

ARK

ORTICELLI

Luciano DeSanctis

Tanitha's and Narmer's long war has ended, bringing peace, security and immortality. The new technological prospect of making a new life cycle with each other was breathtaking. Now, with their new body-forms, they have a chance to rekindle their romance.

But was that — enough?

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Luciano E. DeSanctis

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For Antonietta, Leva, Domenica, Verina
and you . . . Donato.

For supporting and encouraging me
to believe in myself. I love you all.



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PREFACE

Enslaved by our own ingenuity, we have constructed a synthetic world, and, as a species, we have never been less human than we are right now. Greed, corruption, consumerism, and wars have been a grim and fearful fee during the age of Pisces in an attempt to satisfy our ego, which in turn gave rise to attitudes of prejudice and separateness.

Just as the age of Pisces gave us both Jesus and the Inquisition, the tide of the Aquarian age has bought us extraordinary technological breakthroughs with as well as spiritual incompleteness.

Myths, religions, consummation of natural organisms and along with artificial chemical substance, have failed us as a major component of reaching enlightenment to a higher self. The evolved simulated world of our intelligent machines was to be a sort of prosthesis for human reasoning: a tool that should have, as a matter of course, accelerated the transformation of our awareness into the fourth dimension and onto the way of enlightenment to oneness with Mother Earth and the cosmos.

Nevertheless, that baton has been passed to a new species of our own creation; therefore, it is not from the womb of nature. Henceforth, it is *Homo evolutis*, not we, who will be twirling with our sun across the Aquarius constellation. Thus, we leave the world a mark of our creativity, an adaptable artificial genius that has no aura, no

soul, and no humanity—just wishful thinking. And we, like the rest of the hominids, pass on into history, showing only our ineptness in this third dimensional domain, and withstanding the steps to follow in the way of the order of things.

This story is about our creation, and how an addictive desire of domination and conquest can lead to—nothingness.

PRELUDE

Homo sapiens' Last War was a century long and costly, dwindling the billions of human populations to nearly nothing.

The war was divided by geographical lines from all four hemispheres of the globe. It became like all other wars fought over economics and government. However, in this circumstance, the 21st century catastrophic financial crisis of the world was the spark that caused separation between shadowy elitist of wealthy and powerful oligarchy of banks, corporations, dynastic families and institutions in fighting one another over monopolizing the world's resources and world domination. Even after years of devastation, after all the oppression that was, after all the trespasses over the will of nature, in a bleak, dying earth where between ninety-eight and ninety-nine percent of known life became extinct, the elitist-survivors blindly carried on their warfare without intermission. These humans lived like moles in various self-sustained underground shelters and tunnels around the globe, leaving their battle to the machines to fight it out. They considered the war like it was a chess game. If the war were the World Series, these elitists would be like an umpire, rather than a player. Judging their war machines or their tactics, for control of the world's future or rather for the survival of the fittest.

One reason the war had lasted so long was because of technological advances invented between adversaries in

their respected hemisphere. They considered that it will end the war and their position would benefit humanity in a new world order. Thus, it was brought to light that a few thousand of these humans were left on earth and soon after the war ceased, their lives became pointless. Peacetime came about with a new development in the science of biology by the West. A radical transformation occurred from the use of stem cell therapy, also called therapeutic cloning. It was to treat or prevent a disease or condition. This new technology uses biosynthetic polymer that carried the same information as nature's own, however, with a different assemblage of molecules. Unlike DNA and RNA the synthetic macromolecule was more superior and a body could be especially designed to adapt to different environments. With this new technology, only the physical bodies are copied, and that consciousness' are the originals, simply transferred from one body form to another. This sophisticated cloning procedure was called a metempsychosis transfer. As follows, the genetic mixture from the survivors evolved a population of about five-hundred million genetically engineered people and with it a new order and a new empire emerged.

With the science of Quantum Physics supporting the technology, it is assumed and taken for granted that the technology was the fountain of immortality. It is a leap of faith taken by most of the new generation of creatures who called themselves Homo evolutis. These creatures saw

themselves as a new species. In essence, they felt they were the new gods, or they were in the process of becoming one.

Consequently, it happened that artificial evolution became the means of rebuilding earth's ecosystem.

HOMO SAPIENS' LAST WAR

“Sir Abraam, you are distressed, are you not?” asked the machine in a monotonic unisex tone. The voice startled the Caucasian dwarfed old man who was wholly captivated by the music of Brahms—Violin *Sonata No. 3*. A blinking rainbow of dancing colors came from the monitor as it spoke from the anti-gravity computerized medical chair called the Robo Chair, which was a function of an artificial intelligence running the systems of the new world government: The Republic of the United World States. The artificial intelligence was named Chief of Custodians, and those that created it claim it is guaranteed not to become sentient, but rather to diligently be obedient to human social order.

Narmer sighed, as he sat devitalized in his Robo Chair. His jaws tightened, but no words escaped him. He simply wanted a tranquil transit with pleasant music while he went through the tubular-shaped automated earth-toned hallway, which resembled a garden walkway. He maintained his focus on the music as the carbon black Robo Chair, with adjustable comfy seat and footrest, drifted towards the Metempsychosis Transporter Center, which was a part of a dome building in London. Knowing that his breathing had become much more labored and uneven than usual. For at that point, he discovered that he was worse off than he had been aware, and he was rapidly sinking under the pressure of the infirmities of old age.

“Sir Abraam, your vital signs have ranged to severe levels and—” The voice amplified through the monitor as if protesting, resounding in Narmer’s mind.

Narmer didn’t answer.

“Your vital signs are not stable and are not within normal limits.” Instantly, Narmer’s gray coarse brows deeply furrowed. His cheeks drooped towards his turkey neck, as he glared down at the monitor. He shook his head, closed his eyes to the interruption, and then griped, “Silence!” And he went on listening to the music.

But the machine persisted. “I am afraid that I am not programmed to be silent on this matter. Your vital signs are showing—”

“Yes-yes, I am dying!” Narmer interrupted with a huff, glaring profusely at the flat-screened monitor.

“Affirmative. Data shows your anatomy is becoming functionless; however, medication treatment is still available to ease your discomfort—”

“Oh, shush.” Narmer coughed at those words.

It annoyingly went on, “— Shall I administer the treatment?”

Narmer just huffed again and rolled his eyes away from the screen, and for a few seconds he quickly glanced over the right side of the wall at an artificial crystal-clear river that blended with the soft, cloudy blue sky. He then glared back at the monitor with defiance. He was about to cuss at it when a sudden burst of gasps and wheezes took over. His gasps for breath lasted what seemed to him a slow-motion

moment, until it subsided. His feeling thereupon was the remaining of sharp pain echoing and throbbing throughout his whole body, and it was attempting to stop him from replying. But he cleared his throat and managed to whisper a command with suspicion, “Hell no, robo! Let me be clear —No injections — No chemicals whatsoever!” When he spoke, his voice became scratchy and hoarse. He sounded weaker; however, his dark eyes sparkled with hope. He went on after a tremulous pause for emotional control, “Do you bloody understand, No?”

“Affirmative.”

Narmer then went back listening to the music. His eyes swaying back and forth at the themed garden of the hallway as he drifted along to his destination. By now, the pleasantness of the music was spoiled. Suddenly, he swallowed and made a face with a motion to lift his arms up into the air. His eyes, looking more disgruntled at the monitor, said, “Oh well—what’s the use! Robo, end the music!” He sighed. His lips twitched up in a smirk, adding, “You have ruined this lovely sonata for me!” He wasn’t sure why, for some unknown reason, automated voices annoyed him more than anything. Nonetheless, it just did, secretly annoying him in every possible way. It could be that he was born into an automated society where everything comes in handy, or maybe it was that his life had been mostly monotonous and ingrained, serving him no more than routine: he woke up, he went to work at the Science Center,

he went to some sort of entertainment, and then back to bed.

“My apologies, Sir Abraam. However, I must question your motives for why you do not want to ease your discomfort?”

As Narmer inadvertently watched the sparks of the rainbow voice dancing away from the monitor, again, the sudden attack came to him, and for a moment, he fought the shortness of breath until finally, the pain and discomfort dissipated enough for him to answer. “Because for all I know, this body is by nature. It’s originally me. At my age, I have been fortunate enough to have a body virgin from devices, either external or implanted with no synthetic whatsoever...” He was about to say more, but his glance at the monitor stopped him, “... oh, you don’t bloody get me.”

“Affirmative, it does not compute why you do not want to alleviate your discomfort?”

Narmer cleared his throat, and he scowled doubtfully at the monitor. “I, for one, prefer to keep what goes in this body as natural as possible—it’s my desire for cremation.”

“Why is this significant?”

Narmer drew in a long breath, followed with a slight wet tickle-in-the-throat cough, and then he shook his white, Einstein-like-haired head and shrugged his small shoulders in anticipation. “Umm . . .” he cleared once more his throat, “. . . I prefer to think of this poor shell of a body of mine as sacred. I want to have the cremated remains be

made into a genetic code soul gem keepsake. Do I make myself clear?” All the talking had made him light-headed, and he paused for a moment before asking, “I suppose this is an expression of *Homo evolutis*’ mode in the new order, isn’t it?”

“Affirmative.”

“Right—Oh, my point is on the mark! When in Rome, do as Romans do.”

“Error—you are in London,” responded the machine.

Narmer gave an amusing smirk, “well, I suppose so.” A slight nostalgic look then came to his face as he went on. “As you know, this body is one of the last of its kind: I am pure *Homo sapiens*.”

“Affirmative. You and Lady Tanatha are the last dwarf of this species; however, pure or not, it does not compute why this is significant when *Homo sapiens* is simply an obsolete species that is being upgraded?”

Narmer jerked his head in the direction where the Robo Chair was going with a low, bitter chuckle. He then eyed the monitor with a half grin and a half scorn and scoffed, “Oh, bloody awful, you would concoct that logic.” He shook his head, saying, “It’s not important for you to ‘compute’ with this matter—just get me there,” he ordered with a more eager tone of voice. His trembling finger then swiped up on the white menu bar at the bottom of the screen, showing the route and the estimated travel time, which read 00:11:00. He glanced at the date, November 11, 2118, and thought of what a lousy life it had been as a miniature-scale

human figure. Narmer came to believe that his bad luck was the result of unpropitious times. His life had been quite a strange one indeed, of one inner strife and tragedy after another. Of his life, Narmer came to believe it to be a mere spark from the infinite nothingness; a spark that appears, flickers, and dies back to nothingness, forever. Fortunately for him, he was able to cope with his dying due to the new technology of the mind-photon transporter machine, called the Metempsychosis Transporter. The machine was a technological breakthrough that changed everything in his world, for it scientifically made it possible for immortality. Such a heavenly existence was exciting and a bit intimidating as well, because he wasn't quite sure that the three weeks of training for the transition were quite enough time of preparation.

In his scientific thinking, there were some personal doubts that can only be answered by experience, such as: what would it feel like being long-term as a dead human in a superior synthetic body form? What then will he become? Will he personally be able to adapt, and if so, how long would that take? Nevertheless, as peculiar as it was, it was a remarkable invention by any standards. The breakthrough had completely transformed those he was acquainted with like night and day. From what he heard, the human mind in a Homo evolutis body form was an amazing and spectacular experience, and that gave him all the faith he needed to go on. As it was expected, the new life came with new rules, and as a traditionalist that he was, it was a life he

would have to get to know. He smirked at an odd rule that came to mind, that it was customary to go by first name basis only, ending the surnames altogether. With being a Homo evolutis, ancestry was becoming obsolete, and it was quickly becoming fashionable to regard Homo sapiens as a cruel parody of the new order. But Narmer was quite unenthusiastic about the idea, thinking, *I guess there goes the family tree tradition!* The whispered thought moved his lips as he quietly contemplated its meaning. *Anyway*, he thought, *I'll soon know all about it, won't I? Whatever happens — happens; the outcome is better than the alternative of being erased from existence.*

Narmer looked down at the estimated travel time, now reading, 00:05:60, and as he approached the doors of the Metempsychosis Transporter Center, his optimism cooled and turned flat. His wife was on his mind, and so was the familiar fear that had set in again. His thoughts suddenly ran in faulty rings round and round in his mind, playing out the same old scenarios and consequences of years of marital bickering and estrangement, which had caused a deep-seated bitterness between them. *Our new life will be totally different from anything we've done*, he thought.

At nineteen years old, in the sunrise of the Last War, he had met Tanatha Quintilla, who was a dwarf as well. They had fallen in love with each other and went steady for three years before becoming engaged. They were both twenty-two years old when they married in her hometown in Rome, where it happened to be a place of neutrality and the safest place at the time. Immediately afterwards, they

had a son, Naenio, who became, over the course of time, a five-feet, nine-inches giant to them both, and he became a fine botanist at the '*Museum in Orto Botanico*' in Rome, only to lose him at the age of 29, from the dreaded 2047 Urban London guerrilla warfare. In those days, his identity as an astrophysicist was unknown in London, not to mention that he was part of a high-ranking circle of military scientists belonging to a specialized domain of science that was working on secret weapons projects. However, the Londoners and others simply saw him as a second lieutenant military officer with a cushy desk job assisting the public relations officer. His professional military career lasted throughout his son's youthful years, leaving his wife to raise the boy alone. If truth were told, the mentality of the war had so consumed him that it had completely unprepared him to be a father, let alone a husband. The world, at that period, was a titanic land battle, and it had taken love out of everyone's lives. Like most military men, he had become impersonal, almost sociopathic. Usually, the feeling of melancholy about being away from his family only happened once in a while, like during holidays; he then felt some guilt about being far away. Usually, he was comfortable being alone with the entrusted duty as a science officer, which kept him with his regiment. What made family matters worse was that he seldom did get a military leave to go see them. The often-inspiring explanation to his family was 'I don't know when, but we'll get together then'. And the waiting was quite disturbing to

his wife. Because after a substantial amount of time apart, she wanted him home. Granting that she was close to a loving string of relatives— aunts, uncles, cousins, and inseparable parents— along with two sisters’ families. The separation, however, had distanced his wife emotionally from him, and she had had enough of being a military scientist’s wife. Even so, by virtue of patriotism, he had no choice but to ignore her expressed wishes to resign. Narmer just couldn’t agree with his wife because his science work was deemed too vital for the war effort. Besides, it would have been his reputation that would have suffered, and his resignation would have substantially damaged his prestige with the new ruling class and in the science sphere. Not to mention that he wouldn’t have also been credited for ending the war. At that moment, it suddenly struck him as ironic that his recognition of his science achievements was not only a war success but also related to his son’s death. The bright future he had fought for so long had come, and yet, as a bereaved parent, he found himself shunned like a leper. Since the tragedy, his wife and he had lost their intimacy. Up until now, they had slept in separate bedrooms, and still today, they do not ever speak about the death of their son. Obviously, they’ll never recover from this shock, not in this life cycle.

Oh, how I wished I could undo what I’d done, his thought ran on and on, . . . but I was busy with my work; it was too important to be interrupted! Narmer couldn’t find words to soothe him. No! He suddenly counteracted his

thoughts. If only I had taken the leave there in Rome when I had the chance, Naenio would certainly be here.

Naenio was known to be stubborn, unruly, and with traits of narcissism. He was naively neglected by his father and overly indulged by his codependent mother. He was a Roman civilian who undertook some foolish adventures during the war, like deciding to surprise his father out of the blue in London. Whereas he walked into the wrong time, the wrong place, the wrong bloodshed—straight into a bombing raid.

Narmer liked to think his son visited out of love, rather than resentment. That's how he saw it, and he wouldn't challenge his thought of it. The more Narmer thought of the unspent years with his son, the more it pained him, and the more he was consumed by the recurring thought of his wife's displeasure with him.

All at once, the weird and uncomfortable negligent twitch in his right eye appeared, and he attempted to obviate the annoyance out of his head. *Darn, what was I thinking? I certainly wouldn't harm the project taking leave for a few days*, he thought, slowly raising his remorseful eyes to the ceiling of the hall. A quiver then suddenly ran up his belly. He then shook the miserable thought off his mind with a quick vision that something good in the new life was hiding there with him and his wife, like some spark of love to each other hoping to revive their dissolution of intimacy.

At that instant, like a god who lost a match, his old resentment resurfaced and he quickly reconsidered his

pessimistic view of his family's tragedy. *She can't bloody blame me for his actions! The East forces waged a vicious war that day in London — how could I have known?* He paused for breath, then continued thinking, *I will make it right as her new husband in our new life cycle! Yes, we will both make it right!* Narmer presumed his wife was already there somewhere in the Metempsychosis Transporter facility, possibly recuperating from her own metempsychosis transfer. But he wasn't sure. Because, upon their admissions, they were confined in their own respected care unit. Thereupon, after all that reflection, Narmer felt a bit gratified that they were able to solve some of their marital problems. At least, the insignificant and trivial bickering they were used to having with each other was finally over; they were now talking like humans again as if nothing had happened. And it's about time they got over it. *Enough's enough*, he thought. For too long their son's death had made them extremely morbid in regard to their lives or the world in general. That is until the invention of the Metempsychosis Transporter Machine. The prospect of making a new life cycle with each other was breathtaking. They now have a chance to rekindle their romance and be able to live a happy life. They both recognized that perhaps it was exactly what they needed to continue to grow and repair their love, trust, and fulfillment of their relationship; they therefore made an endeavor to live the life they had imagined.

As Narmer glanced at the door sign, a sudden enthusiasm of adventure set in. A slight rosy blush came to

his cheeks as his mind raced to the thoughts of becoming the adaptable humanoid that would live one hundred and thirty-three years before his consciousness would be transported again to another body form. This time, under this new republic, it will be unlike any other past government. Finally, it is our time now. Our new life is the opportunity for us to start over again. Yes, it will be good, he thought.

Immediately, the Robo Chair took him through an auto-sliding double door with an electronic sign above the doors that read:

WELCOME TO THE METEMPSYCHOSIS TRANSPORTER CENTER.



Once inside the waiting area, the Robo Chair stopped. “You have arrived at your destination point,” said the machine.

It was Narmer’s first time in the room, and he was silent for a brief moment as his eyes darted across the room. Traditional and dull, the room bored him quickly; because contrary to the hallway appearances, this particular room embraced a metallic trend, in a shiny intergalactic style that he was accustomed with in his culture. Narmer then lowered his chin to the monitor, and scoffed, “Yes, I can bloody see that!” And he said quickly, “just take me to the reception area!”

