesn’t like to smoke in crowded places or in the smoking zone inside the SEZ Park.

“One cigarette, one tea.”

He needs chocolate or tea to go with the cigarette, to pacify his gustatory and olfactory systems, which have developed disgust for

cigarette smoke. He has been trying to quit for four years. He has made tremendous progress in his plan to quit after his friend, Benny, gave him a reason to do so, two months back. Benny said, “Unlike drinking where you get a high or a float after a drink, cigarettes don’t make any difference after you smoke one. What is it that you get from a cigarette?” Although Mani knew this all along, hearing it from Benny convinced him.

He gets rid of the tea, as he could taste the melted plastic from the cup it was served in. He pops a chewing gum instead. As he smoked, he thought of the pending items he had to complete over the next two hours before sending them across to the team.

His planning was distracted by the sight of a beggar on the opposite side of the road. He was moving with great difficulty to find shade under a tree, away from the scorching heat of the Chennai sun. He was in his mid-fifties but moved like an eighty year old. The beggar seemed to be patiently waiting and observing everything around. He looked dead tired; but seemed contented with his lone companion—exhaustion. This was the first time Mani saw this beggar. Mani felt something different about this beggar and thought of giving him some money; occasionally he gave alms to the needy. He walked over to the beggar and handed the man a fifty rupee note.

The beggar wearily gazed at the note handed to him, and looked up sarcastically with a half smile, at the face offering it.

Mani was embarrassed. He wondered if he had mistaken the man for a beggar, or maybe he should not have offered money when it was not asked for.

He felt strange inside as the beggar’s sarcastic gaze pierced his eyes, and hit the conscience somewhere in his head. The beggar, without accepting the money, dropped his head.

Discomposed and feeling awkward at this reaction, Mani literally stammered and ordered,

“Here ...take it,” making a strong gesture to the beggar to accept it.

To which the beggar heeded, without looking back at his face.

Feeling relieved when the beggar accepted his offer, Mani looked around. A couple of guys saw this with indifference. Mani hastily kicked away his cigarette butt and walked back trying to grasp the sudden change of emotion and energy inside him. Many thoughts rushed to his mind. Maybe the beggar had not seen a fifty rupee note for a long time, or maybe the beggar felt money to be a pain, because what would he do after the fifty becomes zero? Maybe he was sick and tired of living this cycle many times. Maybe he would have just got accustomed to being without food and money comfortably; someone spoils it by giving money, only to restart the cycle... Hence the sarcastic look.

He tried to comfort himself stating that he had offered alms to many beggars in the past, and the only difference is this guy hadn't asked for anything. But maybe he felt happy accepting the money. Mani kept wondering if he did the right thing or the wrong, until he went back to his desk.

"Mani, we've a call at nine. It was not planned, it just came up," said Rishi.

"Fine, I'll stay back."

"Thanks, Mani."

Rishi is the Project Manager—PM. He is a perfectionist and a good motivator. Everyone respects and trusts him for anything and everything. He is always busy with at least ten spreadsheets and templates open in his system tracking everything on the project. He keeps abreast of all the tasks performed by the team, updating changes and effort estimates accordingly in his chart. He also ranks all the team members on the quality of the work they deliver and keeps track of delayed milestones. He knows how much time each person spends on each activity, and prepares the costing accordingly. The team attends the client conference call once every ten days. The PM speaks to the client on a daily basis and the rest of the team communicate via email.

The team attends the conference call in the meeting room. The

meeting room had a long table with twelve chairs and a telephone placed at the centre with a couple of speakers at either ends of the table. There is also a PC, a projector, and a TV for video-conferencing. Those who didn't get a chair, sit on whatever looked like a seat in the room.

The client call introduced changes to the original project requirements. These have to be accommodated within the already planned activities. This means a lot of rework at a huge additional cost on an earlier module which the team had completed two months back. The developers despised the change, because now they have to start work on it all over again. Testers, already on rest, will take some more rest until the new code is shipped to them.

The call gets over by ten, and Rishi asks Mani to stay back in the meeting room. Mani quickly checks his own to do list and wonders if he has missed something or goofed up in his deliveries, or if Rishi had come to know about him and Kamini frequently being missing during office hours. A sudden worry fills his stomach; he recollects that he has not yet started working on a gap analysis of the new BASEL regulation to be implemented in the system. Rishi had asked him to work on this a week back. After all the team members left, they both grab a coffee and come back to the meeting room.

"I think you've been almost six months in this project. Is that right? How do you find the work?" asked Rishi.

"Yes. It is six months. I'm finding the project interesting. All the team members are good, and very helpful. To get to know everything will take a couple of years for me."

"That's a long time. I'll reduce it by some months for you right away." Rishi gave him some gyan on the industry and its different participants. "That's good for now," with this Rishi ended his knowledge transfer to Mani. After this interaction they both decided to leave.

On the way out some one waved to Rishi and briefly talked to him.

"That was Naresh, he is on night shift. He is my friend's brother. He joined our company three years back as a fresher (a graduate with no

work experience getting employed for the first time). Six months back he was diagnosed with cancer. He is still on night shift.”

“Are you blaming night shift for his medical condition?” asked Mani.

“No. He has moved out of his home town and his family by coming to Chennai. He misused the new money he got from the job, and the freedom of moving away from parents. He didn’t get quality sleep and good food; eventually his health got affected. I have a friend who also works in night shifts and returns back home at morning five or six. First thing he does was to have a great meal and never went to bed hungry. He then switches off his phone and gets an undisturbed sleep for eight hours. Even now he works in night shift and he is fine. But these fresher’s don’t even do any one of these. Crazy fools! Always on the phone! They’ll know it when it’s too late and when they don’t have any insurance either. I think workers in night shifts must ask for a lifelong health insurance as you never know when what disease will strike you as a result of working in night shifts. The so called knowledge industry must wake up to this. The governments, ministers and the industry titans must take some steps in addressing this.”

“If there are so many people working in night, I guess there should be more options for people to have food,” added Mani. “Office cafeteria food cannot be had every day. Other outside restaurants must be open throughout night. Because for the night shift worker, his day is at night and he still needs to have his breakfast, lunch and dinner all at night.”

“That should be made available.”

“Also I heard the working hours get extended beyond eight or nine.”

“That’s because the freshers would be asked to report to a guy who himself would have been a fresher three or four years back. He has his learning curve in managing a team. Thus the new manager screws up the working hours and the shifts get extended.”

“If this happens for the graveyard shift it would be horrible.”

“Not as horrible as those in the rotational shifts. Rotational shift is the

most horrible shift in any industry. This shift makes sense when the employees are taken in a helicopter to a floating oil rig where they have to work for twelve hours for four days and come back to the shore to take a three day off. I don't know why there is a need for rotating the night shifts when you work on computers. Every month or fortnight the shift timings get changed. One doesn't even get to create a sleep cycle and his health is royally affected. No shifts should extend beyond nine hours and the rotational shifts must be banned."

"But, I think it is there for making everyone in the team take turns to come and work at night. So no one is unhappy about being the only one asked to come at night in the team."

"Well I feel a circadian rhythm is more important and the freshers don't even know what it is. By the time they come to know it, it will be too late. Shift timing must remain the same for at least four months before it gets changed. The body needs a rhythm and we must not change the rhythm often."

After this they both left for the day.

Mani felt good after his chat with Rishi, and also his unnecessary worry reminded him of an important task which he had forgotten. Mani enjoyed leaving office at these hours as there would not be crazy traffic after eleven.

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Months later, one morning at four Mani woke up from deep sleep and tossed around in his bed. He switched off the air conditioner and tried to get back to sleep waiting for dawn to break. He heard a clinking sound: someone had thrown something, and was walking away from his bed in the dark. He tried to figure out the man's face in the night light. As the man walked away from him, he looked back smiling at Mani and uttered something before disappearing into a dark corner of his room. He saw, the man had thrown some coins on him and Mani happily started collecting the coins in his bowl...

He sat up from his bed, and was shocked to realize that the man from

the dark place of his room was the beggar to whom he had handed a fifty rupee note. Horrified, he got out of the bed and switched on the lights, to be sure that it was a dream. He saw that the beggar had taken his shoes, and he, Mani, had become the beggar. From the dark place of his room he had peeped into a distant place; the future or into his next birth, with roles swapped with the beggar.

Disturbed by this dream, he didn't go back to bed, fearing that sleep can take him back to his dream sequence. Although a doubt lingered in his mind, 'Was it a dream?' He decides to go out to a nearby shop that opens at five for a cigarette. He doesn't keep cigarettes as he was trying to quit, and believed not having one ready in his pocket, will make him smoke less. It was still dark and some guys were having tea. Mani lighted a cigarette and thought about the dream. Immediately he saw one more guy light a cigarette and yet another guy across the street lighted one. At first, he thought that the guy across the street was the beggar, but he wasn't.

He later understood that when he lit up two other people lit up as well. It was a chain reaction from a smoker to a smoker; to light up when they see someone else do so. He also remembered how he started to smoke. He had spent three days with a client in his estate. The client regularly smoked; which made Mani to try it just once, and that resulted in keeping on with it till now. People start smoking by seeing someone else smoke.

Mani is well built and was in his late twenties. He takes proper care of his health, but still it was so difficult for him to quit. He had used his mental, physical, spiritual, psychic and emotional strategies to quit; at last, only Benny's logic seemed to help.

Back at home he again tried to figure out the beggars' half smile and tried to recollect what he uttered. He went to the beach at sunrise, and walked along the shore, trying to reason the beggar's visit. He stared at the curved ocean, and kept walking along the waves in search of an answer, but nothing came up.

In office Mani was considered to be someone special, because of his

stock-broking back ground. Often people come to him and ask about trading strategies. He tried to minimize advice and encouraged his colleagues to stop day trading. But he knew that this was an addiction as strong as cigarettes, if not more.

In some projects employees don't have internet access and phones aren't allowed inside. Other projects had no such restrictions. Mani's project also didn't have any restrictions and many of his team mates traded. He gets irritated with this and at times worried if he would again get into trading and gambling by spending time with these traders in his team.

It is now a year since he moved to Chennai and into his project. His project was drawing to a close and it was celebration time for the team. They planned a trip to a resort in Pondicherry, a resort hub one hundred and sixty kms south of Chennai.

All the team members went to Pondicherry for the week end party. They celebrated the team work and hard work put into the project and for finishing it on time. While partying, Kamini got a call from Manoj. She told Mani that Manoj was coming down to meet her. Kamini introduced Mani to Manoj. They spoke for a few minutes and Mani went back into the resort. Kamini came back after six hours. She looked disturbed and went to her room. Mani noticed her and doubted that she had some issue with Manoj, but quickly dismissed that thought. The party continued throughout night and everyone left back to Chennai the next day noon.

After the project got over, Mani realized that he will have to sit idle on the 'bench', until he gets another project. After spending two months on bench, Mani was still unsure about landing another project.

After another couple of weeks Mani got an offer from a company with immediate work for him. The job was in Bangalore and Mani decided to move.



## 2 – CHAPTER

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### *THE SOCIALIST IN A DEMOCRAZCITY*

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Mani settles down in Marathalli, a bustling suburb near Whitefield. Whitefield is a locality where lots of companies have set up offices. This has helped urbanize Marathalli, formerly a village on the outskirts of Bangalore. Mani's office was in ITPL -International Tech Park Ltd, a tech park in Whitefield, ten kms away from Marathalli. He had joined a consulting MNC, and his role was again that of a consultant: he had to design a process and keep optimizing it.

He does push-ups on his way to office and also on the way back home, as the traffic was worse than Chennai. Even though the commuting distance was half of what it was in Chennai, it took him the same time. And he found a lot of jerks honking above sensible decibel levels here as well.

After spending four months in Bangalore and in his office, he was enjoying every bit of it. He was in touch with all his project members from his previous company in Chennai through the group mail id. He also talked with Kamini over phone.

Since the Pondicherry trip Kamini had been having problems with Manoj. There had been a lot of misunderstanding between Kamini and Manoj. Kamini missed Mani as she wanted to discuss her issues with him. She had been missing Mani during the past four months after he left Chennai. So she decided to come to Bangalore and meet him for a day. But after meeting him, Kamini hesitates to speak about her issue with Manoj. She spent the day with him and went back to Chennai. She felt if Mani had been in Chennai, she would have told him. But now may be the distance has made her feel uncomfortable or maybe she felt it not right to talk to him about it; she was not clear why.

One day, returning from the office, he again saw the half smile beggar

from Chennai, sitting on a side-walk fixing him with a piercing stare that went straight through his helmet. Shocked at seeing him, Mani turned his bike around and came back to the spot, only to find no one. His mind was disturbed and troubled by the beggar. As he thought about this, he heard the words uttered by the beggar when he came in his dream in Chennai. "Go hungry, thirsty and dead tired..."

Mani wanted to smoke badly, and looked for a private place to do so. He saw a bar, rushed inside, ordered a beer and lighted a cigarette. Immediately a couple of guys who were already drinking light up cigarettes, confirming his reasoning that he should not light up even in a bar, because the chain reaction can make another guy light up. It was similar to yawning. He doesn't like to be a trigger to someone else smoking, and decided never to smoke again in public. He also decided never to trigger the chain reaction by the sense of smell. Even a whiff of cigarette smoke is a strong trigger for a smoker.

He went back to analyze the Chennai beggar appearing for the second time now in Bangalore. This time he concludes that it is not just a dream but something more than that; may be a vision. Why does this keep happening? What does the beggar want?

He gulped his beer and Googled 'Beggar'. He had never thought that he would Google beggar. Maybe he is the first person from India to browse beggars in Google or the whole of internet. But he couldn't relate to anything that he found. Totally drunk, Mani paid a guy to drop him at home with his bike and he dozed off in his bed.

The next morning when he woke up, he again heard the beggar's words, "Go hungry, thirsty and dead tired..." These thoughts troubled him on his way to office and he headed to work disappearing into the SEZ Park, into his office.

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One Saturday, at around eleven in the morning, he went to a Sagar restaurant for brunch and had a combo of *bisibellabath* --a mix of dal, rice and lentils with spices- and *Vangi bath* --brinjal rice. As he walked out of

the restaurant someone spoke to him.

“Excuse me sir. Can I have five minutes from you?” A lady in her mid twenties approached him.

“Yeah.” Normally, he avoids anyone trying to sell anything, but he couldn’t bring himself to avoid this lady. He looked at her eyes and develops an intense eye connect. Her eyes sparkled with life, which he hadn’t seen for a long time. She wore designer spectacles, which made her eyes look mysterious, and herself elegant. It was as if he had caught sight of something precious kept inside a protective glass house.

“Thank you; I’m Nalini from OOMEN-Org. We have an awareness drive going on at St.John’s hall in Koramangala, and we are inviting people for a thirty minute session starting one hour from now.” She handed out a flier with the location details.

“Okay. Why me? Do I look stupid and unaware?”

“Nothing like that, I approached you because I just saw you here.”

“Oh. Should I pay something for the awareness?” he enquired.

“No sir. No need to pay anything.”

“Awareness of what?”

“General everyday stuff, what we make a life out of.”

“Oh. Okay.”

Mani liked the girl and agreed, but still had doubts that it could be some marketing or membership scheme and decided not to give a penny if money was asked for in any form.

About thirty people had assembled in the St.John’s hall. On time, Nalini began.

“Thank you all for sparing time to come down here. I have a thirty-minute power point presentation for you.”

The projector beamed the first slide. She began, "I'd like to talk about the ills of over-consumption, materialism and how non-consumption leads to maintaining the sanity of nature. Nature is ripped off by the eight billion of us for our selfish wants. Extracting oil, gas, ores, minerals, metals, fracking, mining and quarrying from earth, loosens the solid structure and the ground below us. Whatever we take from underground creates a vacuum, and the vacuum suddenly sucks in due to pressure. That's when earthquakes happen and sinkholes get created. We must not ape the west in consumption and development. It'd be disastrous if the 1.3 billion of us were to start off on a consumption spree. Less is more for India."

She talked for the next five minutes on this slide. Mani kept looking at the girl. She looked tall and professional in formal trousers. He considered her broad perspective, and admired her attitude, confidence and looks. She had a natural pure confidence which took her, moved her and projected her. Perhaps the confidence was from the fact that she was doing the right-thing-in-need.

