

SCHRÖDINGER'S GLASS



CHRIS
GRALL

"Schrodinger's Glass is a taut, fast-paced thriller that will keep you turning another page until the surprise ending."

—LARRY BARTHURST, Author of
The Philosopher's Stone

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This book is dedicated to the memory of Stephen Vessels.

Stephen was a giant of a man with a heart to match. He was an artist and a writer. He was kind, funny, and had a no-nonsense way about him. He loved the craft of storytelling and shared it with everyone.

One night at ThrillerFest, in 2018, Stephen challenged me to write an opening sentence for this book. “Hit me with a first sentence, that’s all.”

I spun something off the top of my head.

“Good, that’s great.” Then he paused and gave a sly smile. “You know, you’re the only person who can finish it.”

I was hooked. Stephen was like that.

Sadly, Stephen passed away in 2021. He never had a chance to see the book he inspired me to write.

Rest in peace, my friend.

1: MAX

Armed security wasn't what Max Peck had in mind when he retired from the Army, but he had a Top-Secret security clearance, and the Department of Energy paid extra for that. His original plan had been to work for one of the many civilian contractors that provided intelligence or training support to military units deployed overseas. But those contracts dried up about a year before he got out, which was why he was walking through the main corridor of the Heisenberg Accelerator and Research Center, or HARC-Lab. But armed security wasn't so bad, and the paycheck augmented his pension.

His route took him by the beam control room, and he couldn't resist sticking his head in for a few minutes. The room buzzed with energy as the staff went about their tasks. Dr. Rachel Hare sat at the command desk, a rock in the torrent of activity around her. She was the youngest person in HARC-Lab history to achieve the position of Director, Beam Activities, and she ran a tight ship.

"Are you going live tonight?" Max asked.

Dr. Hare looked over at Max and smiled. "Monday. We're doing final tests and calibrations now. We've been pushing hard. One last weekend off before we resume twenty-four-seven operations again."

The beam had been down for over a month because some

kind of rodent chewed through a power cable in one of the service junctions. The board of directors saw an opportunity and decided to perform additional maintenance and systems upgrades. Those improvements meant recalibration and simulations. Under normal operating conditions, beam adjustments were calculated only as needed. During simulation week, they were calculated hourly. It had taken a toll on the staff, and they were due for a break.

“Did they ever figure out what kind of critter that was?” Max asked.

“Nope,” Dr. Hare said, “and I don’t care. If it doesn’t happen again. Aren’t you supposed to guard us against intruders?”

Max laughed. “Only the two-legged variety. So, what kind of output does the beam have now?”

She slid her hands across her desk as if caressing a sports car. “This sweet baby is going to boost hydrogen atoms up to ninety-nine-point-nine-nine-seven percent of the speed of light. Not as fast as CERN, but we have just as many experiment sites. Which reminds me ...”

Dr. Hare turned back to her staff. “Okay, boys and girls, this will be the last sim of the night. We’re going to bypass the stacking phase and consider all other systems as notional. All we’re concerned with is telemetry. I want to make sure we can deliver shots to the paying customers. Checklist: Nelson.”

The scientist at the far left of the semi-circle of workstations turned his chair around and said, “We have a cold beam; the tank is empty. Hydrogen delivery is scheduled for Saturday.”

Max stepped back to let the scientists do their thing. He checked his watch. There was enough time to observe the test before resuming his rounds.

After she worked her way around the control room, Dr. Hare started pinging the experiment sites. "ANvIL?"

"Standing by," the voice came from a speaker on the command desk.

On the central screen, ANvIL went from yellow to green. Max didn't know what the acronyms meant, but he appreciated their pronunciations. It reminded him of his time in the Army.

Dr. Hare punched a button on her desk, switching to the next experiment site in line. "Arvo?"

"Control, this is Arvo; confirm you have a cold beam."

With an exasperated sigh, Dr. Hare punched a call button. "Yes, Arvo, the hydrogen won't be loaded until Saturday. We are targeting only. Do you have a problem?"