Along the way, he kept glancing around, until he noticed some of the people sitting in the waiting area. Most of them glanced back at him kindly, but there were a few who looked at him with an impartial expression, which made him realize that he was among forgiven former war enemies. He couldn't help but eye on the colorful fashionable tunics and robes worn by both genders of the Athenian Era, which had come back in popularity. When he tipped his head slightly to the side to look over to two familiar looking pre-adult Asian female and male that happen to be Homo evolutis, he whispered, "Mhmm, do I know those two from before?" His vision was weak and the view was not as clear as he would like it to be. As Narmer passed by the couple, he attempted to catch their eyes, but at that moment, they were centered on each other, which passed in slow motion. He had to twist his achy head to keep looking as he drifted along. After seeing they were too absorbed with each other, he rolled his dry tongue around inside his eager mouth, watching them kissing and fondling as if they couldn't resist. Seeing them interlocked in each other's arms, the glimpse of the truth of their erotic obsession suddenly had evoked his memories of pure feelings of youthfulness. Granting the air of freshness and playfulness, the tactile sensations, however, dissipated in seconds by his throbs of pain, which coincided with his heart's pulse-beat.

The room circuit cameras signaled the Robo Chair the view of Asian couple. "Negative, Sir Abraam, you do not

know them from the past,” answered the machine, “Sir Suman and Lady Maninder were Homo sapiens from the East and they were your enemy during the warfare. As you are aware, the two have successfully accomplished their metempsychosis transfer, and they are now waiting for the metempsychosis transfer of their son, Sir Ravi, before going back with him to Lumbini, Nepal.”

A son? Narmer wondered. His small smile showed a touch of chagrin. At that thought, Narmer attempted once more to dismiss the past; accept it; learn from it: trying to embrace the dawn of the Age of Aquarius. As he approached the reception, his eyes widened upon the site of the eight-foot exoskeleton robot blankly staring at him in attendance with its creepy bright jaundice metallic eyes.

“Greeting, Sir Abraam, I am number 65! Your appointment is confirmed with Professor Morton,” said the robot standing in front of a clear acrylic podium. The metallic face smiled slightly. The voice pitch was slightly higher than of the Robo Chair monitor, but the tone of thought and manner of voice was the same, since all machines operated by a central processing unit of the Chief Custodian. Aside from their monotonic voices, all automatons wore naturally a solemn expression, which distinguished them from any hominid or animal alike. “I will escort you to the metempsychosis transporter room, please follow me . . .” Narmer nodded at the machine like a wise, old wide-eyed owl. He was about to say something witty about his new life, but the lightheadedness and the

coughing stopped him from doing so, instead, he fought his misery by looking back at the very youthful lovers with delight. *I'll be joining them soon, in this free world, with no more wars to be contended with*, he thought, submitting faithfully to his plan for his immortality. At that instant, the escort robot went on saying, “. . . you have been made aware your vital signs are unstable and you must hurry. Your replica biosynthetic body is waiting and it is in my computation that you are overdue for your new life.” Moreover, the robot read Narmer's facial expression as distress and then said, “Sir Narmer, it is totally normal to feel anxious before a metempsychosis transfer. Nevertheless, the procedure is perfectly safe!”

Narmer scoffed at the robot, taking some deep but shallow breaths trying to express his thoughts. “Look number whatever you are . . .”

The robot suddenly interrupted, “I am number sixty-five!”

“. . . Well, number sixty-five, you observed me wrong, and if you're ‘computing’ that I am afraid of this here transfer, you're bloody wrong. For what it's worth, at my age of one-hundred and one, I've learned to live a courageously long life in the midst of war that was both personal and patriotic.”

“Affirmative, Sir Abraam,” bowed the machine, “and with the New Republic, harmony and serenity are waiting for those of victory who cares to walk the new life of *Homo evolutis*.”

Narmer made a slight face of acknowledged, raising his trembling finger straight to the robot, “yes-yes — enough!” he said feebly, being bothered by the robot’s praise as well as his depressing memories. “You fail to understand that peace came with the complete ending of nature’s humanity.” He gasped and he couldn’t say more of about the past: the losses of friends, of relatives, and of course his son was quite uncomfortable.

“Affirmative. Homo sapiens is an obsolete species of life form that is being upgraded to Homo Evolutis in the new order of things. Are you ready to be upgraded?”

Narmer was silent to that question, and more of a practical thought came to his mind about his old failing body. *Oh well, that’s how it is, everything ends in death — everything.* He then nodded and whispered, feebly to the robot, “Proceed!” He carried on by turning his head to the lovers sitting in the waiting area and back to the robot with a pleasant squint-eye, and added, “I am looking forward to the pursuit of happiness like them two over there, living a romantic humanoid life style.”

“Affirmative, Sir Abraam,” answered the escort robot with a light bow.

After seeing the machine’s respectful demeanor, Narmer genuinely accepted the robot’s words and then orders the Robo Chair to follow the escort robot inside the Intensive Care Unit, where there was a circular nurse’s station surrounded by eight clear acrylic walled recovery rooms.

As the Robo Chair drifted by, following the escort robot crossing over the 'Recovery Room', Narmer scanned around the room between some of the medical robots involved in their care. He questioned where was the flourishing humanoid Professor and thought, *Damn, how could I have blanked out his name!* The synthetic biologist and he, knew each other on and off in a couple of different periods of their lifetimes. At one time they were assigned to the science team of the Antigone Project, which was a research and development project that produced Smart Pathogens as a Cyborg-weapons of mass destruction to conquer the East. Suddenly, Morton, popped in his mind. *Right-O — his name is Morton Benjamin!*

Just then, as the Robo Chair drifted on, Narmer recognized him in his new body form inside a room tending to a sickly middle-aged human individual with characteristics of the East Asian genus. *Ah, I guess that chap must be Ravi*, he thought. As he passed by another room, unheard by him, a feeble, but high-pitched female voice suddenly cries out, "Narmer . . ." Seeing no response, she then ordered, "Robo escorting Sir Narmer Abraam . . . stop! Let me talk to him!" Both the Robo Chair and the robot slowed to a quick halt.

"What are you doing number 67?" Narmer griped with a sudden burst of gasps and wheezes.

"Error! I am escort Robo-65! Lady Tanatha would like to speak to you," said the robot and pointed its metallic finger to the room where his wife was recovering.

“Narmer, look over here — it’s me!”

Disoriented, Narmer cleared his throat, “What?” He questioned as he turned his head toward the strange voice and to an unrecognizable young girl lying on the high-tech bed. Narmer’s vision, as weak as it was, he still was able to see the anemic looking girl being aided by a nurse robot.

She puffed annoyingly, and then glared at him seriously, calling, “*Madonna!*” she raised her adolescent eyes on him, “It’s me — Tanatha!”

Through the blur of his tired vision, for a moment, Narmer couldn’t talk; he could only gape through the clear acrylic wall at his wife’s perfection. He bent forward his head for a clearer view of her and thought that he wouldn’t have recognized her if they’d passed by on the street.

“Lovey — oh my! You passed off before me?” He inquired sarcastically with a weak-gasping voice. “But you’re so altered?”

Tanatha let out a silly smirk and nodded a gesture of ‘of course I have!’.

“Good Heavens, you caught me off guard—you’ve taken on the body of a child?”

Tanatha’s thoughtful hazel eyes suddenly opened wide and sighed like a Roman woman would, “Oh Madonna!” She pressed her small hand to her face. “I am afraid that I never did mention to you that I was going to have myself enhanced a little.”

“A little?”

“Well, don’t be concerned, I am told that I am still in the developing stage.”

“But—Lovey, it’s just not quite you?”

“Well, *caro uomo*, this is pretty much what I looked like when I was a little girl,” she reluctantly mentioned.

“Rubbish, you don’t resemble any of your childhood images.”

“It’s a slight enhancement,” she blurted out, rubbing her temples as a faraway look came into her eyes. “Well—I suppose.” After a pause, she raised her chin at him, adding, “well *caro uomo*, you won’t quite resemble yourself either after your transformation.” Her retort sounded weak, and she was tired of talking.

“Oh . . .” he said as he couldn’t help but notice her tiredness. “. . . Right-O, Lovey!” He went on with a dismissive chuckle. He then tilted his head at her slender dwarf figure and, of what he could see of her, he went on to say between a cough, “You’re quite a fit bird, aren’t you?” He kept looking, appreciating her half-naked seductively curvy body.”

“Am I really?”

“Absolutely smashing!” he chuckled again; the chuckle, as it happens many times before, turned to a series of coughs. After a pause, he said, smiling, “I mean you’ve taken in the footsteps of a charming goddess, haven’t you?”

Tanatha nodded, with a grin at his awe-struck earnestness.

“Excuse me Sir Abraam, Professor Morton is asking for you,” interrupted the escort robot. “Your time, Sir, is of the essence; you must leave now to start your metempsychosis transfer process.”

At the same time, the nurse robot inside the chamber informed Tanatha. “Your Beta and Gamma brain rhythms are unstable. It is essential, Lady Tanatha, that you rest and relax completely.”

Narmer let a breath go and then took his time looking at her before saying, “Charming—I can’t believe it is really you!”

“Oh, go on! It is really me—silly.”

As the escort robot led on and the Robo Chair began to move, Narmer turned his head to his wife, whispering, “we’re cheeky, aren’t we?”

She caved in an approval response with gleaming eyes, saying, “this time, no excuses on not having the time for dancing lessons.”

“Right-O, no excuses. I am glad we’re progressing along, fixing mistakes.” He tilted up his chin, proud, declaring, “You know, time will pass and things will change, but my craziness about you will always remain the same and nothing in this world can change that.” He smiled lovingly, “I’ll see you a bit later, my Lovey.”

Tanatha returned a loving smile, waving her delicate fingers lightly in the air, whispering back, “*Arrivederci*.” And in the warmth of her hand gesture, her white gold wedding band on her finger caught the light and glittered. Without a

question, it was obvious to him that she requested her wedding ring to be transferred to her new body because she wanted their marriage to last as much as he did. Narmer gleamed at her appreciatively. He wrenched away with a touch of pure serenity, grinning softly in silence. He was being more grateful than ever for their marital reconciliation.

Thereafter, inside the metempsychosis transporter room, the escort robot pointed to the Professor, pleasantly saying, “the robot nurses are waiting; we are looking forward in welcoming the new you! Farewell, Sir Abraam!” And then the escort robot exited on its way.

The Robo Chair drifted him toward the metempsychosis machinery, which resembled a futuristic twin-tube MRI chamber. Narmer looked over at it with keen enthusiasm. When he neared closer to the machine, Narmer’s left eye twinkled a little as he took a deeper look through the clear tube at his replica synthetic body, which lay naked on the right Tube bed [B], along the left side of Tube bed [A]. The exquisite looking boy was priceless to him like a donor organ would be. He had, to a limited extent, experienced the replica as an avatar format in the habitat simulator-based training program, which was especially created for *Homo sapiens* by the new government’s biosynthetic administration. However, witnessing his replica in actual reality, equipped with his five senses, was all but a different experience. Right away, Narmer was able to identify the replica as himself, as he

once was in his youth, and the thought was remarkable enough to cause him to take a deep breath in awe, which was, nevertheless, more like a gasp than a (woah!). Narmer gave the replica a keen smile, believing of the wondrous possibilities that he will have in such a body. The more excitement over his replica, the more Narmer coughed, until he looked away from the view and ending the excitement with a pleasant sigh.

By now, Narmer was too exhausted, and he felt he was about to lose consciousness. He then took a couple of labored breaths to steady his nerve, as he approached the Professor in the other side of the MRI chambers, where the operational area was by Tube bed [A].

“Hello Narmer,” the Professor said in salutation, looking up from reading a tablet.

“Morton Benjamin!” Narmer called out the Professor with a nod of salutation. “This machine contraption is quite magical, isn’t it?”

The Professor smiled, “It’s as magical as fire itself.” The Professor then chuckled and said, “by the way, these days I only go by the name, Morton.”

“Right-O, we have polished off those bloody surnames,” Narmer said, with a faint smile. Well, do tell me, Morton, it has been some time since your transfiguration, how are you feeling these days?”

“Wonderfully, old friend, I have no side effects whatsoever. I feel powerful! I find my sensation and perception are more enhanced than I ever thought possible

— it's a magnificent life!" he said chuckling. "You'll come to know this soon enough."

Meanwhile, two nurse robots began to get Narmer ready for the transfer. They disrobed him and then lifted him up off the Robo Chair, placing him naked on the metempsychosis transporter scan table (A). The table then gently moved into the clear tube of the machine. The robots were efficient at ensuring Narmer's safety and they were able to get through the complicated procedure perfectly.

Through the clear tube, Narmer was able to communicate with the Professor. He gave him a reminiscing smile, saying, "strange, your ephebic-like face brings back the ghost of the past . . ." Narmer was trying hard to look brave and unconcern, but by now his Caucasian face had become quite white. He chuckled gently between coughs, trying not to think about death. He went on saying, "what's flashing in my mind is the day at Oxford University, where I met you for the first time, where we almost lost our lives there from the droids' intense laser firing. You know, sometimes I can still smell the burning flesh and hair; the fumes-burning plastic and hemp and molted-metal. Oh, how it stung the back of my throat as I screamed and inhaled . . ." Narmer momentarily became silent when the look of befuddlement flashed across the Professor's face. Besides, he was using up too much of his breath to talk.

The Professor nodded an acknowledgement with a meager smile and said, "Of course, I must have blocked

those days out of my head so I can sleep better at night.” He then glanced over the tablet and shook his head indicating a negative. “Narmer — your health records show that this metempsychosis transfer procedure should have been done around eleven months ago, before your first symptoms of the third stage of lung carcinoma.” The Professor shook his head and shrugged in reluctant surprise, wondering why he had done that.

Narmer nodded, for he was much too tired to explain.

The Professor went on reluctantly with a half-glance towards his face, “I would have never thought of you to be this stubborn! You certainly went out of your way of not complying with medical advice!”

“The reason is all there on record,” said Narmer in shallow whispers.

Looking over the writings on the tablet, the Professor side glanced at Narmer and frowned a bit. “Yes, I see — to preserve the last of your *Homo sapiens* genetic code.” he mumbled as he sat down on a chair looking over the tablet for the last time.

“Surely you are aware that your dwarfism genetic data are on file along with the rest of the final generation of *Homo sapiens*.”

Narmer nodded his head yes, while his annoying cough persisted. He hesitated for a moment, coughing a bit more before he could talk. “It’s personal and sacred . . . that is why I didn’t comply.”

“Swell, I see . . .” said the Professor, sitting back, reflecting, giving a quick shrug as he rubbed the back of his neck, “. . . I must say, for a cremated genetic coded gem keepsake you’ve come pretty close to abolish your life.”

Narmer masked his gasp with a chuckle, acknowledging that his situation could have been dire. “It has meaning for me.”

Abruptly, one of the nurse robots interrupted, reassuring them that everything is in place, secure, ready to go with the procedure.

“Are you ready?” the Professor asked.

Narmer nodded. “Get it done bloody quickly!”

The Professor then got up, walked to the control panel and touched some keyboard icons on the glass-like screen. “There may be a minor amount of static charge accumulation. You’ll first feel some heat and tingling; you’ll feel like your nerves are frayed. It is nothing to be concerned about.” The Professor said with a promising smile. He then bursts a chuckle at the memory of what he had alleged. “See you at the other side of [B].” Be still now—in a moment you’ll be elated at winning the prize of a new life.”

Narmer lay there saying nothing, the fear had suddenly got the best of him. He felt every bit as if he was about to skydive through a thunderstorm.

“Engaging system interlock,” the Professor went on, “energizing!”

Narmer felt the pulse flowing through his body. The warmth and tingles went all the way down to his toes, as a strong intense light shone through him. He felt the static electricity, but no pain, only the numbness all over his body. He started breathing slowly, then sporadic breaths, and then all at once, one long exhalation and his breathing stopped.



Instantly, a state of unimaginative contentment fell upon Narmer, feeling as though he had physically left his body. At that same moment, the person of being Narmer was no more, but the observer emerged from the ubiquitous sea of consciousness, watching everything around him, which was dark and quiet. Nearby, the well familiar beam of tunneled light developed into view, which was eternal, and knew everything about the observer: his thoughts, what he did, or will do. In that magical fifth dimensional of space without time, where everything was one, moving with a purpose, the observer turned away from the eternal light source and inquisitively moved into the haze, which appeared below him like a bright, cotton-like cloud of gas. Inside the cloudy gas, his thoughts suddenly flashed through the major memories of experiences with the other intimate angels.

There, in an angel of light-like form, the observer stepped into time and let its previous corporal life, unfold like a hologram 3D projection, from unimaginable worlds to worlds, and then from the tiniest to the greatest life forms

on earth's land, water, and in the sky. The experienced vivid scenes came from one flash scene memory to another flash scene memory, inside and away from the other. Before long, the observer birthed into humanity and as the memories dissolved into another and another, the observer suddenly stopped over to the day of his first science social gathering where he met an angel of light as a human. The observer then drew near to where he saw himself as a person, experiencing the life of a student in an Oxford blue suit and bow tie. The young man, Narmer Abraam, was loitering by the food table with some of the other exceptional students from other universities. The observer, at that instant, dissolved into that aspect of memory, becoming the memory, and watching himself as a person.

Narmer felt the presence all about the room as he glanced over to the table where his Professor, with certain scientist guests of importance, were chatting with the famous astronomer Professor, Donato Orticelli, who claims to have discovered a super-Earth sized planet orbiting both stars, Alpha Centauri [A] and [B]. The mansion house was filled with guests with Professors and exceptional students of all branches of science who were clustered in large and mixed groups, sipping the bubbly wine and sampling some of the hors d'oeuvres that were being served.

A few moments later, Narmer spotted a server with a glass of what looked like good champagne. He quickly took hold of the glass from the passing server to give himself something to do.

"Please help yourself!" said a young lady's voice with an Italian tinge approaching behind him. He turned to see the playful voice, and when he did his eyes gleamed at her beautiful small figure in a burgundy gown.

"Oh my, is this your drink?" He responded, startled.

She giggled for a good moment while studying him from head to toe.

"That's perfectly fine, *caro uomo!* You're forgiven!"

"Oh, stupid bloody me, eh!" He continued with an apologetic voice, "Here you go!" Narmer gasped at her stunning face, offering the glass of sparkling wine with an apologetic smirk. Right away, Narmer became attentive, following with his eyes every motion of her brilliant petite figure. A sudden feeling engrossed him of an overwhelming sense of fondness and attraction for her, along with a sense of completion that went beyond words. As he was being accommodating, his logic mind briefly struggled with this strange, unpredictable emotion. Because such emotion was something he had never anticipated. *Wow!* Narmer thought, *you came out of the blue!*

Tanatha giggled enthusiastically as she accepted the glass from him. Her facetious rounded face became gentile. The light golden-brown colors in her eyes were gleaming like those of an Egyptian Mau, and as he looked into them he saw in them the same tender longing he felt in himself. She was bright and independent minded and Narmer quickly became comfortable with their mutual attraction for each other.

At the same time, another server came by and handed him a glass of wine. Narmer gave a cordial smile to the server and raised his glass to his lips, saying, “Cheers!” before taking a sip.