The next slide comes on.

"Our present generation is knowledge-driven, as there are lots of gigabytes and petabytes floating around, and we have many channels, networks and devices to choose from. This is contrary to the previous generation, which consumed the idiot box. The 1980's was when TV became hugely popular across India. The medium was used by new people and new entertainers, experimenting with their creativity and ideas, making a living, entertaining the new audience.

The joint family system was shattered by TV, as nearly every family member wanted to control the remote, which was impossible. Hence, extended families separated to gain control of the remote control. Then there was one TV, one fridge and one of each of all the other common household items bought by every new nuclear family.

Our generation needs a new broader bandwidth of thought, which can be curtailed if you follow their beliefs. So do your own search and research, and discuss your results socially, before you conclude and act

on your educated choices. *One must think about the different processes a particular product has been through before paying a penny to buy any man-made product. Try to differentiate between a man-made product and a naturally occurring product.*"

On the next, last slide.

"This is about global warming. The major cause of global warming is hard working and greedy people, who keep working hard every day without a break, and keep the mad race going on and on. Instead of being a part of the mad race, one should have a sense of what one wants, and on attaining that should stop. One should not find a reason to keep on going by comparing oneself with others thus perpetually changing the goal post. If you fix your goal post you will be environment friendly but not if you stay with the rat race. A meaningful race can happen only in your next birth when you rush through the fallopian to pierce the shell. The lazy and idle ones also add to global warming by using entertainment to kill time. Things you do for entertainment or for killing time kills nature. There is so much fight for resources and we have the lazy types who need entertainment. Please do your part by getting entertained for killing your time in a green way. That is when you go green not otherwise."

She kept on going for another ten minutes. Mani observed the audience; some of them looked enlightened while others looked lost. They needed more information and clarification on the slides.

"Thank you. I hope you'll ponder on these slides and make informed decisions." She concluded her awareness program.

To Mani's surprise there were no donation requests made nor did anyone bring any donation boxes. Mani sensed genuineness in the organization's effort. He felt the delivery method, professional, rather than someone jumping in front of you wearing a green T-shirt, green shoes, green jeans, green lipstick with a green receipt asking for green donations.

"Nalini, Good job. The earthquake and remote control were cool."

“Thank you, sir. Sorry, I didn’t get your name.”

“You can call me Mani. Your free presentation gives a good perspective for those who don’t know these basics.”

He liked her, and wanted to spend some time with her and asked, “I’d like to know more about your efforts and your organization.”

“I am in a hurry to go now. I have some other appointments.”

“Where is your office? I’d like to drop in sometime.”

“Instead, can you come down tomorrow to this same place at four. We have a session which gets over by four. After that we can spend time.”

“Fine.” They exchanged their mobile numbers.

Sunday evening around four, they met in the same place. They decide to chat over a coffee and went to a nearby coffee shop. Mani felt as if he had been waiting for a week, after having met her yesterday.

Mani liked her simple, yet charming, dress sense. Nalini’s red churidar, and a wavy blue dupatta casually draped across her chest, blended perfectly with the red surroundings. He enjoyed every moment watching his new found love. Born in Bangalore, Nalini and her sister were raised by her father. Her mother passed away when Nalini was in school. Nalini had studied Environment studies, and sociology.

Mani asked eagerly, “How and why did you choose these subjects to study?”

“After school I wanted to get involved in people and environment. Initially, I worked with an animal rights organization; later I moved into these subjects.”

“That’s good; I guess you’ve plenty to do in Bangalore.”

“Yes, plenty. What about you?”

“I work as a consultant.”

“In EC?” (Electronics City)

“No. I work for a company in ITPL.”

“How is work going?” she asked.

“Good. Where do you live?” he asked.

“I live in BTM Layout. And you?”

“In Marathalli. Where is your office?”

“We don’t have an office here.”

“No permanent office!” Mani chuckled, “So it’s the roads and sidewalks; anywhere, anytime, followed by a thirty minute PowerPoint session?”

“Yes. We have our HO in Delhi and most of the work gets done by email. That’s why I didn’t give you the address yesterday.”

“What about you?”

“We have two hundred branches across the globe and our employee strength is nearing a million.”

“It must be good working in a big, safe and secure organization?” she asked.

“Ha. You’re just looking at the size. There are many insecure people and non-performers, who can be asked to leave anytime.”

“Is it so?”

“Have you worked before for a big firm?” he asked.

“No, I’ve not worked for one, but I’ve been through one.”

“Which one?”

“My first BPZ.”

They were served with their orders; *Latte* and *Masala chai*.

“What? Which company?” he didn’t understand what she said and enquired.

“Not a company. My school and college, “My Primary BPZ.” I call anything big in size that houses more than forty people a BPZ: a “Bulk Processing Zone”. Any place where there are more than forty people makes me feel like I’m back in school and college.”

He felt she was making fun at the size of his company, but doubted she might have had a bad schooling and asked “Did you enjoy your school and college? Or did you feel over crowded in your school or college?”

“I enjoyed them,” she said. “And never felt overcrowded, but post analysis I came to this conclusion.”

“What made you do an analysis?”

“After finishing my college, I had to devote my time to my sister’s new born kids, until they went to school after four years. I’d never visited a school, after I finished mine. And after a long time, I set foot into a school, along with my nieces on their first day. I saw cute little ones from kinder garden to twelfth grade with the same uniform spread across the place, and that view represented an ocean to me. And in that ocean my nieces would be there for the next fifteen years, at least till they finish their graduation. I kept thinking further as to what happens after their graduation? Like after they are processed from this ocean? I concluded most of them will be in another ocean, like the one you’re in now. Having seen a big office space built near my house, and subsequently hundreds and thousands of people walking in and out of these every day, I was able to see a link between the educational institutions and these work places. Both have similar characteristics. In big manufacturing plants and other business units where there are uniforms, you can see the similar ocean effect. There are many buildings where people come and go every day, just like a school without the summer holidays. Yours is the “Secondary BPZ”. In your ocean you can find people in all sizes and shapes; ages



typically, ranging from twenty to sixty; the only difference being that you get paid for being in a Secondary BPZ and one has to pay to be in a Primary BPZ. Finally, you've another BPZ—the retirement homes and old age care centers, where you enter, post sixty. This is the final “Tertiary BPZ” and one has to pay to be in it. So isn't that a first of a class ‘Primary Bulk Processing Zone’, which I attended?”

“But even in small organizations with less than forty employees, the same thing happens; every one works for money.” he asked.

“It's all same, but it is clearly visible in a big one, as the input and output processing is huge. Everything goes in and out for a specific number of years or until something changes the dynamics.”

“It's an interesting way to look at things. But, why?” he asked.

“This view helps to see things as a whole and break down huge numbers.”

Mani liked her numerical approach as he himself was a very quantitative person.

“Are you good in maths?”

“No. I'm very bad in maths, but I like economics and I'm sort of good in valuing things. It's a natural thing.”

“Okay. As a social worker seeing the big picture, what are your views on beggars? Does your organization do anything for beggars?” He wanted to hear her views, and to check if he got some answers for his episodes with the beggar.

“We don't, but there is a sister concern which takes care of them. Beggars are undergoing injustice, and people should give them at least the basic needs. Every human should have access to resources, but we see them lead a bad, despicable life right in front of us. Being a beggar is extreme. The mere thought of being born as an orphan and becoming a ‘five-year-old-orphan-beggar’ is horrible. A BPZ should be set for them as well. We should pick all beggars from the streets and put them in BPZ.”

“Wow, a BPZ for them, a ‘Beggar Processing Zone’,” He said with no intended pun and added, “I hate the orphan makers.”

“Usually they are typically young teens and sometimes matured people get into unplanned pregnancies, and without the means to resources, leave their new babies with orphanages.”

“But there can be some who in the confidence of backing by orphanages, keep having kids and keep sending them to orphanages,” he said.

“Do you think such people are there?” Nalini puzzled at his strange yet could be true statement and said, “This can be found by DNA mapping all the kids in orphanages.”

Proud of his previous profession he thought, only stock market analysts and traders can have such perspectives with strange logics, as our minds are trained to work in extreme ways to make money; puzzling everyone around.

“Who knows, we are 8 billion, and we can see many varieties; not everyone acts thinking of the right/ wrong or good/ bad of their actions; most just act based on likes/ dislikes,” he responded.

“Any society must not be proud of having many orphanages; it shows the mentality of the society and times we live in. We don’t want orphans in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!!! Shame on us,” she said.

“But if people start blaming the orphanages, and if the orphanages become strict, then the orphan makers will become fetus killers and abortionists.”

“Oh cheese! Enough stop it,” she cried, and added, “It shows the mentality of the people and the quality of citizens you have. And to have a huge number of orphanages is disgusting. It shows how humans are having uncontrollable arousals worse than animals.” Sipping her coffee she added. “It shows the pathetic state of parenting, which if at all is there; is limited to the basics: food, clothing and shelter.”

Mani explained his episodes he had in Chennai and Bangalore with the beggar.

“May be he wants to tell you something. Not all beggars can come in a dream; some of them could be mystics. They have been made to control and train their sense organs for years. Some would have mastered this. Normally these visions happen when a mystic sends a message or a revealing. They come and give you some idea or a tip which you must start following. Did you get any of those things?”

“I have stopped public smoking. I am not going to be a trigger for a fellow citizen or a teenager to smoke... He made me do it by visiting my room or my dream and showing me a dynamically futuristic space and time.”

She laughed, “I am going to add your pun on ‘Beggar Processing Zone’, in my slides. It’s a nice beautiful thought.”

“I was not joking, that just came out as a rhyme.”

“Have you ever failed and lost a year in school?” She asked.

“No, I was moving closely with the bulk and was processed without delay,” Mani quipped.

“When I see a beggar, I hate to think of the survival of the fittest way of life. Don’t you think life should be different? We know how bad it is to lose one year in school and here is a beggar who loses all his years and his life time.”

“That’s right. What other hobbies or interests do you have?” He wanted to end the beggar talk and changed the subject.

“I watch movies. Do you?”

“Yeah. There are wonderful movies being made and I have enjoyed watching them. Some movies have moved me and moulded me and I am happy for it. But there are some crazy individuals who watch a movie and try it out in real life.”

“I had loved the albums produced by individuals during the nineties. It would be great if the song industry can flourish on its own and start dancing.”

“Even I miss those wonderful individual creative albums which were not bulk processed and twisted to cater to the main actor’s tone, style and character in that movie.”

“Piracy has shut it down or other unknown reasons. I don’t know if it can be revived with advanced technology available these days!”

“Any sentence read or heard can be right or wrong, including this one. The reader or the listener must analyze every sentence before arriving at conclusions. Disclaimers apply for a book – any book,” he added.

Changing tack, she asked, “What other hobbies?”

“I go on nature treks and hang out with friends. I play cricket and football in the club.”

“You look flexible and athletic,” she commented.

“What about you?” he asked.

“I’m a member in many social groups and I get invites for their group meetings. I like meeting different groups of people with similar interests.”

“So you pick groups based on your interest?”

“No, I pick anything randomly; attend and listen to them. Last time I went to a group meeting in Christ College. It was attended by people interested in civil construction, architecture and design. They talked about the entire infrastructure of Bangalore. It was great, and I got to know about the best cities with the best public services and utilities and also the architectural wonders around the world. I’ve also attended meetings on sky watching and music.”

“Oh, interesting. Lemme know if something comes up;”

“Would you be interested in a trip to Pune? I’m going for the first time,” she asked.

Mani felt happy at the invitation to spend more time with a beauty who has occupied his mind since yesterday “Oh yes. When and for what?”

“Third of next month, it’s a Friday. It is a philosopher’s guild happening for the fifth time. I missed the previous one. It is claimed that they’ll enlighten you on life and there is no repeat invites to anyone. This guild is started by two individuals; one of them is from Greece and the other from China.”

“Sounds good. Where did you get this info?”

“Based on my likes, the website sends me information about events and meetings.”

“Great.”

Nalini looked at her watch and was planning to leave home, “Hey, what do you think about my presentation, yesterday.”

“Hmm... They were good.”

“Anything in particular which you liked or any opinions?”

“As I said I liked the remote control and the earthquake.” Mani tried to recollect, “What is it with Global warming? I see a lot of talk on climate change.”

Nalini with zest, “Yeah, that’s good you asked. I have actually added some more on that. A normal human body is around 99°F. When you work your body temperature rises by one degree. Now consider the heat generated by the hard working types; the things and places they move and change. Their bodies generate more heat and their bodies heat up by two to three degrees. They are the ones responsible for global warming.”

Mani started laughing at her explanation.

“It’s not funny. I’ll give you more gyan. But, now I have to leave,” Nalini left for home.

Mani liked talking to her and understood that she is a very social person and has huge contacts with various people from different walks of life. She had strong views and is very opinionated; unlike him who ponders and changes his beliefs as and when he gets new data and information. Although Nalini acts and works for social causes, deep down she had a strong stream of misanthropic extreme views. After her education, she got selected for a three-year contract role with the UN, which involved travel around the world, but had to reject it, because her elder sister gave birth to quadruplets and became a widow. Her father couldn’t leave his job and she had to devote around four years to her sister’s kids until they started school. She helped in taking care of her sisters kids and assisted her; a new inexperienced twenty-one year old mother of four. Now, she prayed that her sister should live at least for the next fifteen years.

Circumstances have changed her from a social worker, a sociologist, to a hardcore extreme socialist, caught up in a free democratic city. He believed Bangalore had a good social life, but never expected he would come across a socialist. He had never spoken to anyone with such strong views; definitely a type he had not met before.

Nalini’s sister’s situation reminded him of his friend who had a different mindset. He lost all his friends to marriages, families and their kids. At least, the married friends without kids called him occasionally, but the married ones with kids erased him completely from their minds. He recollected one of his friends wanted to get married because he felt lonely, and he got married. But after marriage both husband and wife started feeling lonely together and bored, so they decided to have a kid for making their life purposeful and had a kid. But again after some time they felt that the kid was feeling lonely and had another kid for giving company to the first kid. And now, Mani was waiting to hear from him about the third kid; because as per ‘lonely—logic’, if two grown up people can feel lonely and need a kid, then definitely two small kids should feel lonely and would need another kid to eliminate their loneliness. Wouldn’t they?

One is born lonely, lives lonely and dies lonely; even twins or quadruplets, are different and lead different lives and die at different times. Don't they? Moron. We are nearing 8 billion and still feeling lonely. Donkeys!

He bought a cigarette before going home. Reaching home, he thinks, if he should smoke or not – as he was in the process of quitting. After some time, he was still thinking on deciding whether to smoke or not. For close to two hours, this decision-making process played in his head, and finally, he flushed the cigarette; for the fear of developing a split personality hit him, and he got out of the house and went for a drink.

In the nine months that passed by in Bangalore, he had learnt some Kannada. He liked learning new languages, and believed in learning the local language to appreciate the local way of life. Local gyan with its particular sayings, proverbs and slang can be enjoyed and experienced by learning and respecting the local language.

Two weeks later Kamini called Mani, as she was planning to come to Bangalore. Mani invited her to be his guest.

She arrived at his place in Bangalore. They meet after a gap of five months and had a lot to speak. Mani casually asked about Manoj and they move on to other topics.

Kamini hesitates to speak about the issue with Mani even now; and decides to talk about it later. Mani observed her and understood that something was wrong. She looked tired and depressed with thoughts. She looked very different from the Kamini he had known, and worked along with, in Chennai.

"You seem to be troubled. Is everything fine?" he asked her.

"I will call you or mail you later on this," she said.

"I am available right now, but I am also fine to read your mail later. I am just a call away." Kamini had another fight with Manoj a month back and has stopped speaking to him. And she wanted Mani's company very badly.

“How are things for you in Bangalore?”

“It’s good. Maybe you should also think about moving to Bangalore”

“I am also seriously thinking about it... Did you get into any casual or serious relationships?”

“No. Nothing serious has happened so far, nothing casual either.”

Mani looked closely at her devilish face, and understood that she has been having a tough time. He hugs her and kisses her forehead and comforts her.

“Would you like to have a drink?” he asked thinking she might start speaking. But she didn’t. After drinking for a couple of hours, she slept.

Next day Kamini got up late and got ready to leave to Chennai. She told him that she’ll drop a mail after reaching Chennai.