Max caught a chill as the display for ARvO went from yellow to red.

"Hell yes, we have a problem. We are picking up a crazy neutrino emission rate here."

"Say again: You are getting readings on neutrino emissions?" Dr. Hare asked.

"Yeah, we've got our experiment online for diagnostics, and the readings are up and climbing."

"Stand by Arvo." She glanced over at Nelson. "What have you got?"

Nelson swiveled his chair around. "I got nothing, boss. There's no reason for them to read anything, other than background, and that shouldn't even be measurable."

He turned back to his console, and Max heard him mutter, "I don't get it."

Max sensed there was something wrong, but he had no way to help. He was contemplating whether he should stay

here or return to the security control room when he felt it.

THRUM

The pulse was deep, like bass from a subwoofer. More felt than heard. Then came the alarms ... and the scream.

Adrenaline surged, and old habits from mortar and rocket attacks took over. Max dropped to the floor for cover without thinking. He couldn't see much from his position, but he identified the source of the scream.

It came from Nelson's station. The man arched back in his seat so severely that Max thought his spine would break. His chair toppled over backward, and a gout of steam and boiling fluids shot out of Nelson's left eye as he thrashed on the floor.

Max was up in a flash, combat casualty scenarios running through his head, but Nelson's scream tapered off to a tortured exhale as the eruption from his blackened eye socket slowed. The smell of burning meat and scorched hair filled the room.

Max knelt next to the stricken man's head. *Why is it so hot?* The body was giving off a lot of heat. Suddenly, there was a pop, and Nelson's head seemed to bounce off the floor. Bits of skull and a spray of blood and brain exploded from the back of the man's head, then a small orb rolled free. At first, Max couldn't understand what he was looking at.

From over his shoulder, Dr. Hare's calm voice pulled things into focus. "It's his eye. Nelson has a glass eye."

Max turned to Dr. Hare. She was shaken, but in control of herself. Other staff members began to crowd around the body.

"Everyone, please stay back," Max said.

He turned to the body and the strange orb. He could see it now. It was, indeed, a glass eye. He reached down to pick it up but immediately pulled his hand back. *It's hot. How can it be so hot?*

Max's radio crackled. "Max, this is Spencer. We need you back in the control room ASAP."

"Roger, Spencer. Whatever it is needs to wait. I've got a dead scientist and some pretty weird shit going on here in beam control."

"Max, we've got weird shit happening all over the campus," Spencer continued after a slight pause, "and we can't find the captain."

2: BELLA

Bella scooped her wine glass off the counter. “Thanks for the refill, love.”

Her husband Saul looked up from the kitchen sink, where he was washing dishes, but before he could reply, she was off, her glass in hand.

The housewarming party had been perfect, and Bella was enjoying a merry buzz from the right amount of wine and company. With the guests gone, she put on her sultry playlist, turned up the music, and danced her way through the cleanup.

Allanah Myles crooned “Black Velvet” as Bella dropped her final load of paper plates and napkins in the trash. She eyed her glass of wine, two sips or one gulp. So hard to decide with a glass this good. The cabernet had been delicious—a special bottle to celebrate the new place. She sighed after she drained the glass. *That’s probably enough for tonight, even if tomorrow is Saturday.*

She set her empty glass on the counter, and her gaze fell on their dog, Smokey, standing by the sliding glass door that led to the backyard. The mutt glanced from her to the door, then pawed at it—demanding to be let out.

“I’ll take care of Smokey if you take out the trash,” Bella said.

Saul dried his hands on a dish towel. "Deal."

As Saul wrestled the overfull bag from the can, Bella crossed the room to the sliding glass door and her impatient dog.

"Okay, Smokes, let's go potty."

The door alarm gave a soft chirp as she opened it, and Smokey shot into the darkness. Bella flipped on the outside spotlights and followed him out, shutting the screen door behind her. She still couldn't believe their luck in finding this place in the suburbs. Not only did the house have all the features they wanted, but also, the outside was a dream come true.