“*Cin-cin!*” she yielded with a Roman flair, smiling and then she sipped the wine.

“Humm! Oh — this is champagne — tasty!” he complimented.

“No, it is a *Prosecco Spumante*. I recognize the taste anywhere because I drank much of it here in Roma.” She said, looking at him sensuously. Right there, being two dwarfs in a room among giants, Narmer understood that she had deduced that they belong together.

“Mhum!” he said, refraining from gulping the drink down. “Right-O,” he went on agreeably with a funny grin and then extended his hands, saying, “by the way I am Narmer Abraam — I’ll be on my first year of astrophysics at Oxford. My project involves the study of rotating stars, with particular focus on the Sun. As you well aware, it has been known for some time the sun has its own unique rotation compare to other stars. However, our observatory computer model has shown that only about five percent of stars in our galaxy behave similarly to our sun.”

“Oh yes, I remember hearing about it in one of my lectures,” she giggled.

“Yes, well, this crazy universe can be both strange and beautiful, full of unanticipated objects.”

She agreeably nodded, giggling further, and then she went on introducing herself, “well, I am Tanatha Quintilla and I am studying my first year of theoretical astrophysics at *Sapienza Università di Roma*. I am under the supervision of Professor Orticelli, studying the formation and evolution of Alpha Centauri triple star system.” They shook hands. “By the way, your British accent gave you away.”

He smiled. “My accent” he laughed softly, “well, not quite. I am actually an Australian, briefly raised in Sydney. I was five-years old when I relocated to England.” He swiftly moved the conversation forward by looking at her sensuously and asking, “Have you been to London lately?” Narmer asked, looking at her closely, as if they had known each other for years, and in some way, she felt the same way with him as well.

“No, I never considered going,” she replied.

“Blimey! It’s hard to believe a girl like you never been to London.”

“Well, I suppose it’s because I am a Roman girl at heart, and the very thought of flying frightens me to bits, especially now, with so much terrorism going on around the world.”

Narmer acknowledged, with a smile of a weary resignation. His voice turned almost mockingly sympathetic as he spoke again. “Right-O, this bloody world is minefielded, terrorized by automatons. It has been this way since the kickoff of the century, and I suppose the bloodshed will never end. In any event, this is the only life we have, and we

should not squander it.” He said with a defiant chuckle. “You know, there comes a time when you need to consider a risk to be true to who you are.”

Tanatha responded with an understanding nod and said, “I suppose, but no, not me, with so much violence out there. Although I am optimistic that once our space carrier out there launches MENES, we’ll then be able to verify and confirm that life truly exists on the planet Hortus.”

“MENES?” he questioned, not sure what she was implying.

Tanatha gave him an amazing glimpse at his lack of knowing. “Yes, it is our Missionary Engine Network Examiner Spacecraft that will be launched on the twenty-first of December.”

“Oh . . . that, I am afraid I’ve heard vaguely about it. You understand, I am quite involved with my project, and I have been a bit lax about the news.”

Tanatha gave an understanding bow. “Well, anyway, I am sure that with the satellite’s verification of an extraterrestrial life, all of our lives in this corrupt world are going to improve for the better.”

Narmer smirked, unsure. “Who can bloody tell? Our life situation here may get better or it may continually worsen. My conjecture is that the quality of life here on Earth will not improve because it’s always been in our blood to be killers.” He said with a sigh, irritation flickering in his voice.

“Oh, how sad you see it that way! Well, I am optimistic that the Professor’s discovery is proceeding to bring about peace for all of us.”

“Mhmm — you really believe there’s possible life there on that planet?”

“I do,” she said, with a faithful voice.

Narmer smiled with a questionable face and said, “For what I’ve heard, it’s hardly orbiting the habitable zone. There are many scientists here that believe the data accuracy of the Professor’s Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave instrument may not be reliable.”

Tanatha returned another amazing glimpse, avoiding his skepticism. “I do believe this evening the Professor is going to provide us with additional evidence of life on Hortus.”

She smiled. “We are so fortunate to have here in Roma the only LIGO Observatory that’s not destroyed by terrorism.” Tanatha then looked around, “Do you know anyone here in our company?”

Narmer looked over the room and pointed, “My Professor is over there.” He turned back to her with a smile. His dark eyes worked their way across her face and into her light golden-brown eyes and said, “I am delighted to have met you! I believe there are only a few of us left with short stature.” He also started looking at her sensually. “I believe you are with the famous one, aren’t you?”

She giggled and replied with a positive nod. “Yes, there’s a group of us here,” she then said, with the proud smirk. “I

follow the Professor whenever he's available to lecture. I am quite sure we have another Galileo."

He chuckled, but his face showed a little skepticism, and said, "It is remarkable that your Professor had a triumph over all the astronomers out there with the discovery of planet Hortus. Even so, it is remarkable that after all the years orbiting out of view behind the binary stars, Hortus suddenly shows itself to humanity."

Tanatha immediately returned with a witty retort, "Well *caro uomo*! My Professor knew exactly where to look! The Alpha Centauri triple-star system has been a passion of his for quite some time?"

He immediately uttered, "no, I didn't know."

She flashed a proud smile. "Yes, the LIGO and his gravitational equations pointed him the way." She then pointed to the Professor, "He's got a unique name, doesn't he?"

"Um — what?" He let out softly, looking at her with a furrowed brow. Her words had passed through him without stopping, and he had drifted away to a fantasy place in his mind where he made love to her.

"His name, silly!"

Narmer snapped out of the sensation he was producing. "Oh — yes! Right-O," he said, as he glanced over to where she was pointing. Then, he wavered a moment before asking, "Which one, his first or last name?"

Tanatha gave out a short chuckle, "Oh, *mamma mia*, his last name, which signifies a small garden in Italian. It is a

unique name, isn't it; that kind of rolls around your tongue?"

Narmer chuckled along, realizing she was much too fascinated with her mentor. "Well, I suppose. Apparently, the 'R' gives it quite a roller coaster sound to it," he jested.

As soon as Narmer told her that, she gave him an agreeable smile, and then, suddenly, a bright shine of white light came about pretty quickly, and the observer saw them both vanish into darkness.



Again, the scenes came one flash scene to another, until the observer momentarily stopped at an underground waterfront public garden. The late night was serene and unoccupied, except for the two persons by a synthetic ficus tree: his ladylove and himself. Under the shade of the night, they eagerly spent their free moments together for they were pressed for time. The observer watched Narmer while he adjusted his uniform, and then watched him sitting down on the grassy area across from his ladylove, who was wearing a khaki military dress that was rumpled and twisted. Laying on his back against a shadow background of blossom branches, Narmer could hear the distinctive, soft rattle of leaves, and he could pleasantly feel against his skin the soft air-conditioned breeze coming from the Northern outlet ports, giving the park a springtime atmosphere. From moment to moment he would give her a caressing expression, while his libido was, again,

skyrocketing him to paradise. For all the horrors and stresses of an endless war around them, the two made their weekend military leave as pleasant as possible. They sat on a whitish picnic blanket that spread out over the artificial turf grass, with two hemp bags with *Panini* and *Minestrone*. By his side lay an open bottle of Spumante where he occasionally tapped his restless fingers on it. Throughout more than a year of their military service, their courtship was restricted by the duties of war; however, they made connections as much as they were allowed. Even though the separation was a torment to them both, when they did see each other, ensnared by each other's attractions and with thoughts of romance, their time together was like as if amnesia had set in and nothing outside of them really mattered. This night was theirs for the taking and take it they did.

Tanatha sat there on the blanket being self-assertive, and she became very talkative. Even though the war made her uncomfortable, she spoke lively, as a bit of gossip, about the personal lives of fellow female colleagues in the West Space Force anti-satellite program. Her colleagues and she were involved in the duties of testing the effect of strategic jamming software, for combating the East updated version of their satellites. Her manner to him was genial and candid with her usual flair. As she talked, she appeared to him to be pleasant and amusing all at the same time. The resulting lovemaking had been natural and fulfilling to her, and being so late at night, in the darkness, Tanatha was

quite sure no one around had witnessed their surprise interaction.

Meanwhile, Narmer sat up and crossed his legs, while being attentive to her words. He gave her a smile as he leaned his back against the trunk of the tree. With his left toe, he softly brushed her right toe for a second, as she continued her talk while adjusting her skirt and bra.

His face showed her the passion he has for her, and she welcomed his passion by responding with a silly facial gesture, welcoming the fire he had raised all over her body.

Moments after, the dull hunger pangs reminded him he hadn't had dinner; his last meal was lunch at the mess hall. "I know it's quite late, but let's eat!" He quickly said with a simple smile.

She nodded agreeably. Tanatha suddenly looked around and blinked, feeling as if she was coming out of a dream. "*Madonna*, do you know, it's almost morning?"

"I guess then we're having breakfast, aren't we?" He said, while he opened his 6 oz container and then shoved a spoonful of cold soup in his mouth.

In the midst of her talk, Tanatha pulled from her bag a *panini*.

After some minutes of listening, he promptly became aware she was hardly eating. "Aren't you hungry?"

"Yes, but this is awful." She replied.

In the side view at the left, the partly obscured pond was calm and still. Its water was polka-dotted by the soft sky glow from the artificial stars and moon, which seemed to

suggest romance and repose under the dark sapphire-sealed sky. The pond was surrounded with exotic artificial trees and with tailored flowering shrubs and bushes. In the trees, a variety of cloned birds had begun to twitter their morning songs, as a small stretch of dome daylight emerged from the Eastern horizon.

After some time, when Tanatha ended her long complaint talk about her current life into self-deprecation and missing out on things with her family, she suddenly looked at him strangely and asked, “Well—*mio caro uomo*, how’s your minestrone?” As Tanatha watched, his face slowly stiffened, making an unappetizing face. She suddenly giggled and sipped her *spumante*.

He laughed. “Bloody superb!” he sarcastically answered. “I’ve eaten better cold soup at the mess hall!” he said, raising his head with a funny grin and motioning her for a taste.

Tanatha took a peek at the minestrone and made a snooty face after smelling it. “No, thank you!” she said in jest, “I think I’ll stay with my Panini.”

With a foul face, Narmer stopped eating his minestrone and put back the lid on the container. “Uh — woof . . . it is a terrible imitation!” He said, complying with a chuckle. He then went for a morsel of his Panini.

She giggled and then stated, “The *prosciutto* as well,” she went on with apologetic eyes, “It is a pity that the conference wasn’t organized in Roma because there’s a superb family restaurant I know that is still serving grilled

panini with genuine homemade prosciutto and pecorino romano cheese.”

“You don’t say. It is unfortunate, Lovey, that we’re stranded here beneath the Alps for the weekend.” Narmer said making a bitter-tasting facial expression, as he chewed down the unpleasant food; he followed it up with a swig of Spumante. “This here is quite unappetizing!”

Tanatha smirked, “Like with no soul, ah?”

Narmer shook his head, without saying a word.

Tanatha then added, “Well, as unpleasant as it is, you can’t question that our synthetic biological food is solving our global food crisis.”

“Evidently,” Narmer said in a low voice and with an awkward look in his eyes.

Feeling tipsy, Tanatha picked up her cup of Spumante, taking a sip before she spoke again, “Well, *mio caro uomo*, I guess this will have to do. We simply have to wait until after the war for real food to come along—thank goodness for our Spumante.”

He chuckled, “Check the label and you’ll detect that it is synthetic alcohol.”

“What? Don’t tell me that!” She said as she drew a disappointing face.

He nodded with more chuckles.

Tanatha chuckled along with him, “Well, for a synthetic, it still tastes amazingly good!”

Narmer’s agreeable eyes then set up a distraction by pretending to gaze longingly at a tan olive tree and upon

some Goldfinches singing to each other. He pointed, “Look, Lovey, look!”

While Tanatha turned upwards to look at a yellow, brown, and black bird with a bright red face, Narmer pulled out of his uniform pocket a small red box. He swiftly leaned forward from the trunk of the tree to show her. When she turned back to him, she gleamed a smile, “What have you—jewelry?”

Narmer opened the box showing her a heart-shaped diamond ring.

“Oh, *Madonna*, it’s a genuine stone cut!” She pronounced, leaving her mouth open for a moment as she let the view register in her mind at what he was doing. “Oh, you had it made to order?”

“Right-O, Lovey! I know it’s quite late, but I wanted to do this earlier and we got talking and tattering and—”

Tanatha’s eyes widened in awe, and she quickly interrupted him with a kiss, “Oh, lovely!”

Well, I am asking you to be my wife?” He asked showing his soft, nervous eyes. “I don’t want to wait till I pack away my uniform for good to get married.”

She gaped at him, startled but contented, and she blurted out, “Are you, really?” And then racing thoughts of the future came to her mind.

Narmer became impatient waiting for her response. He cleared his throat, saying, “Oh—where’s my manners?” He got up and got on one knee and then formally asked, “Lovey, will you marry me?”

“Marriage . . . wow . . . that’s a serious matter!” She said with a reconsidering tone. “I am not sure if a marriage is right for us, for now.” She blinked and thought back to the things he had said about marriage. “But you’re uncomfortable around children and you know I want to become a mother. Perhaps it will be best for us to be the way we are?”

“No, Lovey, I’ve reconsidered.”

“Have you — really?” She looked at him sincerely.

Narmer nodded. “Look, I am not being funny—I have reconsidered.” The twinkle in his eyes was reassuring as he continued talking, “I am quite aware my upbringing is quite different from you: You are a family girl that loves to spend quality time with your parents and your sisters, but I, far from it — that is, being lived in an orphanage facility.” He then looked at her with humor in his eyes, “we are one of a kind, aren’t we? We are made for each other and, Lovey, I need you . . .” Her eyes showed him a new world. “. . . I will learn to be comfortable among your family.” He ended his words in a gentle, persuasive tone.

She smiled, gleefully, like a little girl. “We Romans are loud talkers, aren’t we? But you’ll get used to my family. Oh, I mean our family!” Tanatha then looked into his promising chocolate eyes and said, “Well, then, you are going back with me to civilian life this year, aren’t you?”

“Of course!”

“Even if the war persists?”

“Yes, my Lovey—of course I will!”

“Yes, of course you would!” She gave him a jolly grin. “You wouldn’t have asked to marry me if you were going to be staying on.”

“Well . . . yes. . . I’ve been waiting for the right time to ask you to marry me, it’s just that each phase of the Antigone project has been so demanding, and I have so little time for anything else.”

“There’s no need for explanation, *mio caro uomo*.”

“Lovey, I’ve given to the project all I could give and—”

Tanatha affectionately interrupted, her eyes assured him that she loved him no matter what. “No worries, after all you’ve done, all you can do, and I am proud of you. But I am glad you’re moving on . . . after all, we’re one of a kind, aren’t we?” She giggled.

He laughed softly, “It amazes me that the mother of all computers shows us we are the only little people known to exist.”

“Well, even if there are others, it doesn’t matter—we are here and we are special—and yes—of course, *caro uomo, ti amo* and I accept you to be my husband, for you have touched my heart!”

“Right-O, I love you as well, and I promise that I’ll be a good husband for you,” Narmer declared, as he lay down.

Tanatha giggled, “Oh, I know you will.” At that, they embraced each other and kissed deep as deep as they could.

Abruptly, the scene became bright white, and the light flashed from it with such brilliance to the point that the couple could no longer be viewed by the observer.



Unexpectedly, once more, the white lights flashed and the scene dissolved into another, hurtling the observer through linear time and space and into a hospital room nursery care, where the observer's angel of light had birthed another angel of light.

Narmer glanced at his wife with a thoughtful smile and whispered, "Mumsy, I am chuffed to bits!"

With purpose and zeal, she beamed with pride at her baby boy, "Oh, my goodness—he looks at our precious little angel sleeping. I am in motherhood heaven!"

The observer watched Narmer sitting down next to her looking a bit reluctant, unsure of how to properly hold in his arms the newborn, and all at once Narmer discontinued the attempt.

"Oh, you're doing it wrong," Tanatha said, and tried to show him how to support the infant's head and neck. "Now, this is the right way to hold your son."

But Narmer gave her a look of reluctant appreciation and quickly passed his son back to her, saying, "no-no, Lovey, no, it's best I wait for a better time. I'll practice when we get home — promise." He then turned his tone of voice into baby talk, saying, "Welcome aboard, little one!" and he slowly stroked his dark-headed son's cheek. "He's going to be a lively one, just like you, Lovey." He chuckled, and then he bends over and pleasantly kissed her.

After some minutes, while the three of them were connecting quietly, bonding during the breastfeeding, some more sudden explosion rumbles were heard across the *Alban hills*. Narmer paid no attention, for it was part of daily occurrences of warfare. He was more or less confronting his ego with an uncomfortable moment of watching the infant suckling her breast.

Tanatha held her son tightly as the rumbles went on for a few more minutes before it ended. A look of bewilderment came on her face as she looked at the baby and then to her husband. She was feeling both ecstatic and fearful: ecstatic at becoming a mother and fearful of the hereafter.

When Narmer saw Tanatha's moistened eyes, he sighed and declared, "Now-now Lovey, rest easy! You know that they won't be able to penetrate our domed shield." He then bent over to kiss her.

"Oh *Madonna*, please let this war be over soon!" she said, almost in tears.

Narmer quickly kissed her once more. "I know it's weighing on you, but don't even think about it. Okay?"

She turned her face to him with a pathetic look in her eyes. "We now have a son, and I can't help but think about our future with him!"

Narmer sighed. "I am absolutely knackered from all this bloodshed and violence! If you must know, my colleagues are feeling quite confident with the Antigone Project's updated version of our stealth malware program. They

believe that we will soon be able to infiltrate and damage the East's war machinery."

"Well, I just don't know. But how can you and your colleagues be sure it's going to work and end this lengthy war for good? Because the East, as they have behaved before, are going to discover some sort of way to counter this so-called 'stealth malware' by launching on us their own updated version."

Uncertain, Narmer breathed another sigh, rubbing his face before giving his answer, "Both Empires are bone-tired of this war. It's got to end! This planet is poised on the verge of a severe environmental crisis, and it's becoming to the point that now both sides must come together and negotiate a real treaty that will benefit the whole planet and not just their own dominion agenda. You see, for the sake of humanity, it's got to end!"

A couple of tears came dropping from Tanatha's dark eyes. "Oh Madonna—let this horrific war end! Let our little boy never see none of it."

Narmer looked sad. He then mustered some support by saying, "Lovey, I am doing all I can." He combs his hand through her dark hair, while feeling lost and lonely. "I am very determined, and I will not stop working on the project until this bloody carnage of war finally ends."

After that, the room suddenly became bright white again, and the observer thought, *my time grows short here*, as the scene dissolved into light.



In the midst of what resembled a field of foggy white light, the observer found himself in a nightmarish guerrilla warfare scene. Everywhere in London, the thunder of battle sounded quite brutal and loud. Inside a bombarded building, the observer looked around until he saw himself in agony as a middle-aged man.