After reaching Chennai, Kamini again puts off writing to Mani.

A month passed by, and it was time for Pune. Mani met Nalini at Anandrao Circle, and they boarded the bus at eight in the evening, which would reach Pune around nine the next morning. He again liked her dress and understood that his time and mind were in Nalini’s orbit.

“Once I was woken up by the guy sitting next to me, resting his hand in-between my thighs,” said Mani. “I immediately took his hand and shoved it back to him.”

“He must’ve liked your... ” Nalini laughing, “thighs.”

“These seats are liked by filthy couples who enjoy bus sex.”

“Have you seen that in a bus?” she asked.

“Yes, only once, a couple had a good time and they disturbed my peace. Speaking of this reminds me of another incident. When I was travelling from Bangalore, there were a couple of girls on the adjacent two seats. The bus started on time at night nine, and around two in the



morning, I was woken up by the girl sitting adjacent to me. She gave her mobile to me. I thought she wants me to speak to someone who is asking for some location information or some translation. But it was a message typed in the screen, which read, "Someone is troubling us". She has typed that the guy sitting behind groped her and keeps doing it. I saw the guys sitting in the back seat. They looked asleep, so I decided to call the sleeping conductor and also informed the driver of the girl's problem, to which the conductor responded, "It's nothing sir, please leave it. I will switch on the night lamp and things will be fine."

"I felt miserable at the conductor's response. I wanted to prove my manliness in front of this cheap groping act. I asked the driver to drive down to the police station, which was on the way. To which the driver said, it would lead to wasting around five hours, and we will reach Mumbai late, by evening."

"Feeling frustrated, I went back to my seat. I started shouting from my seat at the driver and the conductor first. The driver stopped the bus; then I shouted at the guys sitting behind the girls."

"What the hell are you doing? Can't you control your urge to grope at night two o' clock? Damnit! Why didn't you find someone and satisfy your urge before boarding the bus; I guess for groping they charge fifty bucks or even less. Any sense, you A#B@C.....X\$Y&Z."

"I abused them with filthy language in Tamil, Hindi, Kannada and Malayalam because, I didn't know which language they spoke, as the bus was coming from Trivandrum in Kerala and passing through three states before reaching Mumbai - each spoke a different language."

"Some guys sitting at the back asked me to calm down. Maybe because I yelled and my sudden exploding voice had woken up everyone, to wonder if the bus had met with an accident. I thought of slapping those two filthy, cheap pleasure seekers, or maybe just one, but I didn't know which one and went back to my seat. After sitting back I realized one of the guys was continuously sleeping, and never woke up to all the noise and shouting I made. I saw the proverb in action— you cannot wake up someone acting asleep. I then felt bad for shouting at the guy sitting next

to him, who woke up from my noise and was the target of my anger. By morning around nine, the bus was one hour away from the destination, and many passengers started getting down. The girls, too, thanked me and got down. I looked back to see the groper, but he was not there and had already got down, and literally there was only me and the guy whom I shouted at.”

“Good. You’re a manly man, Mani,” said Nalini, “Veera Mani true to your name ‘Brave Balls’” (Literal translation of the name ‘Veera Mani’ - Mani’s full name)

“No, I was afraid later. I became a little bit uncomfortable because for sure he was not the one who groped and he looked decent. I could see and sense, from his straight face that he wanted to shout back at me, and thrash me. I got horrified as the day light made his biceps, triceps and forceps visible. The bus was nearing the bus station, which was the last stop. I heard this guy call someone to the bus station and my fear grew. I worried thinking that he was calling some of his friends to beat me up at the bus station. While he was on the phone, I asked the driver to stop and quietly crept out of the bus. I was relieved only when the bus kept moving without stopping; and this guy didn’t look out or follow me. It was one sort of an experience.”

“Going back to that incident, what’ll be the age of that groper?”

“Must’ve been in his mid twenty’s.”

“So he was boyish. It takes a lot of time for a boy to become a man?” She asked.

“A lot of time... And some remain boys throughout. Especially for such behaviour even at the age of sixty, people lose control. The other day, I read news of a grandfather molesting his granddaughter.”

“That’s true. That’s the power of sexual energy and drive. If it is not controlled right from the teens and throughout the life span; you may be controlled by it in various forms,” said Nalini.

He asked “When a young eighteen year old guy, rapes a female, then

his parents are also partly responsible. Aren't they? Because the parents cannot blame the society, or the Primary BPZ for not inculcating self control in the manly product that they have released, which they were once proud of, when it got released."

"The parents failed or shied away to transfer the knowledge to their son, on social mannerisms like how, where and with whom they can legally use their body parts," Nalini added, "They should also spend a small percentage of time behind the bars along with their manly product. I think they should be held responsible up to the age of thirty, not just eighteen for such things."

He reasoned and questioned a basic fact, "But what if one has got idiots as parents? Having an insane as a parent makes a huge difference, similar to day and night, and can determine your life and death. It's not a choice that one gets to make. It's again because these crackpots had parents who were also crackpots, and this insanity has been passed on from generation to generation. Families should start discussing and take responsibility for teaching their sons these basic things, and the governments should see to it that the families are capable enough to do this; else the governments should start compulsory training programs for all age groups."

"Yes something like a yearly scouts program for every one above the age group of twelve. We must include everyone without making any difference among the educated and uneducated. Subconsciously this will help uncivilized persons to become integrated with civilized and knowledgeable citizens and develop greater self control and self respect. People across all age groups must attend this annual scout program and get equipped with the basics. I think everyone can spare five days in a year, and it can make a big difference."

He enjoyed these interactions with Nalini. Meanwhile the bus had travelled well away from Bangalore. Mani felt a romance building up with Nalini, but something else was building up inside the bus. An acrid, rotten, pungent smell filled the bus. Everyone cursed the farter and covered their heads with blankets. The fart made the romance depart.

## 3 – CHAPTER

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### *THE PHILOSOPHERS' GUILD*

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On arrival at Pune by morning nine, they booked rooms at a hotel in Viman Nagar, close to the venue in Kalyani Nagar. They freshened up and went out for breakfast. They had the Marathi breakfast: *Poha* (flattened rice), *Sabudana Kichadi* (pudding made from tapioca root grains) and *Sabudana Vada* (doughnuts made from tapioca grains).

Mani liked Pune but he found idiots honking above city decibel limits here as well. He wondered, how long will it take for people to learn, to use a sensible city limit decibel horn and use a highway horn only to avoid an accident. The other option was to reduce the speed. Slower speed needs no honking.

Later, they took a stroll in the nearby mall, and wasted some time there before taking lunch - *thali*. After lunch they went back to the hotel. After they got into their room, Mani looked at her lovely body and thought of ways to make progress in trying to get her in his arms. He decides to start talking about her dress and then to go about talking on her lipstick... But before he could ask she said, "I have some additions to make on the slides. It'll take a couple of hours. If I get a chance, I'll make a presentation in the meeting."

"Ohh. Your three slides!"

"It has become five. I have added your Beggar processing zone and my global warming by the hard working human body with a 102 degree F."

Again Mani started laughing when she said 102°F.

"It's not a joke," She snapped, "Did you notice what happened in the bus yesterday?"

“No. Did you find someone having sex?”

“No. When we started from the bus station the driver maintained an AC temperature of 25 degree Celsius. Then after two hours when he increased the temperature to twenty seven the bus became warm and the driver received requests to reduce the temperature back to 25° C.”

“Okay that’s normal.”

“Exactly! Our earth is also a bus and everyone who comes in needs to have a good comfortable ride until they get down. If we keep working hard and move things every quarter then the earth would become warm. Winters may be okay, but in summer you can feel the extreme heat. Even if the temperature goes up by one degree it can create a lot of imbalance to the planet. Neither is it possible to reduce the temperature; nor you can get off the bus ride.”

Mani’s state of being was ruffled by this explanation and he went into understanding and integrating this new data with his existing memory and beliefs.

By evening, they started off towards the venue where the guild was scheduled to start by seven.

Still thoughtful Mani asked, “What do they discuss in the event? Do you have any idea?”

“They have a blog on this. In previous gatherings they have discussed the chicken or the egg, evolution, big bang, god, etc. Maybe they will ask something about your own philosophy of life?”

They reached the convention. There was a small banner inviting the visitors to the 21CPPG, “21st Century Pune Philo Guild”. It was named after Pune because it was started by Melissa and Yang, both of whom reside and work in Pune and were also guest lecturers and ex-students of the university. They both worked on contract jobs with government organizations and private research companies. Melissa worked as an astrophysicist and Yang a journalist.

Melissa greeted and invited Nalini and Mani in. They were led to the hall inside where around fifteen people had assembled.

Melissa was in her mid thirties and Yang in his late thirties. Fit and trim, they both looked young, and were dressed casually in jeans and T-shirt.

They waited for another fifteen minutes for all invitees to arrive. They were all seated in a circle facing everyone. Once the attendance was full, they started off.

“Good evening. I’m Melissa and this is Yang. We’re the founders of this guild, and we thank all of you for coming down. We’re going to skip introductions, in order to keep things anonymous, and we request you to refrain from getting acquainted with each other until we finish the second round tomorrow evening. Let’s just keep ourselves to ourselves so we generate more random and different ideas. However, I’m gonna let you know the various professional backgrounds of all of us.”

The guild doesn’t invite the same people twice, unless they experience a rich source of diverse knowledge and views from a member. The guild had been functioning for two years, and had organized four earlier gatherings; the present strength was around thirty-five; all were new attendees.

Melissa started off with the rules.

“Any member can start off with any subject and give forth ideas or views. We expect what you say to be debated by the rest over the logic and basis of the idea. The ideas should have a global reach and must be of interest and accepted by a majority. Don’t bring in beliefs and things which cannot be seen and verified. An idea must be spoken in one sentence, and the person who initiated the idea must not speak again in its support, unless countered. The rest of us can contribute if we have anything to say or we can move on to another idea after thirty seconds. One person may speak for or against the idea or say anything sensible and relevant to the idea. Anybody can present the same idea in a different way again, to get a better response after twenty minutes. We

may pitch in with ideas when they dry up. We're fishing for great, extreme, exotic thoughts and ideas. Let's have a blast."

Melissa and Yang pitch in with topics, stimulating the group to think and give their creative opinions. Anyone can give anything as a reward for a good idea. Melissa and Yang gift anything from a hundred to a thousand dollars for good thoughts and ideas with some logic and weight.

Yang began.

"The world has been inhabited by humans for millions of years, and during this period everyone has gone to the other side called death. It's been millions of years and we still have no clue as to where they have gone. Do we get to know, in death, or shall we remain equally ignorant in that stage as well, as we do in life?"

"What we are doing now is what we consider as the main purpose of our life; not a job or a wish list to do before we die. There is so much data floating around, and we have access to so much information, twenty four/seven. Shouldn't we integrate the work of past philosophers, who introduced the art and science of thinking morally and defining what is right, wrong, good, and bad in doing anything? Now with big data we can make sense, continue on their path, and try to analyze and arrive at better conclusions. Okay. Anyone can start."

Pause. (Someone started off the discussion and the below debate went on between two members)

"Whatever we see around is nature. It includes living and non-living things; in liquid, solid and semi-liquid forms," a member initiated.

"What semi liquids?" someone asked.

"Humans, animals, plants and other micro-organisms," he replied.

"Are you differentiating between humans and animals?" again she asked.

“Yes. Humans and animals are different, because we’ve six senses and animals have five.”

“Shouldn’t we consider the similarities, five of them, and ignore the one thing different; which we can’t see and we assume it to be there but maybe it’s actually not there?”

“Well, humans can think, and can easily hunt down a dog or a lion or any animal.”

“And that makes us a superior wild animal?”

“Humans have the three R’s of reading, writing and arithmetic; which animals don’t. Humans can explore, discover and invent many scientific and biological ideas, which advance the human race. Humans can dress like an animal, or like a man with a tie and a suit, or we can drive a car, fly a plane, or milk a cow, a tigress or an ostrich.”

“Does an ostrich have nipples?”

“I’ve the superior imagination power to create anything in my mind. I can imagine an ostrich with six nipples, which is feeding a snake, and at the same time talking to a human like a human, that’s my imagination.”

“Exactly. That’s what I’m saying from the beginning, we only imagine having an imaginary sixth sense, but in reality we don’t have it. The sixth sense is a product of human imagination. We are born and we do everything that animals do, with clothes on and in a larger, grander scale. But in the end, we are stripped naked and die a similar animal death. So there are more similarities than differences. So we should not discriminate between living things, human or animal.”

“What we saw now, was an act of sixth sense finding fault with the sixth sense. The lady spoke using her sixth sense, but she finds fault with the same sixth sense and claims that she doesn’t have a sixth sense. Does this seem logical to anyone? Ask an animal to speak and I’ll agree.”

“Animals have considered it useless to even think of the sixth sense and in doing so they have activated the right bandwidth and frequency of



the sixth sense. Humans use all frequencies and bandwidths, to such an extent that they don't regard the five tangible and visible similarities, but give more weight age to the invisible, imagined sixth sense."

"But why are you so angry with humans?" he asked.

"Because humans plan and think of a time which is not present, and dwell in the past and future rather than live in the moment. And, in effect, they do not act like animals."

"That's why I said animals and humans in the first place."

Everyone enjoyed being engrossed in the statements and agreed, that there was no agreement reached between the debaters.

Pause.

"People from the east are more sentimental and attached to their families than people from the west."

"Have you seen a physical west or a tangible east? There are billions of people around, and how can you generalize about east and west? What about those in the middle of east and west or south and north?"

Pause.

"Who is better in bringing up a child: Parents or grandparents?"

"Parents, as they have the necessary physical abilities. They are better than the grandparents, and can play with the child, and engage with it."

"Grandparents have experience. They know babies in general and have a good knowledge of their children's genes. Hence, they will raise the child in a cool composed manner, whereas parents, being inexperienced, may suffer unwanted stress in the cause of raising a boy to manhood or a girl to womanhood."

"A grandma cannot give milk."

"That can be outsourced," someone joked.

Pause.

“When does a boy become a man and a girl a woman?”

“A man at 35, and a woman at 30.”

“Physically a girl has got all the gyan or at least must be given all the gyan on sex education before she reaches puberty. The same should happen for boys as well, at around the same age.”

“No, pubescent children between the ages of ten and fourteen cannot understand these things. Sex education makes them feel quite odd; or we feel quite odd to teach them.”

“It is quite odd, but definitely they get to learn from lots of sources at this age. Some of them may learn it the wrong way, so better to teach them completely as half gyan is dangerous. And parents must take an active role in this. They cannot pass their responsibility to the governments or the schools or the internet,” Mani shared his view.

“Although, physically young people become sexually mature in their twenties; when are they mature mentally? I think mental maturity would not occur before thirty-plus in the case of females, and at least thirty-five in the case of males. Because that’s when most people would have had their share of ups and downs and have got adjusted to the ways of life.”

“A child is brought up under the protective layer of their parents. Immediately upon hitting twenty and some cases much before that, plans are made to get her or him married. There is a big list of stupid reasons for this urgency to marry off young people as they near their twenties. This includes societal pressures to get married. Again society pressurizes them to have a kid after marriage. Immediately after getting married these new branded adults become parents in a new family. Yesterday’s teenager is a parent today. A boy or girl may physically look like a woman or a man in their twenties but mental maturity takes time. The situation of a mentally matured lady and man having children is very different from that of a boy and girl who have matured only physically. In the latter the brain lacks the experience of manhood or womanhood which is so important for parenthood. Furthermore this knowledge is

not passed on to the child as the parents themselves never had it to pass it on. One should have seen a minimum number of sunrises and have a minimum of experience before becoming a parent. The whole of one's twenties is the time when one tries out things and learns to know what needs to be known; it is a natural process."

"There should be an international law for a minimum age for attaining Parenthood. Thirty sounds good and sensible. As all of us have come from monkeys we can have a common law."

"They say you cannot make out the age of a woman. But I can make out the difference between a girl and a woman. A young girl is a teenage girl. A young teenage girl becomes a matured girl between the ages of twenty-two to twenty-seven. A matured girl gets transitioned into a young woman when she enters her thirties. This is the time when a lady gets mentally prepared with knowledge for finding a man and takes care of herself for the journey she would begin. The entire twenties is the preparation time to attain this maturity for the subsequent journey of getting married and Parenthood. She also becomes matured to make out the difference between a man and a boy. Similarly a teenage boy becomes a matured boy between the ages of twenty-four to thirty-three. At thirty-five he becomes a young man."