The yard—surrounded by trees and shrubs—offered true privacy. Another house sat behind theirs, but it could barely be seen through the foliage. She suspected that would change in a few weeks. For now, the yard gave her the sense of standing in her own hidden garden.

Heaven.

Sirens blared to life, shattering the quiet evening. Bella identified both police and fire-rescue by sound. Living in the city, she'd become used to sirens. Idly, she wondered what was going on as she looked toward the noise. A flash of orange light backlit the trees, and a loud boom followed a moment later.

Smokey started barking his warning into the night. Whatever happened was big, and she wanted nothing more than to be inside. But a fired-up Smokey proved difficult to wrangle, and it took a few minutes for Bella to herd the startled dog into the house.

"Saul, did you hear that?"

"In here," he called from the living room.

“I think there was some kind of explosion over on—”

The sentence died on her lips as she saw the television. One half of the screen showed a map of the greater Chicago area covered with little flame symbols. The other half held the live feed from a news helicopter. It showed a wide view of the city. Hundreds of smoke plumes rose into the air, giving weight to the map.

“What’s going on?” she asked.

“I don’t know,” Saul said. “I heard the boom and thought we might get some news, but when I turned on the TV, I got this. It looks like half of Chicago is on fire.”

Three sharp electronic blasts sounded from their phones. Bella pulled her iPhone from her back pocket and read.

Lake County Sheriff. Multiple building fires, explosions, and traffic accidents are reported county-wide. Starting at 7:51 p.m. CST. Residents are advised to shelter in place. Consider emergency services unavailable until otherwise notified. This is a county-wide event. There is no forecasted expiration for this message.

As soon as she cleared her screen, the phone blasted again. This time, the message came from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. This warning was identical to the first, but it listed fourteen Illinois counties and Lake County, Indiana.

“What the hell, Saul? Do you think it’s a terrorist attack?”

“I’ve no idea. We should check on the family. I’ll call Mom. You try my sister,” he said.

“Good thinking.”

Bella attempted to dial the number from her contact list,

but the call never went through.

"I've got nothing. I think the cell towers are out," she said.

"Not out, overloaded. The only things that are getting through are the EMS messages."

Bella mentally flashed back to 9/11. She felt the same helplessness now that she had then. "I guess the only thing we can do is wait this out and watch it on the TV."

"I'm checking the street," Saul said.

Bella started to argue, but he cut her off. "I'm not going anywhere. I just want to see if anyone in the immediate area needs help. You read the message. Emergency services are fully tapped. If anyone needs help, we should try to give it."

"Okay, Saul, but just our street. I don't want to be too far away from the house."

"Agreed."

Bella made Smokey stay as she and Saul walked out the front door.

The street was quiet, but not as deserted as she'd expected. Neighbors on all sides stood on their front steps or conversed at the ends of their driveways. The sky glowed orange behind the houses across the street, evidence of the unfolding disaster.

It's like being in the eye of a hurricane.

Saul continued down to the closest neighbor huddle to see what he could find out. While she waited for him to return, she kept a nervous eye on the glow. It was hard to tell if the fire was coming closer or moving away.

"Well?" she asked as Saul came back to the house.

"The fire to our front is about two streets away. No fire trucks. The residents and their neighbors are fighting it with garden hoses."

"What should we do? We're stuck right in the middle of this thing."

Saul looked back across the street at the glow. “A guy named Bill, two doors down, says we should load our car up with all our important stuff and sit tight. That way, we can leave if we need to. He also said to make sure the car had food and water for both of us and Smokey.”

“That sounds like a good plan. We should get started.”

3: BELLA

It took longer than Bella thought it should have. The first part was easy. Computers, tablets, and their various charging cables went into a duffel bag, and the bag went into the car. Then, Saul complicated things.

“Do you think we’ll need our passports?” he asked.