Narmer treaded carefully through the collapse debris of what was once an old elegant hotel room. The enemy had penetrated through the West side of London's dome-shaped shield, which was cyber-sabotaged by cyber-espionage. As more of the thundering and rumbling of the battle was heard far away around the urban center, Narmer cautiously moved around surveying the room. Heavy laser impulse sound, accompanied by rushing cries of death, whistled in Narmer's ears. Friendly cyborg soldiers marched the streets, settling in for battle. The surprise attack came suddenly, without even a moment's warning, and people who were stuck in the street took in the most casualties.

Within seconds, the observer finds himself glancing out over the combat zone, through the collapsed wall of the hotel and into the black and murky atmosphere floating throughout that part of London. The observer saw himself shocked as he jumped on a mess of blood and pieces of coal meat that were scattered among the charred ruins of the hotel. Then his human self-became clear to the observer; on the reason for being Narmer; about why he

was there to experience humanity. The observer observed Narmer walking alone in fright whereas he kept walking he came to a decapitated burned head.

“Naenio—!” the observer heard Narmer’s blood-curdling scream rip from his throat; he screamed so loud, so strong and so real that it drained the man.

The observer then turned away from the emotional human self, knowing that mastering unconditional love in human experience was unsuccessful; therefore, a rebirth was a necessary evil, for to be awakened for the evolution of his Angel self into a higher vibration dimension. With that thought, the observer felt the heartbeat of the tunnel of light calling from beyond, and then the observer dissolved into i.

THE GARDENER AND THE EYE

The darkness visits were infrequent to a planet orbiting two suns in a triple-star system. The glow of the suns' iridescent rays of light dimmed, as a veil of dark shadow slid along across the waters of planet Hortus. A native of that world, a crystalline form of life, keenly followed the vast riches of the cosmos as it had countless of times through its evolution. According to it, which called itself Solon, in the vast sea of energy, all forms of life filled the cosmos with extraordinary diversity. Through its observation and questioning, somehow, in the midst of its evolutionary process, Solon became aware of the reality that consciousness itself is the cosmos, therefore, being in its current state of physical form, Solon was aware that its pure mind intertwined with other creatures in a cosmic web of dimensional worlds of different planes of existence.

In recent times, through its conscious evolution in the third dimension of space and time, there have been certain citizens of the heavens showing Solon who they were. These incorporeal life forms, abominable or virtuous, had given Solon the awareness that itself is a part of a natural function of the order of things: a celestial being embarked on an endless journey through eternity. Wherefore there had been occasions when some of the higher celestial beings, particularly of the fifth dimension, had to some degree, been made themselves known, showing the way to an evolutionary enlightenment. Thus, began the conscious

journey for Solon on the way of growth and expansion, by aiming to perfection: to a perfect creature, of which nothing greater can be conceived.

Grounded on the ocean floor, Solon's gargantuan body structure was composed of silicone crystalline cells with a unique chemical composition unknown to us. Infinite varieties of shards, slabs and obelisks of its body pierced through the vast untamed ocean, sprouting warmth through most of the waters of the 80,151-kilometer circumference of the planet's equator. Some of these massive structures could be viewed from space, spiking through some of the iridescent great clouds. The crystals glow prismatic in a different undiscovered color spectrum, which would be unimaginable, if not impossible, to spot with human instruments. In our way of viewing the planet by our space-scope from our solar system, and at being limited to what our senses were able to detect, the examination of the crystalline structures was of an undiscovered material with a very pallid bluish glow that gradually and steadily turned into a pale reddish glow. The colorful glow from the structure seemed to flow with ease and grace with the planet's rotation. Astrophysicist believes that these colors were a reflection that came from variations of the three stars: Alpha Centauri [A] and [B], which orbits each other, and of course from the red dwarf star, Proxima Centauri.

There, in the night sky with its special electro magnetic field view, like explorers of uncharted seas, though limited

as it was, Solon practiced attunement with the subtle force of the cosmos and its quest for excellence. Aligning itself with this force, Solon was able to discover the beautiful details hidden in the nearby heavenly bodies: its languages of light, its moods, its sounds, its signs and gestures. It considered each star a spirit manifestation and each galaxy kindred.

Then, right in the midst of meditation, Solon became intrigued with detecting a mysterious puny physical object that suddenly went into orbit around its world. This object began flashing a powerful foreign electromagnetic beam onto some of the surface, and when the beam flashed on part of Solon's gargantuan body, a tonal and rhythm patterns of light and shade, similar to our very-high-energy gamma ray instruments, took shape in the theater of its mind. At that point, Solon felt a slight sense of a solemn mood.

The object's formation resembled an oval-shaped (M-type) asteroid, and Solon quickly became bewildered by the strange shiny metallic compound. Its insignificant size was about the size of the clock tower of London, and if it wasn't for its unusual radiate assemblage, Solon would have taken no notice of it. Moreover, the object peculiar behavior kept Solon's interest high; for its speed alone was much too slow to withstand the great planet's gravitational pull. Normally, such a close object orbiting its world would have fallen into oblivion.

Is this a celestial creature or a celestial body? Solon thought.

After moments of pondering observation, Solon's glowing body began to pulse around the globe in unknown colors which was imperceptible to our eyes. Puzzled and curious at the same time, Solon brought forward in its mind an aspect of itself called, Spira. Thus, in the language of light, Solon then mentally conversed with itself, saying, *'confer my dear Spira, how do you explain such a tangible thing over there?'*

~S~ shaped of shades of white and dark gold colors swirled together, as if a demon was bursting through a sun's rays, and Spira mentally appeared in Solon's mind, responding in an unknown frequency of light, *'its essence is unknown; perhaps something else other than nature bestows its existence upon it.'*

Even with the electromagnetic power of Spira, the object orbited too far and too fast around the great planet, and Spira could only sense the subatomic energy the object was transmitting to the surface.

A vague unease settled upon Solon as it remained in sight. *'Perhaps it is a physical-spiritual entity lost in this existence, as we once were.'*

'It is unrevealing,' Spira responded.

To Solon, Spira is neither a thought nor a figment of imagination; it is its soul, unified with the planet's fourth dimension of consciousness. Spira coexists with Solon in a conscious state much like our lucid dream, but much more

intense and realistic. This aspect of consciousness is what we call the spiritual world; a good mental relationship builds on eons of trust. In Solon's mind, Spira's world is a place where one prepares oneself to be an expert of every thought, feeling, and action at all times in a nonlinear time; this is a basic skill requirement in the process of transmuting itself from third-dimensional consciousness to fifth-dimensional consciousness and experience.

Expanding its consciousness into a dimensional world where the frequencies of electromagnetic and energy beyond our dimension of time and space has been a long primary intention of Solon, which it is convinced to be an unimagined dimensional world of unified consciousness where one focuses its attention and then the answer or experience is exactly when and where it is focused.

If one could imagine, a lower dimensional life form cannot perceive a higher dimensional world. As in the life of a second dimensional life form where it can only perceive its world only by length and width on the same plane. Such a life form would not be able to see over or under anything, because that would be crossing into the third dimension. Such a life form can hardly imagine worlds upon worlds, and for that matter, an ultra-high-dimensional spiritual entity.

By the way of cosmic law: first-dimensional consciousness is awareness as a point: minerals, crystals, water, and genetic codes resonate to this level and are the foundation of physical forms. As for second-dimensional

consciousness, life forms in this level live solely within the awareness of the moment, such as: microorganisms, plants, and lower animal form of life. They are only conscious of their species' identity and their need for feeding, competition, and procreation. As for a life form with multi-dimensional awareness such as Solon, each aspect of itself was primarily limited to one of the four spatial dimensions. Like a caterpillar metamorphosing into a butterfly, Solon is steadily progressing through the sequence of dimensions, towards an expanded state of consciousness, where all consciousness is one: as in the image and glory of the *ALL~mighty*.

Time is irrelevant to Solon when one has lived for unknown eons. According to the cosmic knowledge brought by Spira from higher Celestial beings, Solon's existence came from dark matter when a catastrophic burst of a super-supernova broke out in the center of our Galaxy, causing a multidimensional anomaly. This explosion caused the collision of stars, causing some to devour or break or turn into black holes. The energy of life, which was to be Solon, merged with an unimaginable interruption of the tides of groups of halos of dark and tiny matter that swirled in space. Eventually, it evolved into an unusual and indefinable powder mass of silicon cryptocrystalline quartz particles. As the particles took on gravel dimensions, being a swarm of diamond-shaped meteoroid bodies, they moved in the open and irradiated space for eons of years. Until it was attracted to the new Alpha Centauri star system. And

like a hermit crab that came across its shell, the large gravitational field of the frozen and deserted planet attracted the meteoroid and like seeds sown in a garden, the sparkling silicone quartz quickly immersed itself in the frozen ocean. And over time, the quartz unified and bloomed, and then more and more of its light intensified, warming the surrounding environment with its intense glow.

As the ocean warmed, and as the quartz grew around the equator, it steadily merged with all the energy of the planet, becoming Solon: an ultra-physical-spiritual silicone life form, evolving along with the carbon-based organisms of the planet. Solon called this aspect of consciousness of the planet, Anima.

The planet was moonless, in orbit alone far enough away from the distance of both suns. The planet in the Alpha Centauri system was quite different from the other celestial bodies that orbited their individual stars. Its gravitational force and crust were twice that of Earth, but its internal temperature was significantly lower.

From an orbital point of view, there were no large land masses, only a multitude of volcanic islands rich in minerals that had arisen in the vast expanses of the ocean. Most of the volcanoes were inactive, but there were some volcanically active. The dense atmosphere consists mainly of nitrogen, argon, and oxygen and with a significant amount of methane, ammonia, and sulfides, trapping the heat of both suns in the lower atmosphere of the planet.

Strong weather patterns, which would be quite severe on Earth, were more frequent and more intense on most parts of the planet. Together with the mighty lightning spikes across the magnetosphere and ionosphere, they served as a kind of planetary shield.

The southern and northern polar regions of the planet are frozen in glaciers just like the moon of Jupiter, Europe. The frozen surface of the oceans was sprinkled with cracks, and the constant echo of crackling, creaking, and crashing naturally exploded in waves of vibrations across the regions. Within the crust of the planet, where it was roasted hot and buried under the thick sheet of ice and water, gravitational waves compressed and expanded, heating the equator and beyond, while orbiting its tracks only every five hundred and nine years. The planet was in the midst of an extraordinary evolutionary process in which the mineral, solid, microorganism, and multicellular creatures had given rise to fungi and primitive plants, and now to more sophisticated animal-plant creatures such as sponges and cnidarians. On land, bacteria-like organisms, mosses, fungi, and plants were giving life to plant-animal creatures similar to a pitcher plant or a Venus flytrap; these new organisms lived along the edges of shores, creeks, lakes, and riverbeds, of the warmest islands of the planet. This evolutionary process was a new phenomenon of nature to Solon, and it was very good. Like tending a just sprouting seed, Solon tended the soul of the planet, as if it were keeping the weeds away, protecting the sprouting from any harm or

injury that might come to them. Solon's sole duty is to keep the weeds of false knowledge out of the garden of truth, and to see that the good things are well fertilized and well cultivated. To Solon, who felt the presence of good, its existence in this world of physical time and space was neither a penalty for evil nor a pawn or a prison. Solon came to believe in being the gardener of its world because of its power of reason and understanding. The experience was fruitful to Solon, for it was satisfying to be able to nurture life into existence and have the capacity to blossom itself into its highest potential.

After some days passed by, the metallic object drifted much closer to the planet, touching the outermost layer of the atmosphere. However, Solon had lost interest, for it had concluded that the object was no more than a strange, insignificant celestial body. By now, other fabric of the cosmos became more interesting; for a range of heavenly expressions were calling, filling Solon with something more tantalizing and awe-inspiring. Unusual as it was, Solon was accustomed to seeing the object buzzing around its world awfully too frequently; *this nuisance of a thing must be some sort of a fly-by in an unintelligent exploration*, Solon thought, and dismissed again the view out of its mind. Because it concluded that the object would eventually leave on its way towards interstellar space.

Eventually, the time came when the object penetrated through the dense, planetary atmospheric layers, falling like a meteorite would. Solon watched the object burn with fire

as it fell without resistance, but when the object passed through the planet's Troposphere, it somehow managed to slow down and then moved westward to one of the larger sandy islands of the equator.

Solon watched it float with confusion, thinking it had never seen such skillful maneuvering by a physical object before. *Curious—it seems to be some sort of celestial being after all.* On that thought, Solon mentally called Spira. ‘*Arise, my dear—go make an inquiry!*’ Instantly, a glowing golden glare burst out in Solon’s mind and Spira willfully responded by concentrating on the hiss and sizzling trespasser. Thereupon, Spira’s pure high-energy aura encircled the object, and then it absorbed into the binding energy of the metallic elements like water in water and began to explore every molecule about it. By Spira’s intangible presence, the object’s solemn mood intensified, and Solon could immediately sense an energy of apathy. The indication was that it was not as it seemed; not the sort of intelligent physical life form entity that Solon had anticipated.

Back inside the gargantuan crystal-like structure, the moment came when Spira presented more clues, as well as verifying to Solon that the object was neither a celestial being nor a celestial object after all. Impelled by a strong wonderment of why such an object had never surfaced before, Solon then mentally signaled to Spira, ‘*Tell me more of your discoveries of this singular physical existence.*’

Swirling and churning within itself in pleasant patterns of a distinct ultra-golden hue beyond our visible spectrum,

Spira informed Solon, *'It is a fabricated sort of an eye engaged in an exploration; a creation from an extinct creature from our nearest neighbor's garden. Visions from this eye showed that the creatures were sovereign like us. They called themselves, Homo sapiens.'*

Solon expressed more uneasiness with dissatisfaction and confusion. *'Extinct—divine celestial being—but how?'*

Spira informed, *'Unknown. We can only sense the non-existence of Homo sapiens in the physical plane by this eye's subatomic images. Visions also revealed that in the far depth of time and space follows another fabrication called a transporter. This transporter carries physical fabrications of beings, and it is governed by a survivor of Homo sapiens; a synthetic corporeal fabrication of entities who call themselves, Homo evolutis.'*

Solon became alarmed. *'A fabrication? Are you signifying an image of a celestial being?'*

'Correct,' returned Spira.

'Are these fabricated entities a sort of life of servitude?' Solon asked.

'It is unrevealing,' Spira responded. *'The voyage of the transporter is of interest in migrating. It has been revealed that Homo evolutis is transporting hibernated offspring and other physical entities to be assimilated in our garden — '*

Solon interrupted, *'Unacceptable! These fabricated entities' quest for other heavenly gardens is abnormal of the cosmic law. The ALL~mighty caring way is for us to cultivate and maintain our own life energy and our own evolutionary process without any alien interventions.'* constructed

Meanwhile, Anima appeared, giving forth a bizarre swirling and churning radiance display of infrared and ultraviolet hues. Stricken with inflamed ego, Anima then strongly declared, *'these fabricated entities coming here require annihilation!'*

'Why annihilation?' Solon mentally asked.

By reason of they are not of divine celestial beings; thereof, they are not anointed by the ALL~mighty.

Solon rather agreed, however, that is a speculation and such phenomena is unknown to us.

Anima persisted, *'they are not genuine and in a matter of time, these fabricators will vanish from their existence.'*

'Perhaps — however, I see no valid reason for their annihilation.' Solon concluded.

Spira followed Anima, swirling in its own glow of light. *'Perhaps Homo sapiens is so abominable that it is carrying on a practice of deceit and deception and may not be extinct after all.'*

Anima agreed. *'Annihilation is still preferable to our harmonious existence. For this method of physical travel is abominable.'*

Solon pondered for a moment before responding to both Aspects. *Yet, there is much to gain from this Eye.*

An indignant crimson hue came from Anima. *'Take heed, Solon, with such an object and with all that comes with it. They are no different from other heavenly physical entities that have barraged our world.'*

Spira became still and tense, projecting an apprehension hue. *‘Agreed! Take heed! For there have been appearances of incorporeal beings in our garden and many have been abominable — ‘*

‘Agreed,’ interrupted Anima, *‘never have we encountered from other gardens such strangeness. My sense is this fabricated eye and everything that follows it will weed their way in and do us harm. Take heed for their ego will take away our way of enlightenment with our harmonious existence.’*

Solon felt dissatisfied, grappling with an overwhelming sense of emptiness. *‘Agreed, however, they must have some sort of purpose in the grand cosmic plan, for their garden is significant to the Almighty! Oh — we are in such a terrible dilemma!’* A silence passed when a further thought surfaced in Solon’s mind, and immediately the object’s perceived energy of apathy made sense. *‘Be collective. Not all incorporeal celestial beings have been abominable or have ever harmed us. Let’s not forget all those divine beings that have attained cosmic enlightenment and have shown us the way.’*

A brighter color radiance of infrared and ultraviolet patterns of Anima suddenly dispensed in the crystal structure, like a protesting patriot. *‘Take heed, you are overlooking these entities’ physical properties and their dangers.’*

But Solon neglected Anima, since he began to feel confident that Homo sapiens must have been a malevolent celestial being, in which somehow, in his path of evolution towards the higher self, he moved away from his primary purpose: to live a selfish life which was not in a personal relationship with cosmic law. Now Solon, foreseeing a loss,

accepted what it called, fabricated entities, to be out of divine guidance, since they embarked on a dangerous journey. Since synthetic creations were not of a divine spirit, and like Hamlet belonging to William, they only belonged to their creator, Homo sapiens. Solon surmised that tangible or intangible, sentient or not, these entities who were by no means of nature were locked respectively in their dimensional worlds they were created, and they can only adapt, mutate and evolve in that realm of that dimension until they evaporate into nothingness.

Solon asked Spira, *'Have you tried to establish contact?'*

'The attempt was futile. The eye is unable to comprehend my thoughts,' answered Spira.

Anima added, *'Apparently, annihilation is our sole option.'*

While annoyed by such a thought, Solon then considered, *'No, these fabricated entities must have a purpose in their realm of their own heavenly garden. I believe they must be informed that their course of action here will only serve them incompetence.'*

Spira emitted a quick flash of bright ultra-gold light of confusion. *'But why, Solon? Why are these insignificant fabrications of life important to us personally?'*

'Because,' answered Solon, *'I suspect there is an apathy coming from their garden, and this is a cry for aid which must be heeded. It's obvious these fabricated entities' great reason is obliterated.'*

Spira was surprised at Solon's response and signaled, *'Their garden will find a way to balance out life, and there is a high chance our meddling may inflame the crisis. Annihilation may be our sole option.'*

Solon responded, *‘no annihilation,’* and paused momentarily for thought before continuing. *‘Perhaps this is about an endeavor to get things right for them. Somehow, some way, we must try to guide these fabricated entities back to their own garden, and possibly link them back with their own Gardener. Perhaps, together, they can recover and fulfill their true purpose and destiny that the ALL~mighty has bestowed upon them.’*

Anima interrupted, *‘Pointless!’*

‘Perhaps my dear Anima, mentally said Solon, ‘Nonetheless, I sense a misguided mistake by them has been made, and, as far as I am concerned, the only thing to do is to correct it by communication. Therefore, all we can do is to stand firm, keep trying, and keep observing these fabricators closely through that object out there, and attempt to discover a way to decipher their form of communication.’