"Well there are a lot of view points on this. I'd say only one thing. I am not a doctor or a fertility specialist, but I feel horrible when a young girl in her twenties becomes a mother. The power and freedom of a singleton is ripped off from her by her husband, parents, in-laws and society. A physically and mentally matured lady takes care of the twenties without taking unwanted pressures from family, friends, society and work; for motherhood in thirties. It's pathetic to see a girl becoming a mother, before becoming a young woman."

"The primary reason, for parents to get-rid-off their children at a young age on entering twenties is— a belief – that this age group will always be getting attracted to the opposite sex and end up doing some crazy stuff; some of them cannot control their erections and go and rape females. Even animals don't rape. Men stoop below animals and show they have less than five senses."

“Well it is a correct point what the parents are making. You should think positively about it. At least they are worried that their children might find the wrong person in the young age. So they get into arranging their marriage as soon as they come out of their teens. Aren’t they better than those, who with no clue leave their children to roam around the city streets like cows and bulls?”

“The cow and bull analogy was good. But doesn’t it again show that the parents themselves were so irresponsible to have made their children into someone unable to control their desires and pleasures; to such an extent that they need to be married off upon entering twenties. A parent can start teaching this to their children when they grow up. Can’t they? We must train everyone on basic life mannerisms, like a scouts program on discipline.”

“But even if someone didn’t have a choice and are married off in their early twenties, they can take time for becoming parents. Use the post marriage time to see things more clearly and plan for parenthood in thirties.”

“The sons are mainly married off to become more responsible by having a child. But this is a disgusting logic. Only a responsible man must start a family. Not the other way around.”

“People should find other ways to make their sons responsible. Making eighteen as a minimum age for many things in the society is a sign of adulthood. You have become adults and you are responsible for things you do. It is a great start to responsibility. But to become a parent and to start a family you need the thirties, not the twenties.”

“I guess whatever we talked on this topic applies to the educated ones and those who think they are knowledgeable. It is an entirely different story for the uneducated and those who start working as children in family businesses or other establishments. There are many who have never had any education nor was knowledge imparted to them in any form during their entire lives. They must be analyzed separately, as their logic and ways of life are quite different. But it is holy pathetic when you see the educated and the knowledgeable do these things.”

Pause.

“Hard working people have more egos.”

“Ego makes a man and also breaks a man.”

“A hard working guy works hard and breaks his back, and a lazy guy just sits around and breaks his back.”

Pause.

“Fish kill is a phenomenon which happens in water when the oxygen content becomes less and/or the water becomes more acidic with pollutants; the fish die. Similar conditions are happening on land and we can see human kill.”

“No. Humans will build huge oxygen tanks underground to support life, if such a scenario should arise.”

“Not everyone can afford a tank and so they will be fish kill or human kill.”

Pause.

Nalini asked for a quick ten minutes for her presentation and opened her laptop.

Nalini started with her five slides and talked about her views on BPZs and the three types of BPZ's. Then she spoke about her idea for a beggar BPZ and the effect of hard working bodies in raising the global temperature by three degrees.

Yang interrupted, stating, “DNA once created is created; everything one does is recorded by nature. It's not only the cloud but there is a DB in air, earth, water and space. Nature keeps a record of all the things and they get stored everywhere and in everything. It's a Divine Database.”

Melissa added, “Emotions are bad as, under their control, you tend to think erroneously, you're either too close or too far from the centre and lose your sense of being.”

“Emotions guide people’s instincts and have ruled for centuries,” said Nalini.

“What do you say about someone who is developmentally challenged? Is that justice? Someone has a strange disease and lives in pain throughout his life, is that justice? How can you compare different people who die at the age of 30, 15 or 5? What about 5 or 10 year olds losing their parent? Aren’t these bad? How do these compare with the beggar’s situation and what can we do about these things? Life and death is not in our hands,” Melissa responded.

“There is a big difference between man-made and naturally occurring things. Don’t you think so?” asked Nalini.

“You must not use emotions to discuss any point here; nobody likes emotions, we want logic and ideas, created from a tangible source,” said Mel.

“Every life is born out of an emotion,” again Nalini.

“Sex is not an emotion.”

“But one is born, when there is an emotional need and love between the parents to have one.”

Melissa smiled and said “Now I want you to relax and don’t get too serious. We all know that we are nothing but a consequence of you know what. Thank you. Don’t get emotional put logic to it.” Mel and Yang laughed at Nalini’s passionate argument and ended it.

Pause.

Pause.

Pause.

“Okay Guys. Thank you. We had a refreshing discussion. Thank you again for your time and for sharing your opinions. Have a good time until we meet tomorrow.” Melissa ended the meeting.

After the meeting, Nalini felt bad as only her ideas were rejected and ridiculed by Melissa, “Melissa is totally wrong and I don’t feel like coming to the guild tomorrow.”

Mani tried to comfort her, “Forget her. There are thirty-five other members who may have interesting things to say.”

To which she said, “But even the rest of them didn’t support my point of view.”

“You should have concentrated on your first three slides and the 99 to 102°F and your bus example. But you went deep into beggar zone. And they were right when they said you became emotional. There are other ways to analyze and judge things, choices and people.”

“Nalini... Nalini,” called out Melissa from behind pacing towards them.

“Nalini, Mani would you be interested in joining us for dinner tonight?” asked Melissa.

Nalini felt being invited to continue the argument in private and accepted. Mani was pleased to be invited.

Melissa and Yang took them to a restaurant as an appreciation for their contribution and to know more about them. While having their dinner Yang said, “Nalini, you’re the first one to be invited for a dinner with us, none of the attendees impressed us, including those from the previous four guild meetings.”

“Thank you.” Delighted and gratified of her views being honored, she asked, “You liked my views, but why did you argue with me?”

“No Nalini, we’re looking only for logic and not emotions. What we argued on emotions stays. We didn’t consider you at all on the subject of our argument. We like your BPZ concept but nothing of your emotional talk. The BPZ in our language, we call it the Billions Processing Zone. BPZ is a very good concept, because when we have to see the big picture, we should always look at it as a whole and not individually. Looking at individual lives and drawing some conclusions is simply not possible,

and hence the BPZ concept will help us in our research and analysis,” said Yang.

They interacted and learn about Melissa and Yang.

Melissa is originally from Greece. An only child, she moved from Athens to Mumbai with her parents in the eighties when her father became the head of a consumer product MNC for the Asia-Pacific region. She attended school in Mumbai but didn't enjoy it. Things changed when she moved to Pune to attend university, where she pursued her enthusiasm for science. She stayed in a hostel and enjoyed the freedom of being away from her parents watchful eyes. She went home to Mumbai on weekends. After she obtained her PhD in physics, she married Dinesh whom she met in the university. They made their home in Pune. She inspires knowledge and gyan to be shared, and thoughts to be awakened, so everyone appreciates life and learns to respect each other better. She is still in pursuit of meaning, which she considers her utmost purpose in life.

Yang is from mainland China. He is the only son of a wealthy Chinese industrialist with interests in various industries internationally. His grandfather is a self-made man and a very big industrialist settled in Zhengzhou, capital city of the Henan province. His father, his grandfather and many generations were all brought up in the same family house. Yang's father was educated to take care of the family businesses, but Yang's grandfather had different plans for Yang. He wanted him to pursue learning for the sake of pure knowledge rather than for profit. He encouraged him to choose from one of four options from an early age: geography, science, biology or philosophy. Yang chose philosophy. By the time he graduated in Philosophy from the local university, he had mastered all the subjects and all the schools of thought.

He wanted change and believed that an entirely different environment can stimulate more hybrid thoughts and perspectives, opening up new thinking dimensions.

Hence he chose India for his post graduate studies. He later went on to finish his postdoc in Pune. He is married to Huiliang and now settled



in Pune. They have a baby girl Oshin.

Mani asked, "Why are you having these meetings? What are you trying to teach the attendees?"

"We're not going to teach anything specific. We just discuss random topics and everyone airs their views, so in the process all of us come to know more things and more ways to look at things. Everyone is specialized in their own area of work and knowing their perspectives will be beneficial for the rest," said Melissa.

"But, what is your goal and what are you trying to get out of doing this?"

Melissa (Mel) and Yang tell them about Gola, who attended the same university. Mel met Yang during her third year of graduation, close to fourteen years back through a common friend, Gola. Yang and Gola were then doing their PhDs in philosophy and had been classmates since their post graduation days. Gola was a couple of years elder to Yang and Yang a couple of years elder to Mel.

Gola was from Angola, Africa. Civil unrest and constant wars made life difficult there. Sent by his uncle, Gola had come literally running for his life from Africa. He had lost his family; parents and two sisters to crossfire between two gangs and was orphaned. His uncle wanted him to remain in India until things settled back at home. Gola was in a state of shock and did nothing for a couple of years. After that he spent time at the university while waiting to go back to Africa. That's when he met Yang and Mel. Soon all three became close friends. They had in common that all of them were foreign students, of different nationalities. Gola didn't make a conscious choice to study philosophy, but he later enjoyed the subject.

Yang and Mel were deeply moved by what Gola had undergone and never left him alone throughout his stay in Pune. They enjoyed each other's company and spent a lot of time together. Melissa taught both of them enough Marathi to make their stay easy in Pune.

In Yang's car they have explored all the arterial roads and kacha (Dirt)

roads leading out of Pune, as well as the water bodies and hill stations nearby. Mel's house in Mumbai was a favorite weekend destination for socializing with her family and exploring the city.

Mel and Yang considered Gola their Guru. Mel was inspired by Gola right from the first day, as Gola constantly teased and confused her with interesting thoughts. They catch up at the university cafeteria during their breaks where they had lively discussions.

"Mel, why are you studying physics?"

"I'm interested in astronomy. I want to explore and find the meaning of life and I feel I can learn from the planets and outer space."

"So you're gonna find the meaning of life by looking outside, with a telescope or some deep peep. Have you understood everything in earth, before exploring something so far away?" Gola mocked.

"I don't see any point to use telescopes on earth to view earth, but I like to work with them. I also fancy a rocket ride and spending time in another planet, like an adventurous holiday trip."

"I thought so, and it beats all other holidays. You're gonna get a well-paid job in some space research agency, but not the meaning you're looking for."

"So be it, and that's why we call it research. Why did you take philosophy?" asked Mel.

"I took to philosophy as it was my savior, because when I was suddenly alone and orphaned, I was in a different sphere. I am lucky that I got into philosophy, as my mind was running high on revenge all the time."

"You mean hitting back at the gang which attacked you?"

"Yes. Africa is a vast area of land and there are many groups who fight and kill to plunder natural resources. Anyway, I can't hit back at anything or anybody. But there was this mad energy inside me, which enlarged my

nerves and veins, and changed me inside out.”

“So, philosophy calmed you down?”

“Yes, the gyan I got from philosophy calmed me down, and made me see the bigger picture of things, not just individual events. I’d suggest that you too should learn philosophy rather than peep at the planets and waste your time in trying to understand life.”

“Are you trying to teach knowledge to an astrophysicist?”

“I’m just giving a point of view. I love astrophysics. Do you know what a shooting star is?”

“It is debris entering earth’s atmosphere.”

“No, it is a jet, carrying some dead people to outer space. Each shooting star is like a rocket and has dead people, and they are transported to another place which is the next stage for those who pass the current one.”

“That’s nonsense,” said Mel.

Gola said laughing, “I’m trying to say that, philosophy is not one subject standing alone. It needs Chemistry, Biology, History, Geography, Maths, Psychology, Sociology and Astrophysics. So don’t get me wrong, just do what I say. Develop your interest in philosophy and you’ll do well in astronomy.”

“Where do you plan to work?” asked Mel.

“We are the ones, who direct what work needs to be done, and what is the right way to do it. We’re the guides to the governments, countries and what not. We are God’s messengers.”

“I’m flattered.”

“No really, many have become journalists, some work for NGO’s and many as think tanks for governments.”

“So after learning so much, what’s your definition of life?” asked Mel.

“One is, we should find out its definition for ourselves, and then find out what we should do in it.” Gola continued, “Everything is working perfectly and we should not call it a mystery and forget about it or take it for granted, even if it is available for free like air, water, land. When something works and we don’t know how it works, I call it ‘mystical work’. So that’s my definition of life. And for what I should do in life, I’m still not sure, but one can, however, be sure of things one must not do. To act we need knowledge, but since there is no complete knowledge, I will not act. My knowledge is developed only to the extent that, I understand things I should not do. And I’d prefer to stick to that... As Nature is mystical work, I’ll definitely do my part of the mystical work, but my core purpose is to constantly try to get a better definition of life, and meaning for my role in it. Because if we pass out of this stage without knowledge, then we’ll arrive at our next stop with the same ignorance, won’t we?”

“Are you again making fun of me? Like, I’ll land on the moon and look ignorant?”

“Dear, I am not making fun of you. As I said, I love all subjects. Do you know Plato, Aristotle...?”

“Of course, they were Greek philosophers.”

“You twit, they were your forefathers.”

“Oh my! What about your forefathers?”

“They were all tribes. They followed wise traditions.”

“What other discussions do you have in your PhD lectures?”

“We discuss life , death, sex, man, woman, rich, poor, religions, god, dreams, animals, mammals, reptiles, carnivores, omnivores, viviparous, oviparous, space, energy, planets, time, diseases, body parts, asexual reproduction, masturbation, procreation, plants, rocks, oceans, rivers, ponds, snow, mountains, sand, metals, minerals, superior, inferior, sea, lightning, ageing, etc. We discussed masturbation at length. But the most

interesting one was when we discussed, 'Is man – a part of Nature?'"

Mel keeps bugging Gola and Yang to tell her about all the topics they discuss in the course of their study. In turn Gola asks Mel to buy them *vada pav's* (a local snack; a burger) for each topic they discuss with her. On completion of his thesis, he got a job opportunity with an NGO and travelled to Africa for a couple of months. After returning, he was in a hurry to go back to Africa, as things were quite calm in Angola. He bid good bye to Mel and Yang. They all promised to be in touch, and to let each other know of any progress they make in their quest for meaning.

Before Gola left, he again said to Mel and Yang, "When in trouble, and in a bad place, always ask the blue, green and brown nature. It will respond if your mind is in the right frequency, wave length, space and time. Knowledge changes everything. I'm sure I'll not act until I receive it."

Mel and Yang continue to follow the ideas given by Gola, to generate diverse views. Gola had said that diverse opinions can be generated, if people from different backgrounds work together. Hence, they got into the act of generating ideas by forming a guild— '21CPPG', which they use for their own research in philosophy.

And so Mel, Yang, Mani and Nalini came to end of their dinner. Nalini and Mani understood the purpose of having these guild meetings and were happy to become permanent members of the guild. After dinner, they all left.

It was half past eleven by the time Mani and Nalini reached their hotel. They were dead tired roaming the whole day and retired for the day.

## 4 – CHAPTER

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### *THE SECOND DAY*

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Next day, they got up around eight, and had breakfast from their hotel restaurant.

“Melissa and Yang; nice guys working with lot of passion and enthusiasm,”

“Oh, now you say this because they like something of what you said,” he asked.

“They’ll understand the rest very soon.”

“We should again ask them about their Guru, Gola, and his definition of life.”

“They are trying to solve the mystery of life, which all three consider to be their ultimate purpose of being alive.”

“Was it a joke, the shooting star?”

“No it was not. They’ll not share their jokes with us. It is their belief that not everyone goes to the same place after death. They believe that if one doesn’t try to solve the mystery of life then one will land in the next stage with the same ignorance as they have about life now. To graduate to the next stage we should solve the mystery of life.”

“Was Gola making fun of the scientists and space researchers?”

“No, he was against people believing, that the scientists are going to find out the mystery of life. One cannot outsource discovering life. Every person has to do it for himself. Each one has to ask the questions and answer them— what is life, and what should I do in it? ”

“What are they going to do with my BPZ concept?”

“They are going to use your concept in finding out the billions processing zone. Let’s wait for today’s session and we’ll get to know more.”