This initiated a round of document gathering. Passports, closing documents for the house, insurance policies, birth certificates ... The list seemed endless. Sure, most of these items were in their computers, but Bella—being a lawyer—understood the importance of retaining signed originals. They designated a bag for documents, and a new scavenger hunt began.

Why don’t we keep all this stuff in one place?

Finally, they packed clothes and food. Priority went to underwear, socks, dog food, and water. They stood in the garage looking at their hastily packed Mini Countryman.

“Not much space left,” Saul said.

“Mementos?” Bella asked.

“Yeah,” Saul replied, “but only stuff we can’t replace.”

They spent another half hour collecting picture albums and personal treasures. Things meaningless to others, but given an opportunity to save, they couldn’t pass up.

Bella leaned against the kitchen counter, exhausted. How long had they been at this? Three hours, four? She looked at her glass of wine sitting next to the sink.

When did I refill this? She wanted to chug it, wanted to regain the happy little buzz from earlier, wanted things to be normal again, but normalcy wouldn't be returning any time soon.

She picked up the glass; it seemed like a shame to waste perfectly good wine, so she took a big drink before dumping it into the sink. Smokey's bark from the sliding glass door interrupted her before she could clean it.

"Oh, alright," she said as she placed it on the counter. "Dog biology trumps all."

Bella let Smokey out and stepped into the backyard.

The glow beyond the tree line had faded from its earlier brilliance. She still heard muted sirens in the distance. *Maybe things are getting better. At least in our little part of the world. Thank god we're not in the city.* That thought triggered a round of guilt, adding to her dark mood.

"C'mon, Smokes, finish up."

Smokey looked at her, then went back to securing the perimeter of his new domain. Eventually, he peed on a bush, kicked at the ground with a couple imperious barks, and trotted back inside.

"Yes, dear heart, all tremble before you," she said to the dog and followed him in.

She drew up short when she saw the wine glass. It was full. Precisely where she'd left it.

"Read the room, Saul," she muttered as she dumped the

glass in the sink. True, she *wanted* more wine, but she didn't *need* more wine. Before she could clean it, Saul called out from the living room.

"Bella, there's an update!"

She set the glass down and went to the living room, preparing for the worst.

"What's going on?" she asked as she sat next to him on the couch.

"It's weird," Saul started. "Eyewitness accounts are coming in about some of the fires. People are saying that they're spontaneous, sparked by normal items that suddenly burned super-hot. *Twilight Zone* stuff."

"What?"

"Yeah, and there are reports of mass hypnotism. People are staring at things and don't respond until the thing is covered. None of this shit makes any sense. Wait, listen."

Saul turned up the volume on the TV.

The news anchor looked as frazzled as Bella felt.

"Okay, we're receiving reports from police and fire-rescue that some objects produce paralysis in people. If someone in your area goes silent, is focused in one direction, and won't respond to you, do not try to find out what they're looking at. Initial reports suggest that these objects only affect the naked eye. They can be viewed safely through a camera."

The anchorman broke from reporting and looked off to his right.

"Is that right? Do we have any other confirmation on this? Of course it's important! How the hell can we help people if we haven't verified what we're reporting?"

"Chalk one up for local news," Saul said.

Local news. How much of the country is affected by ... whatever this is?

“Saul, have you looked at any national reporting yet?”

“No,” he admitted. “It all seems so immediate. I thought local news would give us all the information we need. But now that you mention it ...”

Saul flicked the channel over to CNN.

The chyron at the bottom of the screen read: Multiple Fires in the Greater Chicago Area.

On the screen, arial video showed scenes from a war zone. Half of a residential block had been reduced to rubble, and fires burned within the broken remains of the homes.

“We believe this is footage of a neighborhood in Chicago called Irving Park,” the news anchor said. “The damage you see here is probably from a gas main explosion. Experts tell us that these events are usually limited to one or two houses, but for some reason, there’s been a cascading effect in this area. This is typical of the many reports we are receiving from both our Chicago affiliates and social media.”