Anima interrupted again, *‘Pointless! Guidance of these creatures is futile! What makes you suppose you know what’s best for them?’*

Solon then said, *‘Haven’t we learned that we must respect all of the Almighty creations, if we are to follow and reflect the image of our Creator? We will express caring virtue against vice. We cannot let anything threaten our way to attain enlightenment for our quest to the next plane of higher self.’*

In the meantime, Spira’s light was humble white, becoming obedient to Solon. By now, Solon’s curiosity intensified, for in its vision, such goodwill agenda was to be worthy of praise as well as in earning a spiritual victory.

Based on this thought, Solon's unimaginable prismatic light suddenly shines stronger and brighter throughout his

gigantic crystal body, signaling through space and time, *‘Let it be so, in this way, I shall do all that is required to unite these fabricators back to their own garden. Even insignificant as they appear in our estimation, I shall keep my practice of caring, and in the same way, I will build prosperity for the future of our own garden. With my guidance, protection, and upbringing, we will lead ourselves to the way of enlightenment. I will do this for us and for the very essence of light, which is life itself.’*

MIGRATION TO HORTUS

Rattles and hissing sounds of leaves brushing against each other frighten the birds out from the ancient eucalyptus tree. Narmer heard them screeching and chirping frantically inside the very dense, dim evergreen foliage. In his beastly ape-like hominid avatar form, the climb felt easy and secure. His dark hairy hands moved swiftly upward, grasping and carefully pulling on each branch or woody vines to hold on a footing. His breath was heavy and intense as he climbed with entertainment venture in mind.

After some minutes of climbing, he stopped where the vines vigorous growth had ceased. He quickly hopped and instantly wrapped his long prehensile tail on a sturdy branch. He let his furry apish head hang down, searching far down enough, with dark snaky eyes, between the obscure branches for his wife, and he was stunned when he couldn't pinpoint her. Right away he shouted down to her in a telepathic mode, 'by George, will you quit moseying and try to keep up here?'

Meanwhile, with a nail-gnawed foot stuck in interweaved vines, Tanatha was so occupied on freeing herself that she couldn't answer him.

Narmer clenched his teeth with his vampire canines protruding from his fleshy lips as he continued to search for her in the branches of the tree. After a moment, he telepathically said to her, 'you know, I am almost thinking

you didn't want to be invited.' He gave her a sigh of disappointment; well aware she'd absorbed his telepathy.

When Tanatha finally managed to free her heavy, calloused foot from the vines, she looked up and let out a sly sneer. Then, she telepathically returned to him, saying, 'Let's not get into it again, shall we?'

Narmer then huffed out a breath and wiggled his flat nose for a second and retorted telepathically, 'You know, the way you're fussing about down there, we'll be missing the beginning of this experience!' Immediately upon the sound of an annoying buzzing around his hairy, pointy ears, Narmer shook his savage ape head and swiftly swiped his long, sharp nails for a kill at some of the primitive dragonflies.

In corporeal reality, both celestial migrants were in their Ark's living quarters. They were being linked by technology from their own respective regenerative-therapeutic torpor system, and their voice of speech as well as their physical sense were only in their minds. Their thoughts with each other, transmitted through the Ark's central neural interactive artificial intelligence system, was a similar transmission of the hybrid analog and digital radio waves. Their means of telepathy are as synthetic as they are: by implanted biotechnology, and by using electromagnetic transfer such as with biological microwave and ultrasound transceivers, which are synchronized along with a network of communication beacon stations roaming the generational Ark.

Tanatha felt awkward in her naked hairy hominid avatar form with monkey ears and tail. It's been quite a while since they engaged in an artificial reality recreational activity such as this with each other, and looking back, she has lost count of the times she has played these silly, but addictive, beastly games that her husband habitually played. Besides, she has not sustained a real intimacy with him for quite some time. Moreover, it's been years since their marriage separation, becoming more business than anything else. With their work and their company, the only time together was at the Habitat Simulator, which was another neural interactive system: a specialized simulated setting that was created by the Solar Empire. For it was mandatory to take aside monthly time to prepare and rehearse in detail the skills required to govern a populace in an unpredictable empty world such as Hortus.

'Oh, just mute, Narmer—obviously, I am not as fast as you!' She said telepathically back to him in a snappish complaining mood. 'Climbing is not my forte!'

The Ark's fourth-dimensional technology of artificial reality offers an exceptional, realistic experience in every sense of the word, and for a moment, as often as it happens in the artificial world, Tanatha forgot where she was.

Peering down through the branches, Narmer finally caught a brief glimpse of his wife's dense, shaggy, and dark hair. Inexperienced with the beastly avatar body form, she climbed the tree like a sloth. He annoyingly grinned down at her, and then he shook his head, scoffing to himself like a

flustered old man would. *Oh, I bloody hope that you'll quickly adapt*, he thought. He was often in stark contrast with his wife's attitude towards things that mattered most to him. Over the years, he had avoided unpleasant discussions and hurt feelings and was often alone, playing extravagant games in the artificial world. His games eliminated boredom through long and lasting years of boring time during his space mission and had given him the passion and enthusiasm to live. But, unlike him, his wife was a habitual person that was obsessed with routines and the humdrum of always continuing playing the same boring game that she played in her *Homo sapiens*' life on Earth.

Narmer raised his sandy-haired head and jumped onto a sturdier branch. He sat down, rolling his tail on a branch, while the memories of their experiences of artificial reality returned unexpectedly. Remembering some of the family soap opera games with which he had played, which over the years became more and more ironic, melodramatic, and boring, as if looking at a white or black wall.

What Narmer wanted was that his new game would give him a feeling of true freedom; he wanted new relief from the constant isolation and stress he experienced every day in ruling the Ark; he wanted exciting new challenges, and he wanted the experience to be with someone real.

The loud hum of insects continued to haunt him. He shook his head and pouted in thought. *Freaky, appalling things! 'Why have I created you.'* At that situation, he mumbled privately some cursed words as he killed a few and

managed to get rid of all of them. At that instant, a brief pleasant puff of fresh air waving through the leaves cooled his sweaty face. Narmer took a deep sniff of the sweet smells of the rainforest of grass and leaves with delight. He then pulled away a branch to see how far up he had climbed, and as he went on breathing harder, then, all of a sudden, the soft dampness of the breeze carrying a distinctive, sickly sweet odor filled his nostrils. It was only for a moment that a sudden rush of intense familiarity came over him, making him feel awkwardly alive like he once was. Whew! Death and a meal. *What a whiff!* he thought, gazing at the corpse with purposeless eyes. He quickly wrinkled his dark flat nose in disgust and shook his head, trying to suppress the odor of a decaying gigantic kangaroo, carried by the gentle passing breeze. Nearby, some prehistoric vultures frenzied around trying to get sufficient safety information before the feeding. As he watched the birds tearing the red flesh to shreds, Narmer gave a sadistic smirk to the scene. From what he could remember of Earth, of the bits of memory, this was what life was like there with the thoughts of death.

Meanwhile, down below, abruptly, Tanatha mentally let out an irritated sigh when she slipped her hairy foot on a boulder of the great tree. Quickly she dug in her long dagger-sharp nails into a crack of the wood and pulled herself up, at the same time she made a futile attempt to curl her tail on a vine. In fact, she had no idea what she was doing.

On receiving her struggling signals, Narmer peered down through the branches and flashed a crooked smirk at Tanatha while scratching his itchy, bushy brow with his strong fingernail. His eyes then widened, projecting a wide grin of humiliation into her mind. ‘Now-now, Lovey! Don’t bloody go falling again!’ He sighed and let his huge lips turn in a small smile.

‘Oh darn—I must have been out of my mind accepting your invitation!’ she transmitted with a sulky pout, and then she shifted her grip to another branch. The tree moved in little jerks, making her dizzy, and as she realized the pain foiled her climbing effort, her mind then went to the artificial intelligence, ‘chief custodian, limit the program’s pain tolerance to level zero.’

When the artificial intelligence complied, she inwardly moaned relief.

‘Ah, whoa! Getting off lightly all the way down to level zero!” he quipped at her. “Yes indeed—you never could handle a little discomfort,” said Narmer with a chuckle.

Tanatha gazed up at him reproachful-like so and responded with a snappish retort to his mind, ‘Oh . . . Just mute, this is as disinteresting as the Martian Mountain climbing!’

‘Mountain climbing?’ he mentally emphasized with his measured and sarcastic tone of thought. ‘Ah yes . . .’ and he went on with a conceited smirk, ‘If I can recall correctly, it was roughly more than a year ago when you abandoned me halfway up Olympus Mons.’

‘Precisely,’ she smirked back in response, knowing she had successfully made her point.

Narmer then made an amusing smile. ‘Yes, I can recall now listening to your enduring complaints about your *Homo sapiens* Martian suit.’

She peered up again at the tree into the branches for him, nowhere to be found. ‘Well — it was unnecessary — much too unrealistic and uncomfortable climbing with such ancient equipment.’

‘It was supposed to be a Twentieth Century Martian experience.’

Tanatha shook her head up at the branches, telepathically saying, ‘Well, it was awful! Besides, in that century there was no one over there climbing mountains.’

He sighed and telepathically said, ‘You could never enjoy a hypothetical experience!’

‘No, not an unrealistic venture as unappealing as that was.’

‘Why does it have to be nonfiction?’

‘Because in the past, you’ve created ridiculous games! Hopefully, this time you’ll have a game that will make me feel good.’ Tanatha transmitted, while she peered once more through the branches. Suddenly, when she was able to pinpoint him, she then scornfully transmitted, ‘And let me tell you that the bark of this tree is much too scaly and quite sharp; I would have designed a more authentic representation!’ She was about to continue, but then his ebony eyes lit up with his wild nakedness, admiring his

glory for a few seconds. Her husband's avatar was inspiring, and her body immediately became wet with passion. For some unexplained reason, an impulsive natural emotion to procreate flared deep into her soft-haired tummy. The ape man was a sexy and brutal beast in equal measure; he quickly stopped his emotion and moved directly away from him, grasping, wiping out that desire for familiarity with a real, competitive, and unpredictable person. Rather, her thoughts went to where she still stared and was not influenced by him. But suddenly, at his pompous, pleased return to his thoughts, Tanatha quickly blinked his eyes, showing her contempt by telepathically saying, 'Another fall, and I am dismissing this climbing experience with you!'

Narmer shook his head and smiled to himself, knowing she was somewhat jaded with the climb when she could not compete with him. 'Stop your bloody whining! Let's do this — come on!' He then took a huge sigh and waited restlessly for her to join him.

During the waiting, Narmer kept his thoughts private, thinking that his time there in his newly created game was limited. Messages (signals) from the Kuiper Solar Empire Station on the dwarf planet Eris were about due. The long-awaited messages, that took about eight years to reach their intended destination, came like broken waves on the shore. Such transmissions traveling so close to the speed of light, at a distance of about 4.37 light years, degraded and deteriorated along the way, in which much computation and deciphering were necessary. Narmer felt both inspired

and apprehensive that the voyage was finally nearing its end. It had taken two hundred and thirty-three years; given an average velocity between 2.5% to 4.5% of the speed of light for Ark Orticelli to have passed by our closest star, Proxima. Soon the Ark will be closely approaching Hortus, where the fourth dynasty of Abraam's will take place, leading the first colonization on the massive planet. Narmer and his wife's mission, ordered by the Solar Empire, was for them to safely carry a zoo of genetically re-engineered seeds of earthly life to Hortus. Thereafter, they were to establish a settlement on one of the volcanic islands on the planet's equator. They were to make further explorations and preparations for more members of the order to come. As with the crisis of the relentless pathogen, Antigone, which had infected synthetic life on Earth, the Empire's aspiration for salvation was turned to conquest and expansion into the solar system and the frontier of an interstellar planet, Hortus. In fact, upon the passing of Homo sapiens, Homo evolutis became quite obsessed with owning this planet as soon as the planet was confirmed that it supported life.

Their objective was to add suitable life on Hortus and make the triple-star system part of their dominion. The Solar Empire was capable of performing their will over their mission by the loyalty of the Ark's artificial intelligence. At times, both Narmer and his wife's patriotism were shrewdly tested through emergency drills. Yet, even with all the isolation and surveillance that his wife and he

were experiencing, Narmer was still in a sanguine disposition over leaving the Solar Empire with all its problems behind; they both complied, and they plainly managed with what seemed endless years of journey by adapting and living in a microcosm artificial worlds of their making. Apart from that, Narmer himself kept a focus on his ambition and vision, which was to make history as the Father of his Planet.

Of the past, particularly his second life cycle, Narmer secretly hated living in that time period ever since the end of the government he fought for. It was disturbing that he was robbed of what should have been a wonderful life of living in the Tyson City on Titan. Because of the highly successful coup d'état, not only did he miss the way of the New Republic but also was forced to accommodate with a constitutional monarchy system of government. As a patrician, he disdained the competition for noble power and social prominence with rival groups within the new regime. However, to please his ambition, he had no alternative but to satisfy the will of the emperor as well as complying with the chief custodian operating here in the Ark. Narmer is destined to be the empire's governor on Hortus and soon, upon arrival, there will need much guidance given by Station Kuiper in establishing the new settlement for the empire.

His thoughts drifted to the Emperor's Honorary Consuls of the Solar Empire, wondering how they were now coping with the quarantined pathogen pandemic circulating the

earth's ecosystem. Being that Station Kuiper's responses on the subject was continually unclear. As it were, his thoughts of his cradle home were limited; his earthly memories have faded considerably. As years went by, his guilty thoughts, regrets and sorrows of being responsible for originating the pathogen, lead at times to an emotional disintegration moment that he couldn't control. These days, Narmer must depend on the chief custodian's historical data for refreshing his ancient memories, because such memories were now like scattered of bits and pieces of far-off images. All he could remember was that he was in a war that helped create the super pathogen, Antigone. The pathogen causes a dead-end infection to synthetic life forms. For Homo evolutis, the pathogen starts as a sore foot working its way to cause damage to the feet and legs, camouflaged as rheumatoid arthritis. The pathogen is then able to rapidly progress its way to the sacral region of the spine. As a matter of fact, the pathogen was able to extinguished all synthetic biological life forms on earth. Fortunately, the empire was able to quarantining themselves as well as other synthetic life forms away from the mother planet and to the cities on the Moon, Mars, Titan and to far beyond colonies on dwarf planets. Although free and far from being consumed by the evil of the pathogen, in his heart, he still hopes for a miracle for a cure on earth. He wanted data from the Solar Empire that the horror had finally ended. But the time never came—not yet anyway. Being that the rate of mutation of the pathogen was so unnatural that the

artificial nucleic acids, unlike its natural counterpart were too perfect. Homo evolutis body form, as with all synthetics, were simply the perfect host to the pathogen with no resistant. This malevolent plague pandemic was abolishing life as he knew it, and the horror has brought mortality back in his mind. Sure enough, it had taken him and his kind away from their birthplace: away to leap throughout the sea of space to other worlds.

Narmer dismissed the thought line, because it was just nonsensical thinking about something he has no control over. He calmed himself by looking out, down and over the wide lush Tarkine rainforest to marvel at his creation. There was only a family of giant short-faced kangaroos and some small animals, such as potoroos and possums. The animals were browsing by a wide variety of exotic trees, bushes and flowery plants. His newly composed getaway made him momentarily imagines something strangely pleasant about it, as if looking at a beautiful and radiant garden: pure and innocent. As strange as it was, at that moment, Narmer felt comfortable and at ease, that is, until sin showed up, and then the feeling was taken away.

Farther in the distance, he spotted fast movements through the burly blue-green ferns of what looked like wild dogs with dark stripes across their backs, and tails. He recognized them to be a pack of Tasmanian wolves on a hunt. Narmer watched his creation of the predators with a vague look on his face, as he considered the characteristics of the natural Earth, for it reminded him about how

organisms depend on the death of others. Even being secured on the knowledge of being in an immortality phase, his logic told him that his conscious mind was still in a mortal body form and ancient ideas of death was both intriguing and bewildering.

Narmer shook his head, thinking, *Mhmm! The longer I live, the more disappointing...* He shook his head again, scoffing at the wolves. *What a horrible life it was there; so much death, so much pain and violence! What a waist! Why do I find natural life with no purposes other than to consume each other's energy in parasitic relationships?* He had no answer; he swiftly wandered away and aimlessly stared off, momentarily forgetting the waiting. His wandering thoughts then brought forth his years in a state of presumed immortality, which haunted him from time to time, making him question again the therapeutic synthetic cloning process that he must dreadfully undertake over and over again: are genetically engineered people really the same person as the original? Or to put it in another way, upon the transfer of one's consciousness to a new synthetic body form, will it cancel out death and allow him to continue existing, or will there be someone else [a copy] who would act as he did in every sense? The frightful, relentless question gave him no answers nor peace, especially now, being in his three hundred and eighty-two years of conscious existence. Because in his estimation, as a scientist with years of hand-on experience working in labs, the question hasn't been scientifically answered. Haunted by faint memories and confined within a holistic

generational Ark, which felt eerily alive in a dark vessel of illusions of artificial and actual reality, there were times he wondered if he were truly alive, or just an empty shell of energy. The pestering questions of identity came about as a result of years of long-term memories fading with each new body form. Moreover, seeing that his fourth metempsychosis transfer is about due, memories of his past lives, though quite distant in time, were both equally suspenseful and horrifying. He remembers vaguely his first metempsychosis transfer, done at the age of one hundred and one, due to his passing from cancer. His second metempsychosis transfer was at the age of forty-seven, resulting from a poison injury during a Titan moon flyby accident, where the spacecraft laboratory exploded, leaking radiation and ending himself, the crew as well as his wife's life cycle.

Though memories of that period were distant and broken, he clearly remembers the period of migrations for millions of *Homo evolutis*, a time when the super pathogen rapidly emerged throughout the Earth. His third life cycle ended normally here on Ark Orticelli, halfway to Alpha Centauri and at the maximum age of one hundred and thirty-three. It was at that time that he began noticing that he was experiencing severe memory loss. But now at the age of ninety-nine, Narmer is about to face another dreadful metempsychosis transfer, knowing he was being cheated out of thirty-three more years of this life cycle, and as the date got closer, the more apprehensive he got about

having to go through another one. This was to take place soon upon reaching Hortus before landing. He and his wife would have to go through a transformation from a deep space fitted body form to one that is best suited for the planet's environment, and the long-dreaded switch was coming soon enough.