“Also, according to one of the intellectuals we’re still boys and girls and not yet man or a woman.”

Mani said, “One is born alone so one must live alone for some time to get the ability to judge people independently. One should live to see a minimum number of days and nights and have a minimum of experience before one becomes a parent. There’re always some odd cases where the twenties behave matured and people in fifties and forties behave like teens.”

“Twenties is the time for weathering and to get marinated and seasoned for motherhood and parenthood in thirties. Thirty plus, as a standard for mental maturity, should be the minimum age, for humans to start having kids. Twenties is the time when one gets out of the Primary BPZ and gets adjusted to the Secondary BPZ.” she said.

“Yesterday, we’ve got onto something; something heavy and visible all around but never talked about. It was quite different to hear it aloud,” he said.

“Hmm... I think today we should talk something about the cradle of civilization and evolution to get to the mystery.”

They got ready and reached the venue for the meeting at two in the afternoon.

“Wildfires happen every year, so shouldn’t we cut all the trees before they happen? We can make furniture out of them, before they become ashes?”

“Some wild fires are created by real estate agents with hidden support from governments. So they make more room for the ever expanding population. The government gets the taxes and the agents charge their

rents from the increasing population. High GDP's are good for the government and the economy but are they good for nature and ecology?"

Pause

"Sperm and ovum are like military units of soldiers in waiting: 'a Standing-army'. Sperm is like Wi-Fi and can be generated any time, but ovum arrives in batches. This difference causes huge variations in the maturity levels of boys and girls. The monthly menses cycles have a huge impact on girls and make them more knowledgeable about life.

"One is made to go through it, the other one is invoked at will or if your will is unwilling. A hen physically has no option but to lay an egg."

"But mentally, the hen and the rooster have options. There is a choice to be made by everyone; to act, or not to act."

"In my office we recruited a twenty three year old fresher, Prem as an Associate. We came to know that he was in love with a girl. Suddenly they got married and had a baby; or they had a baby and got married. After a year, one day he ran away from his wife and child shunning his responsibilities. The girl looked matured and confident to bring up the child; but after a couple of years we came to know that she abandoned the baby in an orphanage."

Pause.

"Those who use perfumes don't take bath and they actually stink."

"I took a bath today and I do so every day, and I use perfume to get rid of other people's stinking odor."

Pause.

"Is sex an alien thing? Did Adam and Eve do the alien thing, which we continue?"

"Animals do it, so are they alien?"

"Animals are still a part of mystical nature. They can be doing it just to



fool us into thinking that all types of animals, mammals, reptiles and birds do it, and hence, it is natural for humans also to do it.”

“So, as I said yesterday the animals are superior, as they don’t claim a sixth sense,” said the lady from the first day’s debate.

To which everybody eagerly looked at the other debater for a response. But he answered blankly, “You cannot win an argument and I was done with it yesterday.”

“It took a serpent to trick the first man and woman into committing the original sin. So maybe now all the creatures are fooling us naturally.”

“Now we have a group of people eating all types of serpents to get more stamina and life to commit the same sin.”

“Adam and Eve lacked scientific knowledge, but we civilized and logical ones with external and internal memories and multi-threading concurrent processors and analytical DB’s— must make some improvements.”

Pause.

“In the future, war will happen without even knowing who did what, why, how and when. Nano wars, biological wars, weather altering weapons and resource depletion acts will be performed without anyone knowing or realizing.”

Pause.

“One can get lost in the beauty-deception trap of nature, and can spend his or her entire life in that zone. One can label two pumping hearts as superior or inferior, but in doing so his brain becomes inferior. A person concentrating on the face, nose, base, entrance and exit will not see the resident energy and the data.”

Pause.

“Déjà vu confirms that you are on the right path, it’s like a database-

sync with nature; some realize it.”

Pause.

“Tinnitus, the sound which some people hear, and some other constant sounds in the ears, are auditory effects of charges the body receives from the magnetic poles through the ears and also for memory sync with earth. Some people realize it. It can be seen similar to earth, receiving electricity from lightning to keep rotating and also for its memory sync with the solar system, space and the universe.”

Pause.

“The subconscious is quite powerful, and picks up everything from the surroundings and then in your real life the subconscious acts out many things for you; before your conscious even thinks of them. You are exchanging lot of things in every process. You’ve taken something and you’ve given something. You may not know exactly the value or the numbers, but it has happened. It’s always getting exchanged in the air everywhere. It is similar to a solid getting converted to a liquid or gas by constant weather change. Any time you spend with any element establishes a link with you and some ‘cells and atoms’ get exchanged, changing the existing states inside you. There is nothing created by nature for spending time without any exchanges.”

“But how do you filter it? You said it is sub-conscious!”

“I don’t know. It’s a mystery to find what you have taken subconsciously. After the sub conscious exchange you may feel different and think differently; or look at others and everything differently.

Pause.

“Group behaviour tells a lot about the social lives of people.”

“What about lonely people who don’t like groups, and create their own group of lonely people. Can this group be called social?”

“But that’s what happens in any group, like people with similar

mindsets or strategies come together and form a powerful union.”

Mani added, “Lonely people forming a family will tend to feel lonely, even after they form a big family.”

Pause.

“Anything you eat gets processed. We process roughly three kg of liquid and solid foods per day and that becomes a thousand kg per year. Our internal organs are marvelous, especially the digestive systems.”

“Some deep sea creatures and insects eat their own bodies and regenerate. We should also keep looking out for any internal organs, which have been targeted by the hungry stomach and passed on through the intestine.”

“Isn’t fact stranger than fiction?”

The participants looked at each other and wondered what profession were these guys from. May be they are Gastroenterologists or Proctologist or Stool specialists.

“I am a doctor specializing in bowels and bladders for animals and humans. I have transplanted a donkey’s intestine to a man; and a man’s to a goat.”

Pause.

“The gentleman very correctly termed derivatives as weapons of mass destruction. Imagine having surplus funds and similar contacts across the globe to help move the price of stock. Start buying at ten dollars and keep buying till it reaches two hundred and again start selling them at that rate to bring it back to ten. Easy bi-directional money.”

“Well this can even happen locally for shares listed in a small exchange with little liquidity and few investors.”

Pause

“One rupee has become what five paisa (one hundred paisa make one

rupee) was twenty years back. In a few years ten rupees will become one rupee and a hundred rupees will become ten. So should we buy everything today because tomorrow the ten rupees will become one hundred?"

"No, we should not buy anything because the value of one hundred is becoming ten. Everything will become cheap; one hundred itself is losing value and is becoming cheaper to ten."

"A product which you bought for ten rupees ten years before is now costing one hundred. So, not only the value of the product is increasing, but also the value of money itself is decreasing. So actually you are paying two hundred rupees today for something you bought for ten, ten years back. This is inflation in the price of the product along with the decrease in value of money."

"So how about creating a derivative for ten rupees which in ten years will become one hundred or two hundred rupees? So we can go short on the one hundred rupee note and go long on the one rupee note. I will exponentially multiply what I invest initially. The margin will be almost nil, as I'm going long and short on the same underlying."

The banker, the financial analyst, the economist and the mathematician laughed; rest of them understood nothing. These four bastards are enough to take the whole world economy into a recession and also later release their control over the supplies and demands to bring back the world economy out of it; to its natural state.

Pause.

Marriages in India are rules based. The groom is projected as an Alpha male even though he might be good for nothing, and the bride's parents desperately try to get rid of their daughter by paying a huge dowry. This system is accepted as that is what has been happening for many generations. This is considered healthy give and take.

Once the marriage gets over both the bride and the groom's parents will have different objectives. The common objective is to make the newly-wed couple have children. Because both of them are worried if

their son or daughter might be rejected and get divorced. This is a worry even if dowry is not involved. A child is considered as a bond and it is believed the child will strengthen the bond between the couple. This thought brings the child into an unknown and not yet steady relationship. Because usually the marriage happens between boys and girls and not man and woman, so there is a high probability of things getting messed up. So by having a grandchild the new grandparents think that they have permanently got rid of their children.

The groom and his parents additionally will also have the responsibility to secure the dowry; they secure it with a child.

Now the first problem is the reason to have a child in all the above cases is disgusting. Second is the age at which they do all this.

After marriage if the groom thinks he is not getting a sufficient dowry for his Alpha male characteristics, he openly or indirectly asks his wife for more dowry. If his demands are not met he goes for a divorce. He certainly doesn't want to deal with a dowry harassment case. So he makes his wife pregnant and then goes for divorce and starts acting like a pathetic jobless debtor. Now the court doesn't see it like dowry harassment, but just as incompatibility between two people with a child. The groom just has to pay a pathetic maintenance for the child. After having a child somehow the possibility of dowry harassment diminishes or disappears from the legal system.

Dowry is a part and parcel of Indian marriages. But please don't create a child to safe keep your dowry or to save the products from getting rejected (divorced) or finally to escape from dowry harassment while getting divorced.

Sometimes the groom might also be feeling incapable to manage his wife and so he makes her pregnant and makes her busy, so he can have some peaceful time. He goes on to give her another child if even after the first child he remains incapable to manage her.

In arranged marriages especially when the bride and the groom are a boy and a girl and not a man and a woman; there is a high probability

that they have not spent enough time to know each other. They start getting to know each other only after marriage. It'll take at least two years of living with someone to know him/her completely. But in these two years the girl is pregnant for the second time.

How can the girl become pregnant with an unknown man or boy? Two years of living together is the least which should be done before deciding to have a child. But on the contrary the girl is made pregnant on the first night!

A minimum time frame must be spent living together before deciding to have a child. Couples who are more than thirty years of age must spend at least one year living together before deciding to have a baby. Couples or boys and girls less than thirty years must spend many years together, understand each other, before deciding to have a baby.

Astrology is another major contributor to the confusion which prevails in Indian marriages. The problem is with the believers. The believers become non-believers when the astrologer tells something bad for their loved ones. They become non-believers but act based on what the astrologer said and try to avoid what the astrologer said; in turn making their belief more strong. Some crazy parents after knowing from the astrologer that their son or daughter has a high probability of bad things happening; hurry up to get them married off. Shouldn't they take double the time and care to get them married off?

Astrology again plays a role in divorce. If the child is born on a specific time and place combination, it can be bad for the parent. They go for a divorce.

Pause

Yang found nothing interesting and wanted to inject some quality ideas. He began slowly, "People are born and they die, and many millions and millions have passed away. The true count could be ten billion or fifty billion or n billions; whatever number you like. Yet there is no clue of where these dead people have gone."

"How can we find them?"

“Try to imagine what I say. Look all around, and you find all sorts of things; some living, some dead, some non-living, some you see and many are invisible, and the billions passage of the dead is unknown. We know birth to some extent, but still don’t know the why of it, but we have no clue of death. Nobody knows anything about it. Maybe the dead people have failed to communicate with us, or upon death they become selfish about giving gyan to those alive. There is some resistance and some power which prevents us from knowing anything about death, and nobody even likes to think about death.”

“Resistance from what?” someone asked.

“Resistance to drive your thoughts in that way,” said Yang.

“Resistance from whom?”

Yang again, “The Keepers, who maintain the secret of life and death, from all 7.7 billion of us and possibly from all those who have died, another n billion.”

“But why?”

“Now we can only conclude that it is their job and nothing else.”

“Are Keepers a part of nature?”

“Yes, the Keepers maybe hidden in microorganisms and bacteria, which kill any budding thought on knowing death. We may also call them higher intelligence.”

“So does it mean someone here can be attacked by invisible Keepers, as we are trying to do exactly what they don’t want us to?”

“Maybe, but nevertheless we should march ahead in search of meaning.” Yang said laughing... “I’m just kidding, it is natural to be unaware, and this state of ignorance is effected by the Keepers. I’m already facing some resistance. The flow of ideas here is getting reduced. I feel as if our brains are getting dried out. We should understand how the Keepers work, it’s like a puzzle, you’ve to solve it, and nature is

constantly fooling all of us.”

Mel added, “It does. Sometimes you feel hot and at other times cold. Your feelings and perceptions may run between extremes of dry/ wet, emotional/ non emotional, happy/ sad, superior/ inferior, right/wrong, good/ bad, desperate/indifferent, true/ false, strong/ weak, resourceful/ hopeless, natural/ artificial... These are some of the different states employed by nature, to confuse us and keep us unaware and ignorant.”

Pause.

Pause.

“They do everything to keep us in the unknown. For instance, I get the feeling that we all are thinking of ending this discussion now,” Yang got nothing more from the unique crowd, and decided to conclude.

Mel looked around for any more creative topics, but everyone looked done with their exotic resourcefulness. Melissa and Yang concluded the forum and thanked all of them for their contributions and interest in philosophy. Melissa was rushing home, and told Yang to catch up and discuss on the next week-end.

Yang congratulated Mani and Nalini on becoming a part of the guild and asked, “Did you guys like what we’re doing?”

“Yes sir, we had a great time and feel privileged to be associated with you,” said Mani.

“Good. You’ll be invited for the next meeting when it happens. Also, we’ll keep you informed or call you if we need you.”

With a sense of achievement, Mani and Nalini, returned to their hotel.

“These guys are trying to solve the mystery of death, which was started by Gola. They are trying to find out where the dead go. It sounds very vague and that’s why Yang was using the term resistance, because no one thinks about it,” said Mani.



“Yes, no one cares, even though everyone knows that it is the inevitable thing which takes us to the next stage. I have never thought of death. When I go to a funeral, I see people crying and sometimes I too cry and come back home and never think about it later.”

“Even in a dream I have never seen anything about death.”

“When you don’t think about death while you’re awake, how do you expect to get those in your dream?”

“That is resistance from the Keepers who don’t allow any thought to progress in that direction, when you’re awake.”

“Why isn’t anyone doing any research on this? Shouldn’t there be a huge investment in this? After all it is the one sure thing which everyone will benefit from!!”

“Maybe they’ve done many, but none got anything out of it. What if death was an awful place, and finding out that would make life unbearable for some. So that’s why the researcher might never publish his findings. Or as Yang said, like the dead the researcher becomes selfish and does not let anyone know of his research and findings on the secrets of death.”

“I liked the idea of earth receiving electricity from lightning, and also the alien sex ideas.”

“Me too. I found the sperm and the ‘Standing-army’ funny.”

“That one was funny, no clue where he was heading.”

“I feel as if some parts of my brain are unearthed and activated. I will need a month or so to nourish and digest all the topics properly. It’s as if, I’m travelling into space, into an unknown territory,” said Mani.

They packed and left the hotel and boarded the bus to Bangalore.

Mani all of a sudden started laughing.

“What happened?” she asked

He still couldn't stop and said, "Your BPZ."

"What for my BPZ?"

"You said you don't like working in a place where there are more than forty..." Mani again laughing and said, "...but you were born out of a BPZ which processed millions along with you."

"Okay, but I don't remember that BPZ. My thoughts are for the present when I can think for myself. Not bulk processed."

"So when are you planning to get married?" he asked.

"My father talked about marriage during my second year, but later seeing my sister's situation he stopped. My sister has undergone a lot of misery, and I am enjoying the benefits."

"I think since you've a job, you can have a say, else you won't've much of an option. Every bird should learn to catch a worm before it procreates," said Mani.

"As they said, I need to see a minimum number of single days and nights before I'm able to choose a pair. Also, this will happen only if I allow the sun's rays to grace my head. Else how will I make out the difference between a day and a night, or sunlight and moonlight? And then, a minimum of these two lights must hit my head before getting married... Not otherwise."

"Ancient humans roamed naked; the sunlight and the moonlight which their body received, gave them knowledge and they progressed. If you are not exposed to these lights you'll remain in darkness..."

Mani observed her smile and saw a change in his perception of Nalini. He sensed a shift from a feeling of sitting next to an intellectual socialist, to a wonderful lady with her own thoughts, beliefs and convictions. He has found an independent-vibrant-soul.

Nalini looked at Mani glancing at her and said, "Stop looking at me. Don't get any bus sex ideas."

“What...? No.” He busted out laughing, “No... I’m in love with your vision and the way you look at things.”

## 5 – CHAPTER

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### *THE PASSAGE*

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Melissa went home and her children were excited to leave for Chennai. She had promised to take them to see the rocket launch on Sunday night from Sriharikota –an island north of Chennai. She left for Chennai with her children, Ved & Jane. Her husband Dinesh didn't accompany them.