“Holy shit, Saul.”

“Yeah, this is horrible.”

The camera cut back to the anchor. The map of northeast Illinois positioned over his right shoulder showed the same little fire graphics as the local news. They covered the map.

“For those of you just joining us, this is what we know so far. At around 7:45 p.m. Central time, multiple fires and traffic accidents occurred in the greater Chicago area. Events like these have been reported as far north as the Wisconsin border, and as far south as Kankakee, Illinois. The affected area extends from the west near Rochelle, Illinois, to as far east as Gary, Indiana. Authorities still don’t know what caused the disaster, and they are advising people to shelter in their homes until local conditions can be resolved.

“We have unconfirmed reports that random objects are

responsible for some of the calamities in the affected areas ...”

Bella listened for a while but tuned him out when he started rehashing the same outlandish reports about normal objects with weird properties.

“It’s late. Do you want to camp out here or watch in bed?” Bella asked.

“Bed,” Saul said, “but let’s sleep in our clothes. I don’t want to waste time dressing if we need to leave in a hurry.”

“Sounds good to me.”

She rose and stretched. “I’m going to close up the back and grab some water. Need anything from the kitchen?”

“I’m good,” he said over his shoulder as he headed to check the front door.

Bella double-checked the slider to the backyard and was on her way to the garage when she paused at the kitchen counter. The wine glass she’d emptied earlier was full. Bella felt a chill run down her spine.

“Hey, Saul, could you come in here for a minute?”

Her voice trembled a little, and she hated herself for it. She wasn’t a damsel to be rescued, not from some stupid wine glass anyway.

“What’s up, hon?” Saul asked as he came in from the living room.

“You know how the news told us to be cautious around everyday items doing strange things?”

“Yeah,” he said, with a hint of nervousness in his voice.

“Well, crazy as it sounds, I think this glass refilled itself.”

Saul let out a breath. “Damn, Bella, I thought it was something serious.”

“This is serious. I emptied that glass and was about to clean it, but you distracted me with the update. I come back, and it’s full again.”

4: SAUL

Bella wasn't prone to flights of fancy. Oh, she could be playful and loved a good joke, but tonight, given the circumstances, Saul knew she wasn't messing around. Still, he needed to play the devil's advocate.

"I'm not doubting you, but there's been a lot going on. Could you have thought to empty the glass, then got distracted?"

"I know what I did, Saul. I emptied it before I went into the living room. Just like I did after you refilled it when I took Smokey outside to potty."

Saul raised his hands as a calming gesture. "Hold your fire, counselor. I'm only asking."

She didn't think he believed her. He didn't want this to turn into a stupid argument and was about to say so when the rest of what she'd said hit home.

"Wait, what? I haven't refilled your wine since ... Well, since before all the crazy started."

Bella's eyes went wide, and she turned to look at the glass. "It's done it twice then."

Saul thought he knew where she was going, but he had to be sure. "Done what twice?"

"It's re-filled twice tonight, silly boy."

It wasn't an insult, and Saul didn't take it as such. It was

part of their normal banter when one or the other was a little slow on the uptake. He'd called her "silly girl" often enough.

"Okay, what do you want to do about it?" Saul asked.

"I want to watch it fill, but I don't know if we should touch it. You know, with what the news said."

It was Saul's turn, and he took complete advantage of it. "If it was going to blow us up, burn the house down, or emit lasers, it would have done it by now, silly girl."

Bella looked at him and flashed a smile. "You're right."

She dumped the contents of the glass into the sink and set it back down.

"How long does it take, do you think?" Saul asked.

"I don't know. Maybe five minutes or so."

Saul chuckled. "Okay, while you watch, I'm going to prep coffee for the morning."

He walked over to the coffee machine and pulled out the filter containing the old grinds. He knocked them out in the trash can and started to rinse the filter when Bella said, "It's starting!"