Meanwhile, a sudden sound of rustling leaves woke him from his dreamy stupor.

‘Madonna! Will you get over it; will you stop rekindling your paranoia obsession with death; must you be so relentless?’ Tanatha telepathically nags a complaint to him upon meeting up. Shaking off the gloomy images of her husband's spilled private thoughts drumming in her head.

Immediately Narmer's beastly eyes dropped down at her and shook his savage head, annoyed for letting anxious private thoughts filter through space. He puffed away, and then looked down at her with a severe reply, ‘Sod off! Call it as you wish! My obsession is dedicated to scientific research.’

Tanatha dug her long sharp nails into a thick branch and found her footing as she continued on. ‘Whatever, Testa Dura, I am not going there with your plague of paranoia. It is plain nonsense! don't freak me out! As you well know I trust the science given, and obviously you're too foolish to see it that way.’

Standing there, they stared at each other like they were strangers. Narmer raised part of his prominent brow ridge, smirked inquisitively, and then shook his head at her,

disbelievingly. He grumbled at her in thought, ‘Oh come now, by George! Science requires evidence or a plausible explanation for what you refer to as paranoia obsession, but it appears that you have no interest in it.’

Tanatha shook her head back at him, ‘Please don’t! You need not to go over again this obsession of yours. As you well know, the science of quantum mechanics makes it quite clear on the science of metempsychosis transfer.’

‘Quite clear?’ He telepathically asked with an inquisitive smirk still in place, ‘you say that so confidently when you know both sides of the equation have a lot of work ahead of them.’

Tanatha not only resisted his theory, but she became harder and more obstinate as she went on reading his thoughts. ‘Well, I do. It is quite clear to me,’ she channeled her thoughts to him while thumbing her flat nose at him. ‘And as usual, you’re ruining my mood.’

‘Oh, Right-O, there you are at it again. There’s nothing bloody new there,’ Narmer telepathically said, shaking a disappointing brawny finger at her. ‘Let me leave it with the fact that no promise or assurance or evidence has been given by any scientist about if metempsychosis truly occurs.’

Tanatha quickly threw a pouty smile at him and interrupted, ‘*Madonna*, you’re *un pazzo*! Look, stop it! You have made yourself a miserable life cycle that I don’t want no part of — have some fortitude.’

Narmer gazed questioningly at her scowled face, but then it has been too long since they haven’t seen each other.

He simply put up a pouty smile and surrendered. He wanted what she wanted: to rediscover actual genuine amity and sweetness, because he was close of getting quite bored to death at playing alone the same social interaction games that the artificial intelligence offered. He then lifted his gaze away from her and into the rainforest. ‘Right-O! That is your perception!’ he said telepathically, as he looked back at her, uncertain, following with sarcastic chuckles. He then added, ‘for the record, what you call paranoia obsession on the subject was unintentional and I accidentally broadcasted it.’

She sighed, ‘Yes, I am aware of your secret slip.’ Tanatha then softened, sensing his distress. She shook her head and went on speaking telepathically, ‘Madonna, you are so irrelevant sometimes.’ She then gazed up at him with a forgetful look on her face, ‘it’s been what—some forty or forty-nine years or so since we’ve been virtually practicing habitat program for our new society that we will be creating in Hortus?’

Narmer tried to call to mind the number of years that she was talking about, but then telepathically said, ‘oh well, my mind is flooded with too many thoughts. Frankly, I stop counting since we parted ways as life partners.’

Tanatha pouted her mouth. ‘Well, it was your choice to leave the family.’

Narmer quickly refuted it, knowing what it was coming to, ‘A rubbish game!’

‘Ahh! Rubbish you say? Yet, you’re still apprehensive about our golden oldie game?’

‘Nonsense! The importance of running this Ark is more in your mind than your silly family game. I’d damn think, Lovey, that it’s normal to be worried about traveling 24.93 trillion miles in space’

They have had this argument many times and Tanatha went on, ignoring his rebuttal by telepathically saying, ‘Mhmm, I am thinking it was more than forty-nine years ago.’

Narmer softly bit his large lip, thinking. He was slightly miffed at being ignored again. ‘I am not sure the years we started with the Habitat Simulator . . .’ his eyes turned with a swift, almost with scornful glance to his wife, adding, ‘. . . by George, not even when we parted our ways!’

Tanatha chuckled, ‘Mhmm, I’m amazed by your lack of memory. Yes, in fact, you’ve completely erased yourself from my life.’ She paused after seeing him raise his apish bony ridge over his dark eyes.

He then crinkled his left eye and telepathically transmitted a thought as honest as he could. ‘Well, it was logical at the time, but now it’s logical to live our way. Regardless, it started long ago; obviously I forgot when it started.’

Tanatha saw the sincerity in him and accepted for what it is. ‘Mhmm, yes well—of course we can’t remember every detail of our experiences, can we?’ Her mind then went to

the artificial intelligence, ‘chief custodian, what date did we started training in the Hortus Habitat Simulator?’

“You started the training program in 12.21.2299, 01:00 (UTC)” answered the artificial intelligence; the voice was asexual and seemed to echo in her mind from another world or dimension, which was, in realty, inside her Regenerative-therapeutic torpor system.

Tanatha said telepathically, ‘Mhmm, that was one-hundred years ago.’

Narmer frowned and said telepathically, ‘I really didn’t need to be reminded!’ And gave himself a small chortle. Afterwards, his eyes lit up first and then narrowed as a bit of apprehension crept up on him. ‘Oh, how intriguing! I never would have envisioned that training turned out to be right after my second metempsychosis transfer.’

She chuckled, ‘Mhmm . . . well yes. Frankly, it’s rather comical when you think about it: one by one old memories seem to vanish like sand castles on the shore.’

Narmer ignored her comment with a sigh, and then blinked his wide eyes at her direction. ‘For what particular reason are you bringing the training to my attention?’

‘Oh well, your panic thoughts made me think about our forthcoming new life cycle, nonetheless, I still really miss being me.’

Narmer suddenly raised his eyebrows and then shook his head at her. ‘Being me again . . . what in creation are you talking about?’

‘I mean I miss being the earthly girl I once was, and would be phenomenal to have again my original body form.’

‘Now here you go with your bloody identity; I thought we have left that behind us!’

She scoffed at him, ‘I hardly remember myself being her, and there’s no way I’m going to live in Hortus with a default body form!’

He shook his head and sighed, ‘As I’ve told you before, what’s past is past, and you’re not your past no matter how simple it is to forget that. You can’t go back and change the beginning. By George, it’s absurd to wear a *Homo sapiens* body form in outer space — let alone in Hortus.’

She puffed a sharp breath, ‘Well, that doesn’t make me feel any better, and I am tired of feeling more and more of being nothing less than what the emperor ordered—and I don’t like it!’

Narmer’s eyes then lifted with a prudent look on his face. ‘Will you stop being so annoying. . . . we were both fond of the earthly girl, and do I have to remind you that out there in reality, even on Earth itself, it is forbidden to transfer into a *Homo sapiens* body form?’ He paused, and then said telepathically, ‘And if I were you, I would be careful with your opinions online.’

‘Ahh! You are worried over the authorities?’ she scoffed in disbelief.

Narmer nodded to emphasize the implied warning, 'The chief custodian might compute your opinion negatively.'

Tanatha barely raised a smirk and retorted, 'Needless to say, I don't need to be reminded! Well then, is there a law against expressing such a thought? I would think, at the least, we're allowed to let out some of our despair.'

Narmer rolled his dark eyes with a foolish expression and transmitted, 'Honestly, you're taking a risk with such a joke, whether it gets the chief custodian to laugh or not. There are, of course, some exceptions expressing their discontent against the Emperor's rulings. Nonetheless, why take a chance? We have an oath and responsibility to comply with the Emperor's orders and carry out our mission.'

Tanatha breathed a long, deep sigh, 'It seems you never tire of going over this concern, no matter how boring!'

Narmer smiled, trying to dismiss his scolding. He sensually gazed down at her with piercing eyes. 'Against boredom, Lovey, even the gods struggle in vain.' For that quick moment, he resonated with his fantasy and pleasantly retreated with the avatar from the Habitat Simulator. He then unavoidably showed her his heart as he reached out and caressed her smooth, soft-haired skin, under the curve of her collarbone. He stroked her as if a collector handling an antique doll.

Tanatha smirked amusingly as she pulled herself from his touch and then pointed her dark, resentful eyes at him,

saying telepathically, ‘By now, you would think I would have grown accustomed to wearing that body form that you are so fond of, but I can’t handle the look of the bitch—and I won’t become her in Hortus.’

Narmer sighed objectively. ‘Indeed. It’s beyond me. Why is this avatar such a bother to you?’

Tanatha puffed up her cheeks and blew at the sky. ‘Madonna, Narmer, you’re asking me why?’

For Narmer, her complaining question didn’t make sense. He just blinked his eyes a few times, waiting for her to calm down.

Tanatha looked at him awkwardly, ‘Regardless of the body form I’m wearing, it’s still me . . . and you don’t identify me.’

He shook his head, wishing that he could avoid the nature of his affection for the avatar. ‘It’s beyond me why she’s such a—’

But before he could finish, Tanatha interrupted him with sarcasm, ‘Thank goodness she’s only an assigned simulation! I can’t wait to be able to choose my own body form appearance in my next metempsychosis transfer procedure.’ She then gave him an offended look and added, ‘Has it ever occurred to you that your intimate obsession with this particular avatar has become much too real?’

‘What are you saying? You’re spurring rubbish!’ He returned, trying hard to keep out the displeasure from his mind.

Tanatha sighed. 'Not at all, there is something to be concerned about here!' She continued with an accusing face, telepathically asking, 'Are you mocking me when I become her?'

Narmer quietly shook his head and chuckled in dismay. 'What a foolish question!' At the same time, he momentarily dismissed his obsessive thoughts of the avatar.

She quickly responded with, 'Well, come to think of it, in that Habitat Simulator is the only time we are together for any length of time.' Tanatha paused for a moment, realizing that she could feel the emptiness in her husband's thoughts haunted by loneliness, which was something they both shared.

He just smirked at her, contracting his feelings. 'Well, she's satisfying on so many levels, and somehow we get by that way, don't we?' Narmer saw her face drop instantly. He then twisted his head at her, confused. 'It's just a goddamn avatar—yes, your lovely avatar, part of a template designed by the Emperor's astrobiologists, and yes, I find her extremely delightful! I don't see why you are so concerned.'

'Precisely! I know we have our differences, but until lately, it never dawned on me that you've simply lost interest in me as I really am.'

Narmer shook his head expressing his dissatisfaction with her quarrelsome words. 'This is absurd, our standard training is only a monthly occurrence, and it is the only time you are alone with me without him.'

'What? You're now blaming Naenio?'

His flat nose twitched as his apish lips blew a repellent sigh. 'Do you ever bloody do anything else than play parental games in that virtual Roman setting?'

'How insulting! His soul should matter to you!'

'A soul, you say?' He scoffed, 'such a theory petered out with Aristocles.'

'Ahh! Family is all that matters, which, however, you have conveniently erased from your skull.'

Narmer hesitated, thinking further before transmitting again. 'Look, it's different now—Interacting with that image character dampens my mood.'

Tanatha suddenly pulled all the air she could in her chest and puffed her soft-haired breast, and then delivered a heated retort, 'Damn! He's your son! It's beyond me why all these years you've become so cold, distant of a father.'

Narmer rolled his eyes, which was something he did most of the time whenever he was prompt to reply to her with an uncomfortable rebuttal. 'Have you ever considered the fact that you've become very enamored with something unreal, something you've derived from ancient memories?'

Straightaway, a trace of codependent obsession came through her thoughts. 'I do not! His soul matters! And don't annoy me about Naenio like that!'

Narmer shook his head. 'You're so delusional. You perceive I am uncomfortable with the fatherly role-play; however, you still compel me to care for someone who lost existence a long time ago.'

She strongly declared, 'You are so demented! He's family! He survives because we exist!' She then raised her silky-haired hands and opened her palms wide, under the blue-green leafy branches of the tree. 'You should be grateful for these impressive virtual technologies that make him available to us, but you don't bother about it. Evidently, you have lost your family values.'

For the moment, Narmer reserved a quiet defense, holding his disposition of the bickering. Tanatha then quickly shrugged a shoulder and went on sarcastically. 'Well—our relationship—now—that is when it comes to me, it's all about being your paramour, isn't it?'

He sighed, 'Family, you say? Ahh, this is going senseless! All this rehashed drama is too boring! Can we bloody get going if you want to play my new game?'

But Tanatha gave him a persistent look, 'Don't deny it!'

Narmer widened his eyes and blinked a few times in a way that would build logic into them. He pointed at himself and then at her, telepathically saying, 'We get by this way! Look, Lovey, I didn't create the body form protocol that we are to follow, that all came down from the Emperor's Universal Astronomical Union, and, coming to think of it, you are quite aware of that. You are also quite aware that we can't turn back time and be the person we were in days of the past, because, quite frankly, as I have made the point before, *Homo sapiens*' could never exist on a habitable planet other than Earth, and therefore, this conversation is extremely senseless.'

Tanatha pursed her lip and then smirked, saying telepathically ‘Indeed. But my point, rather, is that, I would rather like us to try to recapture, to some extent, a *Homo sapiens*’ lifestyle that we once enjoyed.’

Narmer shrugged his brawny shoulders. ‘Why? You’ve already made the point that memories fade. Do you actually remember any enjoyment about that time period?’

‘Of course, I do!’ she took a breath to control her anxiety and then went on, ‘The special memories, the most important ones with our family there on Earth . . .’

Narmer interrupted, transmitting waves of resentment at her. ‘Nice—here we go with the ‘family’! He sneered as he went on, ‘all I seem to recall from that time period was rather a graveyard of dead hopes in a ghastly war that almost devastated us all.’ He sneered more bitterly, ‘yes . . . thanks a lot . . . ‘family’ . . . my ass!’ He paused, thinking, and then continued, ‘Yes-yes I can remember now, we lived in a bloody *Homo sapiens* freak-show, with ghastly characters in a ghastly society.’ He paused again before going on, ‘Ahh, nicely done, you ruining my mood!’ He sneered ones more. ‘We are who we say we are!’

She sneered back at his surprise performance, ‘well, apparently, you have emotionally detached yourself from the past as well as who I am, haven’t you?’

Narmer agreed with his deep eyes. He pushed away his thoughts of resentments, and then he swiftly transmitted, ‘will you end this charade?’

She scoffed, ‘as you say, it is senseless to continue.’

Visions of the future suddenly jumped into Narmer's mind, expressing concern about the new planet's ecosystem. 'Bloody hope that all the scanning performed on Hortus is accurate and the simulated training does what it was projected to do.'

Tanatha lifted her head at him, confused, 'Explain!'

'I am saying that our metempsychosis transfer due date is sooner than you think, and it would be a pity to make alteration to whatever body form you've designed. It might have to be genetically modified for the sake of unreliable ecosystem data.'

Tanatha puckered her mouth, annoyed at him, 'Are you mocking me again?'

'No, I am not! Well, we'll know soon enough, won't we?' Narmer was about to say more, but was deterred by her interruption.

Tanatha then looked at him with a curled lip, as if she were trying to avoid smelling the pungent odor of a carcass. 'I am not naïve and I am clearly aware of your mockery of me—and I am leaving! This was a cockamamie idea to be here with you. I thought you invited me to settle our differences?'

'Oh Lovey, come now—stop this bloody nonsense over this matter; what I really meant was we might have to make some minor chromosome adjustments to some life forms including our own body form when we get there, since new planetary analysis data shows the planet's gravitational,

radiation and electrostatic field there is much stronger and unpredictable than anticipated.'

'Madonna, I am still a biologist, you know, and I am fully aware that chromosomal adjustments could be a major phenomenon. But unlike yourself, I am confident with the science given; data on the planet shows that all the organisms that we are transporting will adapt perfectly without modification. So, will you stop frightening me with your pessimistic attitude!' When Tanatha saw him roll his eyes at her, she then briskly looked up and away through the branches of the tree and channeled the artificial intelligence, 'chief custodian! End this—'

'Stop! No, don't bloody go!'

"You called, diva Tanatha?" said the artificial intelligence.

Narmer gave a surrendering sigh. 'Oh, for fuck's sake, don't go like this—it's just you and me—it's been too long, you know?'

Tanatha smirked at herself, 'chief custodian, standby!' she then refocused on him and nodded in agreement. 'Apparently, no matter how tired we are of each other, somehow, we can always depend on each other, can't we?'

'Apparently . . .!'

Narmer replied telepathically, looking at Tanatha and shrugging his shoulders pleasantly, but annoyingly. 'Oh, very well, yes, in the order of things given, we are a couple. It's as it is, isn't it?'

Then a smile came to Tanatha, evoked by a pleasant dream. A remnant of the smile hovered around her savage

lips as she gazed upward to the virtual blue sky that manifested through the gust of wind rustling the branches and leaves. 'I can tell you this much about my new body form . . .!'. As she went on Narmer's hand clenched a branch of the tree, his thorny nails silently dug into the rugged bark. ' . . .You can't imagine my new designed figure that I'll be wearing for the next hundred and thirty-three years.'

'Evidently not,' he put an amused smile, looking at her curiously. 'It's such a secret, not even the Emperor knows.'

She squirmed her face up at him. 'At the moment, only our chief custodian knows!' And added with sarcasm, 'yes, arrival will be here before you know it, and I can't wait to be able to move on with our colonist, wearing my girly beauty with pride.'

'Right-O, Lovey, whatever tickles your fancy.'

'What about you? Do you have a body design in mind?'

'No, I don't.' Then he thought about his next metempsychosis transfer procedure that would come as soon as next year. 'We could have had thirty-two more years of this life cycle, if it wasn't for this coming metempsychosis transfer procedure.'

Tanatha sarcastically ignored him at his dissatisfaction statement, saying telepathically, 'I am sure I can offer you a more attractive body form.'

Narmer cast a nonchalant glance at her, 'you are being awful again.' He then gave forth a long breath and tapped

his index finger on his lips, saying telepathically, ‘why are you being so bloody awful?’

She smirked at him delightfully, keeping her sarcasm from slipping away. ‘Oh well, I suppose that I am counting on the day when you’ll become rather bored with your raving beautiful avatar—I know I have, after all these years.’ She looked around at what she could see through dark-green foliage, and then back at him. A stranger’s smile then hovered over her succulent, but almost human lips. ‘But then again, your participation in my reality is like no life at all.’ She sighed, acting blissfully. ‘Anyhow, I have this grand virtual lifespan where I can escape over and over again being me again: a good wife and mother of my child with a good husband of my choosing.’