Melissa had wanted to marry someone totally different from her geographical location, as she believed it would result in varied DNA and experience, rather than the same ones, being passed on and on. She also believed that unlike poles attract, and wanted to marry someone from the south of the equator, as she was from the north. She considered all the countries to the south of the equator, but then she met Dinesh and both had a liking for each other from the beginning. They got married and settled in Pune.

On reaching Chennai, she rented a car, to take them to Sriharikota. At Sriharikota, there was the usual security check, and she had to show her ID at least five times before she reached the gate of the launch centre. Once in, she seated her children at the gallery and then she went to the Launch Control Room. Her friend Guru waved at her, but he was in a bad, pensive mood. The countdown had begun and she was back in the gallery with her children.

t-5, -4, -3, -2, -1, 0, t+1, +2, +3, +4... On reaching t-4, the engines solid propellant can be seen blazing; on t-0, the whole complex vibrated with the sound of thrust, created by the propellant for liftoff. The launch was successful, and the vehicle was guided on its track to its orbit. Later, Mel met Guru, and understood that he was angry at not being selected for a planetary mission.

On her way back to Pune, she thought about the rights and wrongs in Guru's non-selection. On reaching Pune, she immersed herself back in work.

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It's close to two months since Kamini stopped speaking with Manoj. She had decided to move to Bangalore, as soon as she came back to Chennai after meeting Mani. She wanted to stay away from Manoj. A new place can bring in a lot of new things. She wanted to be with Mani. She had already got an offer from a company in Bangalore and was serving her notice period.

Mani had taken a work from home facility and was busy working from home in Bangalore, when he received a mail from Kamini. Kamini wrote briefly about her issue with Manoj. Mani after reading her mail felt he made the right decision by not interfering in their personal lives. Now he wondered what could have gone wrong and called her up.

"Hi, is it a good time to talk?"

"Hi, give me a minute," Kamini walked out of the office, "Yeah, I just dropped you the mail. I sort of hesitated to talk about this during my visits to Bangalore."

"I understood something was wrong but didn't want to pick on that until you spoke it out."

"I got that."

"Would you let me know what happened?"

"Not now, we'll meet; may be after a couple of weeks."

"Sure. I can come down to Chennai, when you are free. It's been some time since I visited Chennai. I'll wait for your call. Bye."

Kamini decides to talk to Mani about everything when they meet. She wanted to surprise him by calling him after shifting to Bangalore.

Mani thought of all possible reasons behind the misunderstanding in a decade old relationship. Kamini was very knowledgeable, well read and also proportionately cunning to tackle any meanness against her. He doubted she may or may not talk about the issue with him in future.

On the following weekend, Melissa met Yang for lunch.

Mel was very practical and Yang gave importance to details. Both of them were very research oriented and constantly processed information in a cause and effect model. They don't see things and people at their present state but they understand the different processes and experience a particular thing or person has been through to get to this present form.

"I found some interesting stuff from our last guild meeting," said Yang.

"Something else other than the BPZ concept from Nalini?"

"Yes. The 'Standing-army' –the sperm and ovum; from Advait - the neurologist."

"Why!!! What's in it?"

"There are millions in every human body and they develop into energetic potent humans with various capabilities, and also have another million inside them. This is similar to the BPZ concept. We can look at how these huge numbers are processed using the BPZ processing logic."

"OK. Did you get anything from the animals and humans talk?" Mel asked.

"Yes."

"What?"

"The six-nippled ostrich."

"What?"

"Yes."

“That’s ridiculous.”

“Well that’s for the power of imagination,” he said.

“Oh, yes. That needs imagination. But don’t you think we should be actually looking at factual things?”

“Yes, but why do you think imagination to be wrong?”

“The thing is, it is not there, so it is not real.”

“Exactly. We’ll be able to simulate in our minds this unreal imaginary world, and can arrive at a lot of conclusions. Trust me.”

“As you say. You suddenly talked about Keepers. That was interesting.”

“That one just came to my mind at that time, it was triggered by some topic that was being discussed, and I don’t remember the topic.”

“Next time we will have a recording device, so that we can play it back to find the trigger,” said Mel.

“It is a very simple way to understand things around us. You just look around and tell me what all things are always there which we cannot see.” Yang continued, “I was seeing everything around, as a consequence of Keepers, keeping us in the unknown by creating this resistance. We should escape this resistance to think freely.”

“How do you plan to escape from the resistance which you only imagine?”

“It is imaginary, but powerful, when we can constantly think that we are kept in the unknown by the invisible Keepers. As the mind perceives, the visible physical things, and not the invisible things; I have assigned a physical phenomenon for resistance to assist the minds like yours.”

“Hmm. Thank you, for assisting my mind with phenomena like?” she asked.

“Atmospheric pressure, gravity and magnetism; these are everywhere but we don’t even think of them as they are invisible. And hence, we can get to see things more clearly when these forces are avoided. I’m trying to assign an invisible, natural phenomenon to improve our perception about the presence of Keepers. This one struck my mind a couple of days back.”

“That’s good. Mountains and peaks, escape the pressure and for gravity do you suggest outer space.”

“No, I remember seeing a report on places with less gravity on earth.”

“Oh yes, brilliant, you truly are a Physicist-Journalist.”

“I need to maintain some standards to be in the company of an astrophysicist,” said Yang.

“And for magnetism, there is some research on places with more and less of it. I will check them out,” she said.

“Mel, I’m heading to the Himalayas.”

“What? Why?”

“Actually I’m going to Mount Everest. I have once climbed 12,000 ft and this is around 29000 ft. Let me see if I am able to do it. I am leaving right now. I don’t know when I will be back.”

“Are you serious? It looks like you’ve been planning such a trip for a long time, and now you can fool your mind, with your imagination that you’re going on purpose.”

Yang laughing, “No, I just planned it two days back after assigning the invisible phenomena. I am just trying to ride and hold on to the thought wave and extract one or two bits of gyan before they disappear. I have used all my journalistic contacts in setting up everything for me, to make my visit to the summit: permits, travel documents, tickets, Sherpa (guide) and the equipments – all ready. Luckily, this is the season for trekking and there is a trekking team halting in the camp.”



“Hope you’ll be back with some clue to solve the puzzle from the low pressure summit. I’ll go to the low gravity or low magnetic zone after you come back. Meet me, and then I shall start.” Mel wished him a safe trip.

They don’t go together always, as they also believe that some journeys are meant to be taken alone; like the journey of birth and death happens to individuals and not to pairs. Traveling alone seeking truth is the ultimate journey in nature.

Mel Googled and found reports from NASA and ESA on places with less gravity. Nearest ones were the western coastal beaches, but the Indian Ocean from the southern tip of India had the least gravity among the nearest ones. However, she couldn’t find anything conclusive on electromagnetism.

Yang landed in Kathmandu, Nepal and contacted his Sherpa. His Sherpa has arranged all the necessary trekking and weather gears. But Yang didn’t come for trekking or to enjoy the climb but just wanted to be on top; so he chartered a helicopter that will drop him at the highest base camp at an altitude of 18,000 ft. The chopper halted for two hours at 6000 ft and 13000 ft at different camps on the way, for Yang to get acclimatized to the changes in pressure and oxygen levels at higher altitudes. The blood inside the body and the bones would also feel the difference in these changes. They would be facing less resistance and the flow would be more. Finally, the chopper dropped Yang at the base camp. He met the trekking team, with whom he would start his trek to the summit the next morning. They have to trek 11000 ft to the summit. There are no choppers allowed beyond the base camp. It is risky and illegal to use a chopper beyond the base camp. Everyone has to trek to the summit from this base camp.

The next morning he became ill, as the sudden drop in pressure, oxygen levels, and the weather made him sick. He was not able to go with the team, which started off at their scheduled time. Yang planned to join the next team which would start their trek to the summit next week. Till then he decided to halt at the camp.

No one is allowed to trek alone. For safety reasons you must be a part

of a team. He rested in the camp for a couple of days. While he rested, Yang realized that the invisible phenomenon has already attacked him with its variations in pressure and oxygen levels. A sudden fear struck him; fear of death, caused by the Keepers using the invisible phenomena. He meditated for a few minutes every hour, and got rid of his psychotic fear of the Keepers. After meditating and resting for two days in the camp, he felt better and enjoyed the lightness and chillness of the terrain. He then decided to get back to his work, and use the low pressure zone for his analysis and research.

In the camp, he was able to vividly imagine the functioning of the Keepers. Everything was rotating and deliberately kept in motion, so as to keep us from understanding anything. He was thinking about the Keepers and tried to link that idea with the BPZ and the Standing-army concepts to establish some logic.

In the camp, he often kept drinking hot soups to keep him warm. Whenever he tried to put on his thinking hat, he felt a lot of resistance and fell asleep. A couple of days passed with no progress. On the fifth day morning, he decided to explore a small mount near the camp, at a height of 1000ft from the base camp. He got ready with his trekking gear and started climbing. He quite easily reached the top of the mount.

From the peak he got a great view of the mountain valley. He sat there at 19000 ft and enjoyed the sight of the terrain and the snow-clad peaks. The Everest was also clearly visible from this mount. From this mount he was able to clearly think about the Keepers. He instinctively felt that this place is waiting to offer him something; something for which he has come so far.

A sudden joy filled his heart when he felt touched by Mother Nature, and he was sure that the keepers can't get to him here. He was on top of the world and felt he was in the right place to receive it in secrecy. He realized if he had not fallen sick and had continued the trek with the team as planned; he would have missed this splendid moment. He thanked her for presenting him with this solitary opportunity. He was now just waiting for her to give what he has come asking for. Hours passed by. He patiently waited and it was already four in the evening. He

knew if he didn't get back to the camp by six then the search team will come for him. So he decided to stay for one more hour and leave by five, and come back the next day. He poured a cup of coffee from his flask. The sky was very clear except for a beautiful patch of clouds, which had formed right in front of him. He kept his focus on the clouds, and suddenly some thoughts trickled down.

Water is recycled naturally with evaporation, and comes back with the clouds. The water in the lakes and oceans evaporate daily, only to accumulate as clouds and later pour back in its purest form. The food we eat is made up of various chemicals in the form of proteins, vitamins, minerals, acids etc., and they get processed into some other chemicals. Food is also recycled. The sewage treatment plant recycles both of them together. The human digestive system and the sewage treatment plant have similar processes. Other places water and food are naturally recycled, and these are the main basic needs of every human and animal. We cannot live without food or water. We store and consume these throughout our living life. Some food and water gets wasted as well.

We take everything from water and food to survive and in fact we are made up of whatever we have got from food and water. We are what we eat and drink. We also undergo the same thing what food and water undergo but maybe in a different way. We humans are also recycled by nature. All living things are recycled by nature including plants and animals.

As energy can neither be created nor destroyed, where would the dead get transformed? A place where the entrance is invisible; and maybe the place itself is invisible. All the dead are either buried or cremated and some are fed to vultures, in which case they again finally hit the ground. So when the body gets decomposed they mix with soil and atmosphere – earth and air.

But there is a time difference between death and cremation or burial. Where does this life energy go immediately upon death? Where can it go? Which place can receive the human energy without anyone seeing it?

It must be a compatible, invisible and mysterious place. A place or

thing used by nature to hide this energy. Maybe the dead become invisible until they get recycled? Or maybe the energy is sucked by the poles and recycled from there? Or the dead just get associated with the non-living things and hide inside them until they get recycled.”

But how do they get recycled from these states and places?

There is no place more mysterious than the human body itself. So maybe the dead are transferred to another human body. Inside the human body, they look-out for an empty place to hide. Maybe they'll get into the spacious lungs or maybe they'll hide in the body fat or inside the bones. Or even better, they just add to the already existing pool of sperm and ova ready for recycling. Also, increasing the number of sperms and ova in a live human body makes no difference to the body owners, as we have no perception of these things happening.

We know nothing of our own body. One's body is alien to oneself. Is there one part in the body which we can claim to know completely? Even doctors specialize in some parts of the body and there are many things which the entire medical community is trying to understand. The brain must identify this and should feel alienated inside the alien body. That's when the brain functions correctly and it is the first job of the brain to feel so. The brain must feel enslaved inside the alien body.

So one ends up exactly at the same place where they began the journey. Isn't that a complete cycle? Inside the body, they can be just waiting, or even better, they work for the Keepers, and in fact are a part of the Keepers team maintaining the body functions and its mysteries. When they are ejected, they become targeted by the Keepers. Before ejection their memories are erased, and they come into the 'Sphere of ignorance'. This is because if everything is formed from one big bang then everything must work with one another. Hence the 'Human Recycler', intakes all the dead and transfers them into the 'Standing-army'; sanitizes them by making them a part of the Keepers, and then again releases them into the Sphere of ignorance after deleting their memories. The Sphere of ignorance is the span of time between birth and death. Only successful Standing-army pairs (one sperm and one ovum) which complete the journey are released, rest of which die out in the

journey/process are sent back for recycling. So it's the dead who are becoming sperms and ova. The old and the babies have restricted movement, and are toothless.

This cycle is repeated to find how we deal with different circumstances, families, mindsets, bodies, beliefs and attitudes. Everyone is dealt with a different card on each entry into the Sphere of ignorance.

Yang's thoughts stopped. He poured the remaining coffee and drank all of it. He thanked Mother Nature and went back to the base camp. He also dropped the idea of trekking to the summit along with the next team which will arrive in a couple of days.

Nothing happened for the next three days. He daily climbed the same mount and spent time from nine in the morning to five in the evening; hoping to receive any other thoughts. Finally, the next day, he decided to return to Pune with whatever he had got, although he felt missing some essential logic. He again thanked Mother Nature and went back to Pune.

Yang messaged Melissa to schedule a conference call with Mani, Nalini and Advait the neurologist, as they all could help in giving more inputs and perspectives based on his ideas.

Melissa invited Mani and Nalini for the conference call and apprised them about the developments after the Pune guild meeting; so they all are in the same page to understand Yang's findings during the call. She told them about the Standing-army, the Six-nippled ostrich imagination, the Keepers and the physical phenomena assigned to the invisible Keepers: Gravity, Pressure & Magnetism. She also tried to reach Advait but couldn't and dropped him a mail.

Nalini and Mani already ruminating with all things they heard in Pune, were shocked to hear this latest development of Yang's phenomena and his Everest visit.

Nalini met Mani at his house and they decided to take the call from his house. Mani was happy to see Nalini in his house, and becomes alert to catch hold of the magic moment before she leaves his house.

"I can't believe Yang was in Everest for the entire last week to catch his thought wave and escape from the phenomena," said Mani.

"Sperms and ova or the Standing-army is the other idea which they have picked from the guild. It doesn't make any sense to me. What is the point in calling it that way?" Nalini asked.

"Initially I found it funny but it has a lot to it. They are the most powerful elements present on earth, because they are the ones evolving into humans. A soldier is a powerful human but there are billions of millions of sperms and ova, hence an army. Yang assigning physical phenomena, which are present everywhere to the invisible Keepers, is brilliant."

"Yes. Have you ever thought about gravity? Every movement you make—you do it against gravity. Even when you're dead tired and drop like a magnet to your bed, you wouldn't think about gravity or magnetism. But that's what is pulling you down."

"No one cares about the atmospheric pressure, which is constantly acting on our body from all the sides. Without this the body becomes disoriented. The pressure exerted by the air and atmosphere around helps in maintaining body functions and its shape. Else, everyone will be a shapeless ball with liquids and solids floating inside. We also don't think about it in a hill."

"Maybe that's why the saints and monks go to the peaks and meditate. Or rather the Indian and Chinese monks go there to get away from the billion population."

"I think you are confusing with the monks in Tibet. Those monks live there, they have not climbed there to meditate. The oxygen is less there, but to meditate you need to fill your lungs with oxygen. Sea level is best for meditation. The monks don't need to climb a mountain; they can attain the meditative state within them wherever they are. I have seen some go underground to the caves. He ceases to be a monk, if he puts some pre-conditions to meditate. Sensible humans bring that state within them throughout their life every day without thinking of climbing

up or down a hill.”

“Now let’s wait for the Chinese-Indian monk to come on the conference and tell us what he has got from the Everest.”

“And the ostrich with six nipples is for imagination.”