Saul dropped the filter in the sink and joined Bella, watching the glass. Sure enough, a small pool of red liquid sat at the bottom of the glass. Slowly, imperceptibly, the glass filled and eventually stopped.

"We should have put a timer on this," Bella said.

"Okay, yeah, we'll do that this time, but first, let's see how much liquid is in the glass."

Saul rummaged through a couple of drawers until he found what he wanted, a graduated measuring cup.

He picked up the glass and looked at Bella. "Ready?"

Bella nodded. Finger poised over the stopwatch app on her phone.

Saul dumped the contents of the glass into the cylinder, and Bella started timing when he set the glass down.

“Five ounces,” he said.

“Standard pour for a glass of wine,” Bella replied. “Damn, we should have marked the glass to see where the end level is.”

“A ballpark guess is good enough for now. What I want to know,” Saul said, eying the cabinets, “is do we have anything else that does the same thing?”

For the next five minutes, Bella watched the glass while he emptied the cabinets. Saul wondered as he worked, *Are we suffering from productive procrastination?*

As a psychiatrist, he was familiar with the phenomenon. During an emergency, people often perform small, everyday tasks to regain a sense of control. It was also a form of mental escape; deal with this problem, so I don’t need to deal with that one. In the end, he reasoned that it didn’t matter. If they could learn anything helpful to their situation, they should.

The cabinet search was a wasted effort. Only Bella’s glass refilled itself.

Bella called the time at around the five-minute mark. Then, she pulled a Sharpie from the junk drawer and marked the level. They measured the output, five ounces.

Saul laughed. “If this really is wine, you’ll never need to buy another bottle. You’ll have wine forever!”

Bella didn’t laugh. She didn’t smile. In fact, she looked afraid.

“Saul, I took a big drink from the glass after it refilled the first time. What if it isn’t wine, or it’s tainted somehow?”

Saul felt an initial burst of panic, but he stomped it down. Calmly, he asked, “How long ago?”

“About an hour, I guess,” Bella said.

Saul let out a breath he didn't realize he was holding. He didn't think there was anything to worry about, but he talked them both through it.

"Did it taste the same as it did earlier?"

"Yes. I couldn't tell any difference."

"Good. Do you feel sick or nauseous?" Saul asked.

"No. Well, at least not until a moment ago."

"I don't think we need to worry. It's safe to say that if you'd been poisoned, we'd know by now."

"Unless I'm in a coma somewhere having fever dreams," Bella said.

"Trust me, you're not."

"Okay, Saul," Bella said. Her relief was almost palpable. "So, what's next?"

His mind flashed back to productive procrastination, but what else was there to do? They could watch the news repeat, or doom-scroll social media. No, this little mystery was much more interesting.

"Well, we have consistent output and consistent time. That indicates stability," he mused.

"As opposed to?"

"Well, if the amount or time varies, the process is ... unstable?" He shrugged. "I'm throwing spaghetti at the wall to see what sticks."

Bella said, "I wonder why it stops. Shouldn't it keep making wine?"

"Maybe it hits a point of equilibrium."

"The level has been consistent twice. I bet the time will be too," Bella reasoned. "Let's try it upside down. Maybe it will continue to make more if it never gets too full."

"I agree. How do you want to do it?"

Bella grabbed a large mixing bowl from the kitchen table. “We’ll put it in here so we don’t make a mess.”

“Good thinking.” Saul put the glass in the bowl upside down and started the timer again. They waited, and nothing happened. After ten minutes, the glass hadn’t produced anything.

“Well, that was a bust. Did we break it?” Bella asked.

“One way to find out.” Saul removed the glass from the bowl and set it upright on the counter. A minute later, red liquid started to pool in the bottom once again.

Bella didn’t wait for it to finish. She dumped the contents into the sink and laid it on its side on the counter. “On its side might work.”

It didn’t.

“It will only refill when upright, and it makes five ounces between three and a half and four minutes. What’s next?” Saul asked

“Stuff it full of paper towels?” Bella offered.