‘It’s bloody fine by me! Keep pretending!’ he scoffed at her in contempt. Yet, after that, he paused with a sigh to regain his composure. ‘Oh rats! This togetherness is bloody awful, despite my effort to bring harmony in this bottled lifecycle. Are we going to set our differences aside and get along? Because it would be decent to have cordiality for a change.’

Tanatha felt a modest glow of satisfaction. She then pushed a strand of her black thick, coarse hair off her forehead with the back of her hand, and slowly but surely, a persuaded smirk developed on her face. She was feeling both amused and sensual over his hidden remorse. ‘Oh Madonna!’ she sighed a deep sigh, ‘Very well, I’ve vented enough. Let’s proceed with this game of yours.’ She then

turned a silly smirk toward him and then carefully placed her feet on a sturdy branch. At the same time, she tried to lift her furry body weight upwards to another sturdy branch. When her muscles started quivering, she hastily stretched out an arm, and pointed her thoughts to him. ‘Well, since you are being so polite, I require aid. I’ve come this far up and I don’t want to slip off again.’

Narmer made a silly smirk. ‘By all means, Lovey!’ he telepathically said while he pushed away a few light branches blocking her path and propped her up higher against him.

Tanatha climbed the new height with a disbelieving shake of her mind. In that second, she glanced down and saw the curve of the tree trunk fading into a backdrop of bluish-green leaves with no ground in sight. ‘Madonna, all these years with you, with all our adventures, I believe I have never climbed a tree. Well, come to think of it, I never did realistically or virtually,’ she said telepathically, as she held him tight.

‘Right-O, Lovey, apparently, you need some work on your tree climbing skills.’ Narmer thought with a chortle. His amusement reflected in the telepathic link as he watched her shake off her light-headedness by trying to be steady on the branch.

Tanatha shook her shaggy hair back from her face and then confronted him with eyes opened wide in response. ‘I sure didn’t expect you to be taking me free climbing a sky-scraping tree with no equipment, did I?’

Narmer almost gaped surprisingly at her, because of her special natural body elegance in climbing. ‘Take a look at yourself; you’re forgetting that your avatar is properly tooled for the climb.’

Tanatha vaguely glanced over her artificial hominid form and hardly blinked in shock as he erupted in chuckles. She then lifted an eyebrow at him, ‘Well whatever! I am not comfortable being this silly naked monkey that you created me to be.’

‘Will you stop your bloody complaining—you’re managing fine—play along, will you?’

She complied with a tiny echo sigh back at him, while he went on transmitting the last word with a demanding tone. ‘I prefer this to be a natural experience, as much as possible.’

Tanatha raised her head with prominent brow ridge face and with awaiting curiosity in her eyes. ‘Very well—I am playing, aren’t I? Why are we climbing this tree?’

‘It is the tallest tree I’ve created.’

‘No kidding.’

‘Relax, I am sure you will enjoy the experience.’

‘You insist as if I should be impressed?’

‘Paleoecology was your expertise, isn’t it?’

‘Oh, that? But that was long ago in my second life cycle, way before I became involved in astrobiology.’ Tanatha replied telepathically. Following that thought, she paused, looking, and then she faced him oddly. ‘Where are we?’ She then twisted her head a little to him, ‘is this place supposed

to represent ancient earth?’ She was clueless and curious to what his mysterious surprise could be.

Narmer responded with a sly grin at her, displaying a noble persistence.

Seeing her husband’s persistence, Tanatha then gave in and let the questions give way with a defeated sigh, for she was not about to ruin the surprise. She became aware that whatever he’d concocted there in the virtual was for the welfare of their loneliness; something they both shared through the age.

Narmer pointed straight up where the sunbeams flickered through the leaves. ‘We are nearly there. Come on, hurry, I really, really want to share this with you.’

Tanatha gave him a whimsical look, ‘Very well—just assist me.’

Narmer lent his hand through the climb, until they reached close to the top of the tree, and then they sat down on one of the thick supportive branches. So high off the ground the branches swayed occasionally, making them rattle in the slightest breeze, which was for the moment quite dizzily to say the least for Tanatha. ‘Get a good grip, we have no time for your falling,’ he telepathically warned with a daffy, charming smile and curled his tail around the branch.

Tanatha was too busy quibbling over her unrested tail, which was not cooperating, then to ridicule his pompous tease. He went on, ‘Just relax—concentrate — tighten those tailbone muscles.’

‘Ugh, it is being difficult!’ Right after that telepathically said, her tail finally curled around the branch. Tanatha momentarily looked away from him, finding herself slightly flustered and breathless. As Tanatha sat there, she listened to the natural sounds that were in and out of the tree. Then, away in front of her, she pushed aside the hanging curtain of leaves and looked around slowly, curious about where she was. Her eyes widened into a steady stare upon his creation of the well-studied prehistoric life: the Paleolithic period to be exact. Her first observation was that there were no mountains or hills. She peered farther over an area of flat grassland at a group of mammoths grazing the land, accompanied by large flocks of flightless birds, which she recognized as *Genyornis*. She looked at the vast expanse of land with herds of herbivorous beasts scattered in every direction. She was overwhelmed by awe and amazement at the prehistoric terrain, which looked so exotic and rather lovely. In that view, one inhalation of the cool, musky scent of the rainforest evoked her sexual desire upon Narmer's beastly figure, making her warm and tingly. She held her stare out into the terrain and afterwards, when desired thoughts clouded her mind and kind of dissipated, she slowly turned to him with bulging eyes and then puckered her mouth and added, ‘I see you have eliminated carnivores of this period.’

Narmer acknowledged somewhat wryly. Smilingly, he then pointed to the ferns far below on his left side. ‘Look over there; I created them to sustain the setting a bit lively.

For now, those striped wolves are the only top of the food chain. We would be bothered by more advanced predators and it would be difficult to concentrate on this experience,’ he blurted in thought, while attempting to avoid showing his own sexual arousal. They both gave each other a smirk, contented with themselves of the intensity of the feeling of being alive.

‘Well, well, *caro uomo*, I must say this elaborate creation of yours is quite atypical,’ she said smugly.

As he responded, he threw her a sensual look with his dark eyes. ‘Yes, even with all the limitations, I find my virtual setting of this time period impressively real—don’t you think?’

The intensity in his eyes made her nipples tighten. ‘A semblance of prehistoric paradise,’ Tanatha remarked with a nod. She then faced away. Her eyes went on scanning around the forest, as she felt that all this was as real to her as her senses were telling her; yet, this was only taking place in her mind.

After a bit of looking, she turned back to him. ‘Indeed, you made this setting quite amicable,’ she complimented. She noticed him arch his eyebrow, and then he nodded with amusement.

By now, there, in the imaginative world of fiction, the avatar character that her husband created kept her arousal high. The new sensation of unguarded desires for the avatar beast was intensifying. Even though, in reality, her husband was physically unattractive to her as she was to

him. Their slender dwarf bodies were about five feet tall, and both were genetically modified to tolerate high doses of radiation exposure in space; these spaces made cyanosis-like skin tones and bird-like bones quite flexible enough to handle the spacecraft environment. They were both completely hairless from head to toe, with long flexible fingers and large silver eyes fixed on bluish cheekbones. Ironically, just as the mythical Eve was a replica of Adam's cells, the body designed by Narmer was a replica of Tanatha's cells. Being that she was the only Dwarf who survived *Homo sapiens* with the correct genetic code in her chromosomes that could serve as a model for a body shape adaptable for the long journey through space. Tanatha sat there looking over the ancient animals while catching her breath. Every now and then the lower part of her body would twitch in delight, being that every so often she couldn't help but glance over his brawn form: his thick crop of russet hair over perfect muscles and hard chest.

Narmer turned away from her, smiling at her fantasies that she was heedlessly projecting onto him. Recognizing that his beastly nakedness along with his natural scent was intruding again, making her feel sensual. She seemed to be more uncomfortable with her primitive form of half-monkey and half-human that she was playing with, and her unguarded images were both pleasant and amusing to Narmer.

But suddenly she caught on and abruptly dismissed her thought. ‘Um?’ Then, she projected to him. ‘When will you tell me why we have climbed this tree?’

He chuckled and then directed to the sky, ‘over there—’

At his word, Tanatha looked up at the unbelievably clear sapphire sky and then uttered in awe, ‘Mhm—Lovely!’ She took a deeper breath of the cool gust of musky scent, feeling comfortable there.

A rare early evening solar eclipse was taking place. Along with the breathtaking view, Tanatha gasped with delight when she noticed specks of silver comets trailing luminous tails of vapor across the virtual blue sky.

She looked at him, ‘Don’t tell me, it’s some catastrophic scene of some sort?’

Narmer licked his upper lip and suddenly threw her a very ambiguous smirk.

She giggled with sarcasm, ‘Oh, this is a new amusement of yours: relishing over nature’s afflictions.’ She briefly paused and thought over how she would phrase it in a more sarcastic way. ‘Well, it’s definitely an alteration to those boring war games of yours.’

He rolled his eyes and expressed annoyance, ‘That’s kind of a rubbish crack from you, but I’ll let you off this time because I am so damn lonely. Anyhow, yes, I do find this sort of experience with animals thrilling; I think you’ll also be pleased.’

She smiled at him. ‘Mhmm, yes, this is going to be very interesting to watch how this little doomsday of yours turns out.’

Narmer also gave her a smile of amusement and then put his arm around her waist, telepathically saying, ‘Let’s enjoy the view, shall we?’ And they watched silently as the moon began to block the sun. Then, from moment to moment, the sun’s rays slowly diminished and the sky darkened like midnight. Along the flared streaks of comets, the stars showed themselves serenely through its mask of black. After a while of curious viewing, interchangeably, they began to feel their heightened libido burning inside each other, as the comets became larger and brighter as they hit the atmosphere. As the light took over again in the sky, the comet spectacularly broke apart, melting away like ice cubes in boiling water. The remaining chunks of meteoroids shot off an explosion of intense bright flares, getting bigger and brighter. One of the orbs of fire suddenly zoomed by overhead, followed by a thunder rumble, hitting the ground some kilometers away. Tanatha and Narmer widened their eyes watching the mushroom cloud forming over the lightning orange explosion.

Seconds after, a very strong gust of wind pushed and ruffled their tree, swaying them from side to side. The swinging made Tanatha feel a bit dizzy and she quickly held on to Narmer with a scream. Immediately after, the wind whisked away into calmness. As the sun began to show itself again, Narmer heehawed in a crazed high-

pitched screech at the sorry sight of devastation that the meteoroid had caused.

Far down in an area near the edge of the landscape, Tanatha could see some of the outlines of the crater. ‘Madonna, Narmer!’ Tanatha remarked with a gasp, as she stared into the massive dark bubbling cloud formation. ‘Wow . . . I am pleased, *caro uomo* . . . I am taken by your realistic details!’

Abruptly, a low deceiving sound started steadily, and they both turned their heads to the sky, looking at an enormous swarm of ancient birds flying overhead while the earth rumbled beneath them. The thundering and desperate cries in the panic resonated in their minds.

‘Look, it is a stampede!’ Narmer glanced excitedly over at her and grinned. In their regenerative-therapeutic torpor capsule, the rush of goosebumps excitement from their avatar form radiated through their small, slender physical bodies.

By now, the feelings of dissociation had completely left them. Tanatha grinned back at him, ‘This is so gruesome!’ They played along, carrying on like intoxicated spectators in a Roman coliseum. Their fingers tangled together as they watched the wild beasts run over each other in a futile attempt to escape the invading wildfire that spread around them.

After a silent moment, they looked at each other seductively: their pheromones were heavy in the air, in their nose and in their throat, and they both were aware of the

craving of the moment: her with his detail of the fur, the chocolate eyes, the ripples of muscle beneath his skin, and the entire animal that he was, and he unable to quell his unnatural lust for ancient beauty.

‘Bloody marvelous! Some fireworks, hey?’ he telepathically said with lively eyes.

Tanatha looked around, the devastation was all around her. Suffocating smog from wildfires hung over and had not yet reached them. Her face was animated watching countless beasts being devoured by the inferno. She turned to him and just shook her head with a sigh and grinned. ‘Quite impressive—yes indeed! This game is rather a convincing new head trip of yours.’

Narmer was too intoxicated with all the chaos. He attended to her lustfully. ‘Let me impress you further,’ he telepathically declared, looking at her eyes passionately. Narmer could not hold back his desire for her much longer; the lust and the passion had now overtaken him, inducing him to forget everything else. With a smile, Tanatha was about to add to his words of thought when he took her in his powerful ape-like muscular arms and kissed her deeply in her thick dark mouth, tasting and teasing her tongue with his as though he could not get enough of the taste of her. His foreign-flavored saliva was heavy, sticky, and the scent made him lustier.

As both minds linked, the illusion of their erotic pleasure induced by the artificial intelligence system was an ‘awakening of sensation’ that was as fresh as a cool breeze

on a warm-sunny Palm Beach day. It was a feeling that even their simulated avatars couldn't produce.

Tanatha felt the hard and demanding kiss, warm and generous at the same time, evoking sweet soft memories of their past love. She imagined real sexual desire in her eyes as those same feelings focused on her. She wanted more, tilted her head, and allowed him to kiss her once more.

‘Oh, I miss being with you like this,’ he said telepathically, while his eyes projected his uncontrollable lust.

A look in her eyes showed him agreement with what he was projecting. Yet there was also some uncertainty, being that they were playing the part for real, and not with a computerized projection of avatar images they were used to being more intimate with.



In an instant, a very bright light came over Narmer; his vision blurred, bedazzling him, and waking him back into reality inside his cocoon shaped casing of the regenerative-therapeutic torpor capsule. He tightened and blinked his large roundish silvery eyes before he could make out anything. There, on a jellylike coverless bed, his eyes suddenly widened, upon seeing through the clear silicone lid an eight-foot exoskeleton robot. The machine with number 0369 on its forehead stood quietly in attendance. Promptly, the sophisticated computerized capsule automatically pulled-off two tube dishes of electromagnetic

probes along with its transducers and sensors from the sides of his face. The robot then took control as soon as it had computed a successful awakening; it then allowed to open the lid.

Narmer rubbed his eyes, and then he glanced unheedingly at Tanatha's capsule, where she was stiff in hibernation. He noticed the robot 0333, attending to the brain-to-brain artificial intelligence interface of the torpor system, and at what he could see of his wife's hairless blue-grey head and shiny leathery skin. He then turned away, of the fact that her unique body appearance was developed specially to combating the impact of galactic cosmic rays, in which remind him of his awaiting death that he was unable to quell. Straightaway he repressed the chills crawling up his spine, which felt like spider legs drumming through his body. Narmer then quickly ordered, "Robo 0369, get me a cup of cool water?"

"Affirmative Governor," the machine answered with an obedient voice.

Afterwards, Narmer swung his short thin legs out of bed, stood up and rubbed away the electrical static around his bluish skin oval head with his long soft fingers, trying to readjust to his flexible body and environment.

Their living quarter was spacious with all the comfort of home. The Ark offered a variety of virtual interior design templates to choose from. Unlike his wife's choice with old décor and furnishings, identical to the old Roman villa in Rome, Narmer kept from boredom by redecorating the

room with different interior designs whenever it was his turn. In this eleven-week's shift of acting steward, he chose a room design of a richly decorated African-Arab decor. He has two more weeks before retiring to the capsule in hibernation phase. It will then be wife's turn to steward the vessel. He sighed, as he looked over the room. Considering she will switch it all back to the same old boring Roman design of the old days on Earth.

As he waited for the cup of water, he soothed himself by gazing over the replica painting of *Chafik Charobim* on the wall. His favorite painting was above his white marble requiem podium, with a setting layout of all of his and his wife's crystal baseball size spherical genetic coded gems. Also, on the edges and between the gems in front, lay a 3D crystal frame of their son. The podium was his inner sanctum, so to speak, and the gems, among his atheist relics, both were imprinted with his original face of Homo sapiens, along with the life cycle dates and the faces of his two previous Homo evolutis cremated in their respected gems. His sanctum was the only scene that was real and didn't not change virtually when the room redecorated. His silvery eyes widened at the natural scene of the half-stripped trees struck by the wind on *Lake Karoun*. Briefly, his left eye twitched, as his thoughts went to his own regenerative-therapeutic torpor capsule. *I actually dread going back to hibernation for another eleven weeks!*

The robo-0369 approached, raising a cup to him and asked, "do you require another service?"

After a moment of gulping down mouthfuls of water, Narmer replied, “No—carry on your usual function.” He passed the cup back to the robot and then strolled to the elevator, taking him to the top of the vessel’s hull.

Upon entering the bridge, he glanced over at the bed of the new synthetic flowered plants blooming at every corner of the room. His eyes moved over to the two robots, number 0225 and 0513, that were busily moving about in their sections of the station, engaged in a certain specified work that were assigned to them. Robo-0153 was at the helm, sitting alone in front of a main view-screen, piloting the Ark. Besides the robots working throughout the Ark, other computerized machines kept environmental order throughout the sections of the Ark and generally making safety a priority. Narmer glanced around for a while, familiarizing himself with what was going on. Subsequently, he strolled by the control console and turned to the robots asking, “Is the message from Station Kuiper ready?”

“Affirmative, it is ready,” the robot replied.

“Let’s see it.” He ordered.

“Governor, the broadcast loss of image and sound is estimated to be thirty-eight percent,” said the other robot.

Narmer thought about all the past transmission statics and cut-outs. “What? A nine percent improvement, is that the best that can be done?”

“Affirmative,” replied the robot, “it is still inevitable the interference between dark matter and dark energy.”

Narmer smirked annoyingly, crinkling his left eye with a stern face at the robots, and then he blurted out a curse, "Mother of sapiens!" He shook his head with a short scoffing chuckle.

"I need to lower my expectations," he mumbled to himself, as the viewing screen went on displaying distorted strange colors of images.

A static-ridden and fragmented voice delivered the grim news he had long dreaded and eagerly anticipated: The super pathogen, *Antigone*, has migrated from Earth to space and infected some of the colonies. The Empire also believes that the pathogen has infected the crew of *Alexandria*, as the *Ark* failed to respond and deviated from its course, and station *Kuiper* was unable to make course corrections.

Narmer gulped, for it sounded like the *Antigone* has cursed the entire Solar Empire. The other news given made no sense, or was it because it was no longer important to him.

Eventually, he strolled towards the commander's station behind the helm control panel and sat down, feeling quite discombobulated. For a few moments, he remained motionless and silent before gazing on the main viewing screen at the heavenly stars flashing by. Between all the passing streaks of rainbow lights, there it was: the three suns. The Alpha Centauri triple-star system looked fixed and was now much larger, radiating with vibrant sunlight. Narmer gazed to the opposite side of Proxima Centauri, at the tiny crescent planet that was *Hortus*, so blue and white, and thought of Earth. He closed his eyes and shook his head with a short, scoffing chuckle. He was thinking that

out of this mind-blowing universe of twenty-one percent dark matter, seventy-four percent of the dark energy, and only four percent of normal matter that he was stuck in: how alone was he in this cursed world.