“They are serious about what they are doing and they have planned to visit these places where the resistance from the invisible phenomena is less,” said Mani, and added, “Every interaction is becoming more interesting.”

They waited for Yang and Melissa.

Back in Pune, Yang met Melissa and they initiated the conference call with Nalini and Mani. Yang explained in detail his concept of recycling, the human Recycler, and the functions of Keepers, and his concept of the Standing-army serving the Keepers, until they are ejected into the Sphere of ignorance. And he called each one a BPZ.

All three of them took some time to digest and comprehend what he said.

“Interesting way to use my BPZ concept; the Standing-army BPZ & the Recycler BPZ,” said Nalini.

“Anything in huge numbers is nothing but bulk.” said Mel, and asked “So, since we know nothing about our bodies you call it alien? Alien is something which we don’t know fully.”

“Yes. Isn’t it?”

“Going further with these perspectives, we also know nothing about food and water which is processed by the body. One is available in the ponds, reservoirs and pipes and the other one needs water to grow from a tiny seed; or we eat meat – which is again an alien body. So they are also alien to us, aren’t they?” asked Mani.

After a deep breath, Yang said, “Guess this is what, I was missing.

Thank you very much. Food and water are nothing but chemical compounds. You can find a list of compounds and chemical substances in the entire range of food we eat. So definitely anything which involves chemistry is a mystery; the chemist themselves named it so 'Chemystery'. Now add a little bit of energy to it with physics and, with the help of biology this chemical compound becomes a growing living thing, which is a perfectly mystical, alien thing. So the human body is a mystery and the food and water it consumes are again a mystery; all three are alien things. And we end up differentiating these alien things with non living things, which again are made of some other chemical compounds but closely packed atoms."

"So now we are all aliens surviving on alien food and alien water."

"I need to think again on whatever you just said, but I am getting an instinct, that I have something to take from Kanyakumari, the ocean," said Melissa.

"Okay. What's not there in Kanyakumari?" asked Nalini.

"A little bit of gravity is missing, but I could not find anything on magnetism," said Melissa.

"I guess magnetism is the main resistance present everywhere. There is no way to avoid it, but we have to constantly wage a war with it. So, my dear Astro-Phylosophist, go and do your part; your duty," said Yang.

"Thanks Yang, I'll ping any of you, if I need help."

They all wished her good luck and ended the call. She would be back in a week's time.

"These perspectives take me to another dimension altogether," said Mani, "Once you die, you're recycled by the Recycler to be later transferred to the Standing-army; who in turn serve the Keepers in maintaining the body functions and the mysteries of life and death. They're also sanitized there. One army pair of sperm and ova is released by the Keepers and they successfully make the journey to land in the Sphere of ignorance, which is the time and space between life and death."



“The army pair is the new born baby. Before the baby comes into the Sphere of ignorance, the baby’s memories are erased. They don’t have any memory of the Recycler, the Standing-army or the Keepers,” added Nalini

“Thus ending back as a sperm and ovum, exactly the way it all began, a full cycle,” said Mani.

“Also, another important question is, if dead energy can get recycled into the Standing-army of an animal or insect?” asked Nalini.

“This’ll again start the animal or human debate.”

“Does a male get recycled only to a sperm or he can also be recycled to an ovum?” she asked.

“That’s a good question maybe we should have this discussed in the next guild meeting. Also, male can be recycled to a sperm anytime; as they said it is a wifi system; anytime recycling can be done. But for females it is done in bulk-one-time-upload during puberty.”

“Hmm. The Sperm and ova form an army pair and enter the Sphere of ignorance; so when they leave the Sphere of ignorance upon death they have to again get separated, like xx chromosomes or xy chromosomes. What do you think?” she asked.

“Yeah. I think they will be segregated and separated by the Recycler based on their chromosomes or maybe more complex DNA or based on the chemical compounds of the sperm and ova. That’s a good point. I guess we need a microbiologist for this; a very terrific microbiologist/researcher.”

“We can send two people underground to a place where there is no life. There we will kill one of them and check if the other person’s chromosome/ DNA count has increased in his body,” she said.

“Wow! Maybe some researcher would’ve tried it out. Or maybe you just gave an idea for someone to try this out. Your mind has also become quite extreme and you are thinking like a trader – a forex or oil trader.”

“Yes. I’ve subconsciously exchanged some atoms and cells with you, and now I’m thinking like a stock trader.”

“Good. Welcome to the maniac club.”

They discussed this idea further for some more time.

In the time which passed, Mani gets excited at the vibrancy and liveliness of Nalini and makes a move. He hugs her and holds her close to him and kisses her.”

They kissed each other. Mani wanted to have sex with her, but she was not in a mood for it, and promised him to have it at their next meeting. He kept kissing her mouth. They talk and get to know each other better. They come to know about each other’s past and present. Mani had one failed relationship in the past and she had a couple of casual acquaintances.

Mani and Nalini were eager to hear from Mel, on her return from Kanyakumari.

Mel headed to Kanyakumari. She took a flight to Trivandrum and hit the road to Kanyakumari. On arrival, she went to her hotel which she had booked online. She was tired after her air and land journey and went straight to bed. Next day she got up early and headed to the beach before sunrise. This was a famous beach where tourists came to see the sun rise and set. She enjoyed the sunrise and walked along the beach. Then she found a quiet place, and sat down watching the ocean. It was relaxing and she got lost in the breeze and the sound of the waves. She usually waited for the right time and frame of mind to set in, and then would start working on it, as this would simplify a lot of things. Melissa chatted with some locals there, and went for a trip around the place. She visited the Vivekananda rock. She had the local delicacy *idli* (boiled rice pancake) and *dosa* (pan roasted thin rice pancake) served with side dish *sambar* (a variety of tangy Dal) and *chutney* (grated coconut with spices). Later, she just wasted time. After sunset, she got back to her hotel, had a drink and went to sleep.

The next day she woke up at around ten, and had breakfast. She

started thinking about gravity. She has come to a low gravity zone so she was trying to find out what has changed in her body. She should be weighing less, but she didn't check her weight before leaving from Pune. She decided to do this activity when she leaves from Kanyakumari. She needed a weighing machine which she can use here as well as take it with her to Pune. She ordered for a weighing scale online, to be delivered to her hotel. She started jumping to find out if she could find any difference in her body weight. Then she went for a swim in the pool to check if she can find any difference in her weight in the water. But, she couldn't sense any difference. She started her analysis by recollecting all the ideas and concepts she already had. She had BPZ from Nalini, Standing-army from Advait, the human Recycler, the Keepers and the power of imagination, a "six-nippled-ostrich" from Yang.

Also, she recollected Gola's beliefs, where he considered nature to be a mystical work, and was not sure as to what he should be doing or his purpose. He believed shooting stars carried dead people to the next stage, and said that the next stage can be reached if you clear the current stage; else you arrive ignorant at the next stage.

Then she went on to reasoning with these perspectives.

"Everything is rotating, the earth, the moon and the planets, and from the earth's view nothing is stationary. Everything is being put in circles, rotated and revolved, and we take part in this unknown circus ride. So things are being moved constantly, to keep us out of the known. And gravity keeps earthlings on the earth, and the magnetic field doesn't let anything enter our atmosphere. Though I know the expanse of the universe, the numerous suns, stars and galaxies; I can't see anything with my naked eyes, so I need not worry about them. Also, 70% is water and uninhabitable. The puzzle creator will also keep the solution in the puzzle for us to find out, and not hide it in some far off galaxy."

"But so many things have been so perfectly created and cared for, and the whole process is a BPZ, a perfect natural Bulk Processing Zone. We have no clue of life, and maybe death will enlighten us, but what should I do now, when I am still alive, to understand life?"

“Now I am human and have evolved from a monkey. OK, that’s what was taught to me, and now I have all the information at my fingertips. The bits and bytes floating around have changed human knowledge, and brought a lot of things to light.”

“So the human Recycler has been functioning for millions of years, and has processed billions, and the Keepers have kept their job intact.”

She went on to think, “Will all humans be processed by a single Recycler? Or will there be a different Recycler for each category of humans? Say like X- Recycler, Y- Recycler or Z- Recycler. Or some of them are separately processed. If it so, on what basis?”

“Can people be classified based on their blood group, or maybe their geographic locations or the languages they speak or their perspectives and attitudes towards life? Well yes, the last one, perspectives and attitudes, looks quite interesting. Winners and losers can be two categories, or people with positive and negative attitudes. But some over-confident and successful people say that they are responsible for whatever they are, and less confident failures say that they are not at all responsible for whatever they are. Both maybe equally right, in their respective perspectives.”

“I’d like to think that man is nothing but a consequence of his surroundings and environment, and nothing more to it. Man is nothing but a consequence of what he is fed, and where he is kept. Many inventions, discoveries and self-realizations have happened, and the human race has progressed and evolved.”

“The moon is always watching the earth and is fixed on the earth, but it also keeps going in circles, and that is the only planetary object where man has landed.”

“If humans are in the end processed by a Recycler, and we end up back as sperms and ova, what is the point in this? First, is it so? It looks very much so, because we don’t have anything to refute this. The dead body literally disappears, and the sperms and ova are invisible and microscopic. And there is nothing going outside the atmosphere as

gravity sucks it back. As we constantly process food and water through our system, throughout our entire lives; we also must get processed the same way like food and water. Our memories are not programmed to keep track of food and water we process throughout our lives. Our memories are designed to never think about everyday things seriously; our memories get evaporated for everyday things. We think seriously of some things which happen once a year, or once a decade like a tornado or a volcano. We become excited at these far-off occurring events, but don't see what's happening inside us. We only think of everyday things when we fall sick. When we are sick we get a different temperature and this change briefly shows us how different and dynamic everyday things are. That's when we see the Keepers in action. But again when we get well our memory doesn't think or remember those everyday dynamics. Nature doesn't discriminate in its mysteries. Every day things are equally mystical. Food and water show us the way; we go as they go. Even astronauts in space recycle urine to water."

"But how do we conclude that everybody is recycled? A lot of water reaches the oceans, and some remain as ice at the poles, and some end up underground. So water is not completely recycled. Fresh water is decreasing, but sea water is increasing, or maybe the poles are melting. But definitely a majority is recycled, but on what basis and how? And some of us may be treated first class, and fly out on a shooting star?"

"Maybe there are stages, like only if you clear first grade, you move to the second and only if you have passed the level of an AVP(Assistant Vice President) can you become a VP, or like an AM(Assistant Manager) first and then a senior manager, etc. Maybe one has to complete some cycles to be eligible for the promotion. What could the promotion be here? In constant recycling, it'd be nothing but to exit the cycle. Once you do what is required of you, then, the Keeper's program will download the exit platform for you. But what the hell is required of me? What should I do?"

Mel wanted to stop as she was feeling resistance in her thoughts from progressing. She had her lunch, and went back to bed. When she got up, she visited some nearby places, and again went to bed after dinner. Then she wasted the next three days, as there was a lot of resistance. On the fourth day she decided to visit some natural surroundings to change the

checkmate with resistance. She visited the Mathur aqueduct that morning at eight. It is situated at a distance of 60 Kms from Kanyakumari. She reached there around nine. A walkway runs alongside the channel high above the ground. The duct is constructed across a length of 380 meters connecting two hills. She enjoyed the greenery while walking on the aqueduct along the flowing water way. The view of the Pahruli River flowing underneath the duct made the view lofty and appealing. She saw the blue sky, the greenery around and the brown soil, and recollected Gola telling her that the blue, green, brown nature will respond if you maintain the right frequency, wavelength and frame of mind. She believed that she was in the right place and definitely in the right frame of mind. She kept looking all around to get some clues. She saw the flowing water in the duct as well as the river flowing beneath the duct. The river water flows into the ocean and also 70% of earth is ocean. She felt she should go along with the flowing river to the vast ocean where all the water energy meets. Then, she realized that the actual low gravity area is in the ocean and not in land. She immediately decided to visit the ocean and headed back to Kanyakumari.

On reaching Kanyakumari, she decided to take a boat into the sea. She took a small boat, and sailed it into the ocean, a good distance from the shore. She switched off the motors at the distance, where she lost her cell phone signal. Now she felt free, with no resistance and disturbance from the stupid tower. She lay down in the boat and talked to the waves rocking it. She asked for answers and clues. First, she thought that gravity is the biggest hindrance, and anything trying to escape it is just wonderful: the Moon and our Satellites. They are kept in a constant mode to escape gravity, and are the most knowledgeable things ever made. They supply information because they constantly try to escape gravity, and when they fail, knowledge and information transmission stops.

Then she decides to employ Yang's imagination and simulation tips, and started off on her grand and vivid imagination.

She decides to simulate the solar system in her mind, and placed herself on the earth's moon, so she could see the big picture from there.

"The creator has created the solar system with nine planets; one with

blue, green and brown colours to support life, and it is definitely the odd one out. Some of the planets have many moons, some only one and the rest none. On Earth, there are the humans, animals, plants and other microbial organisms. Humans are allowed to do whatever we feel like, and have powers very similar to the creator, but cannot go anywhere else apart from earth. We do whatever we feel like in the solar system. We've developed likes and dislikes and became habituated to earth and things we get from it. We've been eating and making merry and have never ever thought of Nature – the Creator."

"We read, write and record things in a database and do data analysis, but still we are missing the basics. We forget to be grounded and keep following our wild dreams. Most of the time we are bulk processed yet every individual is a separate entity and has a different experience or experiences the same in a different way. We plan and execute everything and take care of the supplies to meet our demands; the most basic being food and shelter. We make friends and enemies and process a variety of emotions throughout our existence. We run behind someone or something and some of us run behind many. Also, we have those who don't run but just process food and water, waiting to get themselves processed out of the Tertiary BPZ. We know nothing important about our body, mind and the environment. We don't know why the heart keeps beating, or why we have only five or six senses, or how the lungs exhale and inhale continuously without putting any effort, or how our eyes, nose and tongue function...Science helps in putting up some formulas, but why this is happening or why this is present in this place, is something our minds resist to think about. How can I see the humans different from the Gazelles and Wilder beasts of Africa? One following another followed by yet another."

"We do everything to make ourselves comfortable and lazy. But there are a few who pass this stage and are appreciated and taken to the next stage on a shooting star."

"Now on what basis are these humans promoted to the next stage on a shooting star?"

"Well, for us humans, the earth is a place where we have fun, and in

reality we know nothing in respect of what, when, how, who, from where, why, for whom about earth. But we took it for granted, that it is all there laid out for us. But the earth is an equally alien place to humans, as we know nothing about it. Humans know to plant an alien seed and pluck the alien fruit or vegetable from the alien tree or the alien ground and use our alien body to eat and process the alien food. In turn, enjoying this and keep doing this; an alien thing processed by an alien body in an alien way. We also eat serpents and increase our sexual life, long lasting. We are just comfortable in our hedonistic ways and keep doing what we are addicted to, like slaves. But what is expected from an alien place? What should one do in an alien place, a place where you know nothing of anything? As Gola said, avoid doing things that you must not do.”

“Imagine humans visiting Mars, what would one expect to do there? Nothing – just see the place, open your mouth wide, awestruck, and get out, or you can do some research by taking some samples. This you do because you know you’re in an alien place, and you know that the capsule will return in sometime. We wonder in wonderland, and get back into the capsule.”

Mel was having a great time, laughing in the boat in the ocean, and she continued with her rational inferences.

**\*\*Another rich series of images unfurl in her mind\*\***

“Imagine gravity is low and the houses are floating around, and we live inside those houses in our floating community, in our floating city. Doesn’t this look alien enough? To add more spice to this, consider we’re gonna live only for ten days, like some insects. What’ll we do? What’s a human expected to do? Time and space are freaked out, so what’ll we do here? Further, the capsule is invisible, and we keep forgetting that a capsule exists, and finally we end up going out in the same capsule we came in. And to add some more exotic curry: we get a feel of the rotating and revolving earth, at around 17mil/min, and 1100 mil/min respectively. What’d be expected from a human in these circumstances?”

It was just Gola’s answer which was coming up.



Now she started on the recycling process. "Birth, Life, Death, Recycler and back to sperm and ova – The Standing -army. Why this cycle? If it is so, why is it so?"

It was already seven and it was becoming dark. She was done with imagining and wanted some answers.