“Cool.” Saul grabbed a few sheets and stuffed them in the glass. It filled again, soaking the towels in the process.

After four minutes passed, Saul pulled out the sodden paper and wrung it out into the bowl. He poured the bowl into the cylinder. “A little over two ounces, but you’ve got to figure the towels absorbed a lot. How about liquid? Will it still make the same amount? Will it mix them together?”

“I don’t know, let’s give it a shot.”

Saul used the cylinder to measure an ounce of water. He emptied the wine glass—again—poured the water into it, then hit the timer, and sat back to wait.

“How much wine do you think we’ve wasted doing this?” Bella asked.

"Hmm," Saul tried to remember how many times they dumped wine down the drain. "Maybe five or six times. Five ounces is ... Alexa, how many milliliters is five ounces?"

The speaker on the counter answered the question with impersonal cheer: Five ounces is one hundred forty-seven, point-eight-six-eight milliliters.

"Crap, Alexa, how many ounces in a bottle of wine?"

A typical wine bottle contains twenty-five point four ounces of wine.

"We've dumped a bottle and a half down the drain."

"Saul, I'll never have to buy wine again. This is awesome!"

They looked back at the glass. It hadn't refilled. It still contained an ounce of tap water.

"Hmm, I guess it doesn't like other fluids in it." Bella dumped out the water and set the glass down. "Now what do we do?"

Saul gestured to the glassware, mugs, and bowls that littered the countertops and said, "I guess we put all this shit back where it belongs."

"Silly boy, did you need to empty all the cabinets?"

They worked in silence. For Saul, the last few hours had been a roller coaster of emotions. The initial spike of panic gave way to a low-grade unease when he realized they weren't in any immediate danger. Then, they'd discovered this weird and wondrous glass that could, in theory, give free wine for life, but now he felt a kind of boredom after the initial thrill of discovery. Maybe it was because the glass's behavior was so predictable. Inexplicable, but predictable. Bella broke him out of his reverie.

"Saul, look at the glass!"

He turned, noting the change immediately. The glass was

full, but this time it contained a clear liquid instead of red.

It's the color of tap water.

Bella echoed his thoughts in an awed tone. "It looks like water." She picked up the glass and, before Saul could protest, took a sip. "It is; it's water!"

A thrill went up his spine.

"Do you think it changed because we put water in it when it was empty?" Bella asked.

"One way to find out." Saul walked over to the refrigerator and pulled out a can of Diet Coke. He popped the tab as he walked back to the glass, emptied it, and poured in the soda. "We'll wait five minutes."

After the time passed, he emptied the glass into the sink and set it on the counter. "If this works ..." He trailed off.

Four minutes later, the glass was filled with a dark liquid. Saul picked up the glass and sniffed. "Smells like Coke." He took a sip. "Tastes like Coke, but it's flat. It must have reproduced the liquid but not the carbonation."

"Try something else," Bella said.

After they went through milk, orange juice, and olive oil, they were convinced. The wine glass could recreate any liquid as long as it was added to the glass within the first minute after it was emptied. Fluid added after the glass started its filling process only mixed with what the glass was making.

"Let's try one more thing," Bella suggested.

"How much more evidence do you need? It can do anything."

"I want to try gas."

Saul grinned and picked up the glass. Bella followed him into the garage.

You've reached the end of the free sample.

If you enjoyed these pages and want to continue the adventure, follow the link to pre-order your copy of Schrödinger's Glass.

<https://amzn.to/4iFAQ8H>

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Thank you for reading,

Chris

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



CHRIS GRALL retired as a US Special Forces team sergeant in 2014. He's been providing firearms and tactical advice to writers since 2007. After fourteen years of talking to authors about guns, he was inspired to write *Trigger Guard: A Writer's Guide to Firearms*. With one published work under his belt, it was time to get serious about writing his own fiction.

Chris lives in Lake Barrington, Illinois, with his wife, Mindy. He divides his time between writing, consulting, and training his puppy, Ricky the Destroyer.