"Why am I sent back or recycled by the Recycler?"

"Maybe I'm used to being on earth? Or I've eaten too much and I cannot just escape gravity? Or maybe I'm so attached to earth and hence sent back? Or I've been so lazy and in effect never did anything to prove that I once existed on earth? Or I was so hard working that there is no other place to accommodate my hard work? Or I'm sent back because I left something behind? What did I leave behind? Did I leave too much of wealth behind? Or did I leave bad memories behind? Or did I leave my kidneys and heart to someone? What did I leave behind visiting in a capsule? Did I...?"

Suddenly she became thoughtful and serious. Something struck her, and she sailed the boat in the dark back to the shore, and went back to her hotel. She ordered a bottle of scotch and drank it till she fell unconscious. She woke up at four in the morning and called up Yang, and asked him to come down to Kanyakumari and went back to sleep. Yang sensed her voice and understood that she has hit upon something good. He packed to leave for Kanyakumari, immediately. He also rang and woke up Nalini and Mani and asked them to come down to Kanyakumari.

Nalini and Mani immediately started from Bangalore in her car at around 5 am and hoped to reach Kanyakumari, by around six in the evening. They had to cover a distance of six hundred and sixty Kms.

Both of them were excited to meet again and kissed each other as soon as Mani got into the car.

"I thank god and Yang and Melissa for bringing you to me again so soon," said Mani

"Same here."

Around eight they reached Salem and had breakfast. Later they continued on the highway and Mani decided to drive and took the wheel.

"I am going to stop on the way to explore you as soon as I find a nice place."

She smiled, "You are driving steady and in my speed range."

"I am not a college student driving for the first time; nor am I driving with a girl for the first time to cheaply impress you with my driving skills."

He drove for a hundred kilometers and took left at a small mud road.

"We can get mugged or kidnapped and killed by some sex maniacs roaming here. These happen on remote places and parks or gardens," said Nalini.

"I'm not going far away from the highway."

"Don't you think we are doing something private in public. This makes me feel like a dog with an erect penis running around city streets to mate."

"Relax Nalini. Damit. You sound like the lady from the guild. And we are not in the streets, we are in this car... Dogs don't do in cars. Don't make me feel like a dog."

"Can't you just drive; we are going to find the mystery of life and death."

"We're having sex for the first time, and this could also be the last."

"Why last?"

"Because when we go and discover the mystery of death, there is a possibility of getting killed by the Keepers." They laughed and parked the car under a tree, a hundred meters away from the highway. He then leaped on Nalini and started kissing her mouth and sucked the blood out of her tongues and lips; while he ran his hands all across her body and

squeezed the flesh out of her curves and contours. He pulled her on to the back seat and started stripping her. They both start devouring each other's 100°F warm-meat.

They enjoyed and had sex in the back of the car for thirty minutes.

"Everything has been getting more exciting and thrilling week after week, since our trip to Pune," said Mani.

"Do you think she has got the answer? It's just been a week since she left for Kanyakumari."

"Yang's reasoning was great and if they both are considered equal, then she must have got something."

"I feel as if we are driving down the pathway to death, in a space ship without being dead."

"Yup. I too, feel the same. Driving to the 'n billions passage' to death – Kanyakumari."

They kept driving south on the highway, paying toll after toll after toll after toll.

Yang took a flight to Trivandrum and rented a taxi from there to Kanyakumari. He reached the hotel by night at half past eight. He went and met Mel.

"Hi, come on, tell me. Think you've hit upon something big," Yang asked, curiously.

"Hi," still thoughtful with her hangover, Mel said, "Yang, Your imagination and simulation are too good, and they have got us something."

Yang raised his voice in elation. "What? Tell me."

"No, not here, I'll take you to the place where I received it and you too can try to catch the thought wave."

“Which place? How far did you go?”

“Quite far, into the sea.”

“Into the sea! We’ll have to wait for Nalini and Mani. I asked them to come down. They’ll be here anytime.”

Mani and Nalini reached the hotel by nine and all four headed to the sea. Mel took them to the beach, but her motor boat wasn’t to be seen. However, they wanted to sail out to the sea, to the same place, as soon as possible. It was already late, and nobody else was in sight. They looked around, and found one rowing boat. It looked okay and they decided to take it. They woke up the fisherman, paid him, and took the boat themselves into the sea. With the full moon above, the fisherman warned them of the high tide; but all were determined to head to the spot.

They took some time to get comfortable with the paddle and kept rowing till they lost all their mobile signals. They lay down gasping for breath, watching the moon and the stars above.

After resting for some time, Mel said “I was using Yang’s imagination and I was imagining myself to be the Creator, and Earth to be an alien place for humans as they know nothing about my earth. But humans happily lived there, taking my earth for granted, and without even thinking of me or the big picture; they were inventing things to make themselves more comfortable in an alien place. Then I was trying to think, what I should expect from them, and also looked for what could be expected if humans visit an alien place, or if an alien visits earth. Then I went to analyze the logic of recycling someone, as to why someone should be sent back, and on what basis. Why will I be sent back by the Recycler? Under normal circumstances in day to day life, why will I be sent back to any place?” she asked.

“After going to school for one full year the school doesn’t promote me and sends me back to the same grade; to attend the same grade –another year. Because, I failed in some interesting or boring subject as it didn’t enter my head. That’s a crazy thing done in the Primary BPZ. My friend got married and her kid forgot the lunch box at home and she had to run

back to school via home to give the lunch box. She is going back to the same Primary BPZ where she herself got processed out three years back; after having spent –sixteen years in it. It's disgusting to go back to that place so soon. Hence a big gap is advisable between Primary BPZ and Parenthood BPZ. Please take time to get recycled. I hate senseless recycling," said Nalini.

"My subconscious is taken for a quixotic quest and I am sent back many years into an unrealistic world away from my conscious. Then I go to get my driving license, the inspector sends me back for not adjusting the rear view mirror which needed no adjustment. Then I apply for the best of the colleges but my applications are sent back. Then I go to job interviews and am sent back many times by many different people for many different reasons," said Mani.

"The earth and the moon are sent back every day to orbit the sun; light and darkness are also sent back every day and night. But that's the planetary objects trying to trick us and fool us into thinking that it is natural to be sent back. The Moon doesn't die and come back. Its life span is some billion years," said Yang.

"Going further with whatever research we have done, I am eating the same thing in a different form which some one ate and processed some years or months back. Maybe I am also eating the same thing which Adam and Eve ate and processed millions of years back. Or even further I am eating, drinking and processing the same thing which the dinosaurs processed when they were here." Melissa explained all other views and ideas which she had and added, "You will be sent back if you leave something behind."

"Like what?" asked Yang.

"Someone, whom you loved," she said.

"You mean people falling in love?"

"No. Your DNA... Your children! If you leave your kids in an alien place you'll be sent back for them in the same invisible capsule which you used earlier." She showed Yang, the solution for the recycling puzzle.

“It’s what we base our lives upon,” said Yang.

“Exactly. That’s magnetism. The magnetic illusion created from attachment, love and bonding, which we all feel towards our kith and kin – families, spouse, parents and kids. That’s what nature uses to fool us and keep us in the ignorant sphere, circling round and round,” she said.

They all became speechless, and lay there, watching the moonlit sky for a while; processing what they’ve heard and reconciling their premises and probable logic and reasoning. After a while Yang in a contemplative tone said, “Alien body, alien place, alien life support systems and whatever we do will also be alien.”

Nalini added, “When visiting Mars, you don’t find alien life support systems, including oxygen. This enters our body and exits as carbon-dioxide getting recycled immediately. This is the supreme alien we are dependent on much more than food and water, as we don’t have the access control over it entering and exiting the body. Though we breathe in many mixtures of gases in air, only oxygen is taken in, and the rest are sent out along with carbon-di-oxide. Nitrogen fills a major portion of air and atmosphere we live in, and oxygen is roughly around 17%. This is supreme because we can go without food and water for days but not more than some seconds without this supreme alien gas.”

“That’s great; this is what I missed from the Everest. Thank you, Nalini. Now, I get a sense of completing my Everest trip.” said Yang, and added, “We are made slaves to these alien things, and we continue to be slaves and create new slaves in the form of our children for these alien forces to fool around with, for another million years. Anyone who creates slaves will again become slaves. We are big time slave to oxygen, the supreme alien. And, we have the rocket scientists who are hell-bent on discovering and exploring these alien life support systems in Mars, so humans can be slaves to them in another planet as well. Aliens seeking to find more aliens in the solar system and galaxy.”

So everything we are dependant in life or which enables human life is recycled. So obviously we are also recycled,” said Melissa.

Again they all pondered in silence. The sound of the waves pounding the boat, the dark sky, the full moon, the stars and with these thoughts in their minds; made all of them feel like alien puppets in an alien place.

Yang said, "Mel, this is wonderful. But don't you think that the kids were already in the Standing-army and were just allocated to you. You've given them an opportunity with another chance to move to the next stage. Anyway, what you've hit upon is our goal and it's brilliant."

"How can I give an opportunity?" she asked

"You've to teach them, give them gyan on how to exit the cycle, and show them the way to the next stage. You've to teach them the perspective, of what one should do at an alien place with an alien body on alien life support systems," said Yang.

"Of course, I'd like to give the best to my kids. I'm not over emotional or attached as I'm a scientist. When I can send my kids across the globe, to the best institutes for the best knowledge and education, I'll certainly enroll my kids for the next stage of life. If our view is right, then people will keep following it, and I'll be able to catch the thought wave in my next cycle and join my kids in the next stage. Even otherwise, I'm only for gyan and knowledge, else I will remain in the Sphere of ignorance. I'll equip my kids with these perspectives, and they have to do their reasoning in choosing a path: exit to re-enter or exit to graduate. They are the purest form of divine nature, and I believe they'll do the right thing."

Yang said, "It's our duty to take this message to those waiting in the Standing-army. Our parents, grandparents and forefathers, who could still be serving the Keepers."

"I've to thank my parents for releasing me from the Standing-army, because of which I am able to get this knowledge now. They're no more and I hope to meet them when I reach the Recycler or the Standing-army and spread this idea there. So we can form two teams one which goes to the next stage and the other one which takes the re entry route to release everyone from the Standing army," said Mel.

"I believe there are a lot of people in the next stage who are waiting for us to graduate from earth. Because if we all are created from one thing, then everyone should graduate from earth; as one group we can go to the next stage and begin it," said Yang.

"I don't believe that everyone should graduate from earth, to begin the next stage, but it has already begun, because many have exited the cycle, and hence, they have begun the next stage. Though we are all created from one thing, each of us are different and go different ways. We become one only upon realizing the magnetic illusion, and on releasing ourselves from its sphere," said Mani.

"But this is what Gola has been telling us all along," Mel said, and added, "After reaching the Recycler and the Standing-army, I'm not sure as to how my memory will be treated there, if at all it is still with me. How can I identify my parents, grandparents and forefathers in an army of Keepers –Sperms and Ovums? These are things which we cannot be sure of. But what is in our hands is only life now, when we are alive now, we must try to think of people who are there NOW. If we aren't able to spread this message to those alive, we'll definitely miserably fail, in trying to spread this to those in the Recycler and the Standing-army. Maybe the next stage is one of the stars, with a parallel solar system which one can visit in a shooting star. Maybe that's what the scientists are searching for. But that can be reached only upon death and graduating to the next stage and not on a space ship."

"So did Gola knew this all along, and didn't tell you about these? Where is he now?" asked Nalini

"No. He wasn't sure about it, but he had a vague idea. I don't remember a time when he confidently said something about this to me or Mel. He's married and settled in Angola," said Yang.

"Not directly. But he responded with his usual definition of life," said Mel.

"Maybe he believed that everyone should make their own discovery of life; and not get it outsourced," said Yang.



“We really want to meet him.” said Nalini.

“Sure. That’s the first thing we’ll do as soon as we get our towers and signals on the way back to the shore.” said Mel.

“I believe if we’re passing this stage with this discovery, then even the Recycler & the Standing- army will bow to us, as that is the power of this discovery. Upon realizing the illusion, and as we’re created from one thing, even the Keepers will be enlightened and graduate from earth,” said Nalini.

“It’s a knowledge universe, evident by the bits and bytes zapping all around us. I wish this thought will be given importance by the billions of us to clear the passage for moving to the next stage by exiting the cycles.” said Mani.

Yang said, “I wish both of you the very best in not getting recycled and graduating to the next stage. You’ll be getting lot of road blocks as you age, which will make you fall back into the n billions passage along with us. It’s definitely not easy, and not for the faint-hearted; that’s your test for graduating to the next stage.”

Mel also wished Nalini and Mani, on their choices to graduate to the next stage.

They all became ecstatic, their spirits high on discovering the passage; start yelling and shouting at the sea. They wanted to celebrate and send across the message to the whole world, with the question: “What should one do in an alien place in an alien body with alien life support systems? How can two unknowns create a new unknown and leave that new unknown in an unknown place with unknown life support systems?”

They hardly noticed as the wind rose and a storm ballooned over the horizon. It wasn’t until big waves began to rock the boat that they considered how far out to sea they had drifted. The sea had become jumpy and scary. Water was accumulating in the boat, and they began to bail.

Suddenly their boat felt a jolt, something hit the boat, and they saw a

couple of large creatures circling around.

“That’s huge... lie low, make no noise or movement.”

Yang hushed and asked, “Did you guys tell anyone about our research and work?”

“No, we discussed it with no-one, as it has hardly been three weeks since the guild meeting,” said Mani.

“Mel, we have not informed Gola of anything about our findings since the last guild meeting either. I updated the blog immediately after our last meeting with just the BPZ and nothing else,” said Yang.

The fear of the Keepers which Yang experienced in the Everest, hit him again.

“Guys, if we’re killed by these creatures or we drown in the sea, all our research will be deleted or recycled by the Keepers.”

Yang figured the Keepers have sent their virus containers to seal the breach in the Sphere of ignorance.

XXXXXXX

***Beauty lies in the eyes of... so does Kama; similarly the positive attitude lies in the minds of the readers and not in the words and sentences one reads.***

# END NOTE

Dear Reader,

Thank you, hope you enjoyed the book.

I have lot of respect for hard work, hard working people, scientists and space research organizations. Many research, explorations and experiments are required before any conclusion can be reached on anything. Nature has worked so hard that we are unable to find the beginning or the end; and we end up calling it a mystery or mystical work.

The main ideas apart from the concluding philosophy is, a minimum age for Parenthood when a matured girl becomes a young woman at thirty; and a matured boy becomes a young man at thirty-five. Children are nature's purest forms and they must be brought into this world with the knowledge and experience of manhood and womanhood at thirty-five and thirty respectively. Even if you are got ridden off into a marriage by your parents and society, please use post marriage time sensibly to become parents upon attaining the ages mentioned above.

Another point is to spend a minimum number of years living together before deciding to have a child. The years living together helps in concreting the choice of spouse and later helps in deciding to have a family. More the time together, more the data collected and better the analysis and choices. (Living together is different from knowing one another.)

This view has been presented for everyone to contemplate and view things differently for the common good of humanity. \*\*\*\*\*Again everyone should do their own analysis and take decisions. \*\*\*\*\*All the sentences in this book could be false or untrue. You should think for yourself before deciding on anything. I request you all to spread the word and not be eaten by creatures or sharks, let everyone get this perspective. I believe the human race has got only one purpose and with

unified effort we make sense of the passage.

All the topics discussed are not for all situations and circumstances. Each and every situation and thing is different and needs different thought process.

Thank you and enjoy your mystical life and contribute in making the passage to the next level.

**Terra Biktaba**

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**The** book disappeared from his hands;

**D**wyeth sat back and gazed at the black and blue earth.

~~~~~

Dear Reader,

Thank you.

In the next series we will see what more Dwyeth and his Oxshire friends discover and what more the Black hole reveals to them. Are the black images the souls? Why are the souls angry? What does the red witch soul want? Do they find the logic of recycling? Would they be able to use it to their advantage?

The second series will be released very soon. To get automatic notification of the release dates please follow the author on the “Amazon author central page”. Click “+Follow” button below the photo (photo is coming soon).

This work can be termed as a book on personal choice— India’s Gift to

the world. But the second series presents a very important global scientific choice – India saves the world. Coming very soon...

**Vitadusha Geheimnis**