THE TRESPASS OF HOMO EVOLUTIS

The spherical robotic probe called the Missionary Engine Network Examiner Spacecraft (MENES) lay dormant precisely one hundred twenty-eight years, five months, and nineteen days on one of the largest islands of Hortus before the computer went online and the engines turned on. The landing was almost a disaster, owing to the fact that the probe was damaged by the frequent powerful electric magnetic storms affecting the region. By the way of years, it was buried deep in the sand and gravel. Part of the dry ground above it was moist and surrounded by algae, moss and with what looked like primitive non-vascular plants. The machine's only function for the moment was to be a beacon to the space ark, Orticelli. As soon as Orticelli transmitted new data into MENES' random access memory system, immediately, the probe easily torn through the ground, spitting sand, gravel and some vegetation over the area as it floated away.

When arriving at a few feet above the windswept sand and rocky site on the border of the ocean, MENES opened a portal. Then an electromagnetic beam shot through, scanning the great shards of crystals that poked out from the tempestuous ocean into the sky. Shades of orange-reddish and bluish-purple colors from the sky reflected the great crystal, like dripping icicles do on a branch on an earthly sunny winter day.

The island was treeless; the probe's lenses pick up a sight of a queer-colored landscape. No pollen analysis was established. In that location there were no flowers, no fields of grain, or birds to sing in the morning. It was mostly a desolated island. In this windy environment, there was moist, sandy soil supporting strange, unusual early plant life of close colors of titian, cyan and magenta. These primitive plants along with microorganisms, such as archaea and bacteria, received most of its light from the planet's aura that the great crystal provides. Being that the Hortus orbits its Suns at a distance where it receives close to twenty-five percent less heat and light than our Earth does from our Sun.

As MENES scanned over the great windy ocean, transmitting data to Orticelli, the computer began to show faltering signs as if being overloaded. By now, the two spacecraft were in a short distance of three hundred and sixty-five million miles (588 million Kilometers). A distance similar to Earth and Jupiter.



In the meantime, Orticelli had shut off its Nuclear Anti-gravity Propulsion System, reducing its great speed.

In his regenerative-therapeutic torpor capsule, Narmer's silvery eyes awoke from hibernation. He saw in front of him the robo-0369 standing by to assist him. He looked about the room and was curiously surprised that his wife was not there to accompany him. Since it doesn't matter how

grotesque they looked in their space adaptable body form, it was customary for them to briefly welcome each other whenever they awakened from the eleven weeks of hibernation.

When the robot sent a signal to the capsule control panel, Narmer heard a whoosh noise of air entering the capsule. As the glass lid automatically swung open, he suddenly felt foggy. He quickly fought the inside-out or outside-in sensation that came over him and forced himself out of the capsule. Upon his feet, a feeling of a deeper lightheadedness came over him as he started to levitate uncontrollably from the floor. Swaying in zero-gravity, Narmer attempted to reach for his wife's capsule when he became too dizzy to keep his eyes open. Then, all of the sudden, he fell down hard to his knees, and by the time the robot came to his aid, the dizziness had gone away.

"Ooh bloody shit! What fucken happened?" he gulped, looking a little pained and discombobulated in front of the machine. His chest heaved with heavy breaths. His heart pounded so hard in his small, fragile bluish body.

The robot helped him up on his feet, answering, "Gravitational malfunction! Restoration completed! The occurrence was by a rapid reduction of speed interfering linear time with cyclical space-time on this vessel's anti-gravity field."

Narmer took some deep breaths and became calm. He then pulled away from the robot, ordering, "stand by Robo-369, that'll be all for now." The robot then went to a

corner and stood there silently. When a signaling tone came through in his head, Narmer touched an implanted pimple-like biological device on the side of his right eye.

“Hello Lovey!” he shouted.

A view of his wife appeared in his brain from the nursery room.

“Oh, there you are,” she said wearily. “*Madonna*... whew! Were you woken up to the gravity field anomaly?”

“Yes . . . bollocks . . . yes!” he replied unsettled by the heart-stopper.

As Tanatha spoke, her large bright silvery eyes glanced uneasily about the great room; there were rows upon rows of long, narrow nursery stands holding automatic incubators with a variety of organisms that were originated in the maturation receptacles in the laboratory room. These organisms were replicas of earth’s life in different stages of their development, modified on the genetic level and fine-tuning for the new planet’s environment. “Wow! The timing was really fortunate for us; thank goodness the chief custodian promptly anticipated and corrected the malfunction of these incubators, or these life forms would have been damaged or possibly destroyed for good.”

“I don’t recall facing this malfunction in our space flight-simulator. Do you?”

“Well—I am not sure,” answered Tanatha, and brushed the malfunction off like it was nothing. “Apparently, there’s no harm done.”

“That’s a relief!” Narmer said as he touched twice his implanted device to view the Ark’s up-to-date log reports. “Mhm, I can see we are on schedule.”

“Yes, we are. Come and join me—come and experience what has blossomed here while you were passed out in hibernation.”

He was hesitant to go there. “I’d rather not. I am going to conduct a diagnostic testing of this vessel. I also require to send a report to Station Kuiper and then oversee the landing operation.”

“*Madonna* —you don’t have the nerve!”

“Sod off, this comedy? We have duties to perform.”

“Very well, *mio caro uomo*,” she countered with a taunting voice. “She’s waiting for you!”

Narmer puffed a deep-seated sigh when she cast him a foolish, narrow-eyed grin at his phobia. His face hardened quickly, seeing she was pestering him again out of sheer frustration. “I don’t have time for your shenanigans.” He made a squeamish face and added, “Be right over after my report!” He tapped his implanted device to get her face off his mind and briskly walked off in a huff from the living quarters.

In the bridge, while seated at the commander’s station, Narmer sent a report message to Station Kuiper, hoping that it would reach its destination without much static and interference: “Voyage Log — Space Ark Orticelli, date 03.03.2,399, 11:00:09 (UTC). We have disengaged our anti-gravity engines. Powered with our atomic engines, we are

now slowly coasting through a sea of asteroids obstructing our way. I must say our anti-gravity-tractor has produced positive results at altering the asteroids' trajectory. Our estimated arrival time to planet Hortus is 03.06.2,400, 22:08:03 (UTC). By then, as estimated by our Habitat Simulator, Orticelli would have settled in orbit around the planet for two years before landing. Diva Tanatha and I will be following the standard protocol of scanning Hortus for more information, in preparation for its colonization. We have estimated that after two years from arrival, our first colonial infrastructure will be established in the western equator of the planet, and we will be able to start an Earth 2.0. Hortus first stage of preparation has begun, and thus far everything seems to be going on schedule and exceedingly well with our mission." He glanced at the screen, and shifting through the vast chunks of space rock and ice, amidst by its Suns and the colorful specks of starlight, a radiant reddish-bluish celestial globe appears to move closer to him, as if he was being sucked in.

"The view of Hortus is breathless!" Narmer remarked, and then he went on with the report. "Ark Orticelli's new data from the probe MENES confirms those of past data. The mystery of the great crystal is confirmed. Our instruments showed it to be a crystal-structured asteroid that collided with the planet, becoming what it is today. It is so fortunate for us to have a meteoroid generating warmth on this planet. I personally can't wait to live again in a real

material environment! I'll be waiting for your respond. This ends transmission of data from Governor, Narmer."

On the planet surface, MENES with its digital and analog sensors, kept its business by providing further planetary information to Orticelli. It floated by a dormant volcano rescanning the area, as assigned. At that moment, its analog system picked up an unusual signal that was not computing. Somehow, the unknown electric magnetic signal was overriding its analog communicative system. MENES then sensed a malfunctioning and reported it through its digital system to the Ark.

Some minutes later, Narmer got a signal from his wife at the laboratory workstation. He touched the side of his right eye and Tanatha appeared in his mind, saying, "Have you seen the spacecraft MENES' last report?"

"What—MENES?"

Tanatha nodded her head, yes.

Narmer then looked at her in a peculiar way, saying, "I was quite busy reporting to Station Kuiper. What about it?"

"Apparently, the probe is reporting a malfunction in its analog communication system."

Narmer scoffed. "I'll deactivate it; there actually isn't any further need for this aged machine."

"Uhm, well, it's unfortunate to deactivate it, being that MENES was the first spacecraft to reach the surface of Hortus."

Narmer agreed. "Mhmm, indeed, I have to say that it has been very successful with the data obtained. But now

our chief custodian with our robos has taken over.” He touched a red icon on the control console screen for deactivation.

She uttered mournfully, “Well, this calls for a tribute to our ancestor, don’t you think?”

“Indeed, it’s history that we don’t want to neglect, after seeing now what’s taking place.”

“Agreed! As of now, the spacecraft is a remarkable historic monument of *Homo sapiens*’ accomplishments, and it’s to be displayed for future generations.



A few days later, Narmer entered the self-sliding doors of the nursery room. His nose twitched for a moment at the unanticipated, revolting, musty, and carnal breeding smell that lingered in the air. He walked by the Intensive Care Platform, and suddenly the usual eerie feeling came over him as he passed by the well-known metempsychosis machinery. Narmer clenched his jaws and put on a brave face, resisting his irrational, involuntary phobia. There were all sorts of synthetic life forms held in liquid suspension, and many of them were also in an embryonic stage. Narmer was quite uncomfortable looking at these creatures in their clear, dusky tank receptacles because seeing them in reality brought creepy thoughts, reminding him that he too was made this way; made like from a Frankenstein’s graveyard or the Museum Vrolik. As he continued walking, he slightly cowered at his glances of the vast room of the

biotechnology breeding lab. He promptly passed by some of the sections of the maturation receptacles with their respective labels: microbiology, entomology, nursery stock, zoology, and so on. He then approached *Homo evolutis*, who were in a hibernated state. It had been years since each embryo, of eleven weeks, had gone through the metempsychosis transfer procedure on the moon. Their design assignment was to develop under his leadership and the guidance of the chief custodian for the colonization Hortus. He passed through rows of parallel lines of transparent, cocooned receptacles, which were labeled by their respective owners' given names, and then joined his wife. He glanced at what he could see of the eight hundred and eighty-eight receptacles, and then at the two receptacles behind his wife. Amongst the pearly, bloodless embryos cooking in their amniotic sac, he mustered the nerve to view his own genetically engineered body in the final stretch of its development. He watched it as if it was someone he had known and disliked all his life. Facing his wife, Narmer struggled to find words as he tried to conquer his annoying emotions. "So . . . what in the bloody hell are I doing here anyway?" he cocked his head and frowned at her. His eyes then widened when he realized his wife was smirking at him sarcastically. "What's going on?" he asked, his voice irritated.

Tanatha then started laughing silly. She was feeling so emotionally upset that she could not contain herself upon seeing the gloom on her husband's long, dreary face. "Well

now, I compliment you on having the spine. How long has it been since you stepped foot here in my presence, *mio caro uomo?*” she demanded with a half-muted chuckle.

“Not long enough.”

She then sighed and rolled her eyes at him. “You seem like you’re going to defecate on yourself.”

“Cut this nonsense!”

“Oh now, will you relax and shove away that silly phobia of yours!”

“Oh, muzzle it! I am handling it the best I can.” He paused for a nanosecond before starting again, “You know, it’s not always about me; my heart of the matter is that I am also concerned about you . . . yes you . . . about having another metempsychosis transfer procedure.”

“Oh, what? You are attempting to frighten me again, aren’t you?”

“No, none of that! It is just that no one knows for sure. No one is ever the same person stepping out of that machine that they were when they first stepped in.”

She rolled her eyes at him. “For your information, I don’t care how much more superior you think you are than everyone else in this matter. I—for one—am really happy about the changeover. You know, wearing a new body form would do you and me some good.” She stated with a chuckle. “I can’t believe it is just another year to go and I will be free of this gross physical structure that was given me. I will be beautiful again! Yes, I will be beautiful beyond your wildest dreams.”

“Mhmm, it is too premature; we would have had thirty more years with this physical structure.”

“Oh Narmer—look, everything will go fine with your metempsychosis transfer; it certainly has always been fine in the past.”

Narmer looked at her caustically and said, “Stop rehashing your point—you’re not convincing.”

Tanatha shook her head with a chuckle and she glanced up into his mocking gaze, saying in a tuneful manner, “Be that as it may . . .!”

He sighed in contempt and then shifted the conversation by reminding her of her duty. “Aside from your foolishness, how’s the development going with these body-forms?”

Tanatha deliberately ignored the question with a comical face. She simply shook her head at him in awe that they were actually face to face in the flesh.

“Well then?” he continued. “And stop looking at me like that?”

It was in that moment there, in reality, that they both began feeling the awkwardness of being unmasked.

Tanatha puckered her mouth, hesitating a moment before going on. “Well, this is quite unattractive, isn’t it?”

“You can bloody say that again,” he said, looking solemnly and determined at her. “However, we could both be wearing a creepier body design form. Anyhow, by now, you should have been accustomed to it.”

“I will never be accustomed to being in this body.” Tanatha nodded and went on to say, “Would it kill you to

give me a kiss or at least open up to a hug?” She remarked with a brash tone of voice. She waited for a response, but Narmer looked at her with a bothering sigh. Tanatha then realized that he was hoping she would stop what he considered unimportant for the moment. Nonetheless, she lifted her chin closer and closer to his, until he pulled his face away from hers, and she went on talking, “Well, now that we are here in the ‘flesh’ sort of speak, I am curious to know about something I’ve always taken for granted.”

He shook his head. “And what will that be?”

She puckered up her mouth again, saying, “about having a direct experience without personal pleasure. Have you actually experienced a pleasant awareness of me?” She glanced over at him for an answer.

Narmer’s left eye suddenly twitched, and his lips made an O, like a goldfish in a tank breathing at the surface. “What do you bloody mean—without personal pleasure?”

“Seeing that you mentioned your general concern for my well-being with the next metempsychosis transfer procedure — tell me, Narmer, does it please you in any way how I am?”

He glanced over her bony, bluish, leathery-looking body, and she was as appealing as a dead fish. “Why, yes, I guess so,” he answered with the look of a trial lawyer stuck in a complicated case. “It seems sensible . . .” he went on softly, “. . . we are paired up as partners, aren’t we?”

“Mhmm, perhaps my question is confusing; let me clarify that; what I am asking is apart from our virtual

games, right here and now, in this hideous physical form of ours: do you initially feel a sort of pleasantness upon seeing me?”

His face turned strange and empty; since after many years of life cycles, he wasn't sure how to regard her revolting appearance as 'pleasantness'.

At his silence, nevertheless, Tanatha persisted. “Well, what you say . . .?” When she saw that he wasn't prepared for the question, she continued, “. . . I am interested to know your realistic perspective of me beyond this body form?”

Narmer glanced again at her scrawny figure, at her blood-drained skin tones, and all he could say was, “I am afraid I am lost at your meaning here, Lovey.”

Tanatha slightly pulled her head back and stared him closely at his homely face, pleading, “even like this, there must be a hint of pleasantness for me — here, as I am.”

Narmer gave a nonchalant shrug. Her large eyes widened, and he then saw the reflection of his face showing in her silvery pupils: a bluish-grayish creature which was both small and quite scrawny. He looked down and then looked back at her with a baffled expression on his face, saying, “well, in all honesty, what you call 'pleasant awareness of you', I can't identify it.”

Tanatha sighed disappointedly, saying, “Oh well, I see. I am now more aware of our circumstance,” she puffed. “I believe, in reality, we have lost something significant from

the past with each other, and we must absolutely regain it—but, how can we?”

“I have no clue,” Narmer griped. “People change through the years as they go through various stages of life-cycles.”

“Mind you, after years of meeting like this, even as an unattractive husband that you are, I can still enjoy some pleasant awareness of you.” Then she paused, for a thought struck her. “I am not sure why I feel there is something missing about you that I can’t put my finger on. I suppose it’s been some time since seeing each other like this. I must say, it’s both interesting and daunting at how wearing such a body form can change our whole feeling and mood about each other.”

“Oh now-now, Lovey, I am sure this pleasant awareness of yours will evolve again with the new attractive body form on Hortus.”

She hesitated, and said in a gentle, firm voice, “Hmm . . . possibly . . . but appearance shouldn’t matter, should it?”

Narmer gulped, confused, and then answered, “As I see it, there seems to be a deep something-induced connection between us.” He paused, drawing a stuttered gasp, “By George, we wedded ages ago!” He turned for a second to some of the receptacles behind him, and continued talking, “We—like these colonists here—are especially paired for the migration, and with our new body form, it will all work out as planned. Besides, I’m not chuffed to bits with myself

in this hideous form. How could I with yours?” He pauses for a thought and then said, “All I can say is that I do care for our well-being. How’s that for an answer?”

“I suppose,” Tanatha answered with reluctant eyes. “Anyhow, we are both enduring the best that we can until we finally exit this dreadful shell of a body.” She then turned away from him and pointed to the receptacle, labeled with her name. “Look here, *caro uomo*,” she said jovially. She beamed a smile, saying, “I do believe we’ll be seeing in reality more of each other once I start wearing this new, lovely queen!” She chuckled as a hand caressed the clear, dark receptacle with the almost developed synthetic creature. “Come on, look over here.” She said playfully, touching the small screen on top of the dim receptacle, and then a light came on showing the genetically engineered body form. Narmer’s face scrunched a bit as he casually took a peek. Then, suddenly, he stood stock still at the sight of the body, and his eyes practically popped wide open. A delightful gaze came out of him as he further looked over this flower of beauty. Tanatha beamed at Narmer, “That’s to be me—I am so adorable, aren’t I?”

Narmer quietly nodded, controlling his enchanted heart with the suspended, dormant, almost human female, and completely forgetting the eerie feeling of the place. To Narmer, the desirable nymph resembled a beautiful fairy of mythology: with a slender, petite body, fair complexion, long platinum hair, and large, deep violet eyes. He beamed back at his wife and momentarily smiled, “So, that is the

secret you asked Kuiper to permit you with. I am impressed.”

“Isn’t she adorable?”

“Mhmm—quite so, adorable.” He paused, looking deeper through the receptacle at the girlish face, then a sudden recollection came to him. He smiled warmly and nodded while refreshing his faded familiarity with the way his life was on Earth. “Ahh, I see you made her face in your original resemblance, but she seems different somehow from the avatar that I was accustomed to at your soap opera games.”

Tanatha glared at Narmer with an appeasing smile and said calmly, “Because this one is real, silly; I would never make her an avatar.” She then turned to her cloned body with a genuine look of expectation in her eyes, saying, “My masterpiece, *caro uomo*, I modified her as close as possible to the earthly girl I once was.”

Narmer smiled smugly. And then, with a thought, his face changed to a dreary expression.

“Now, what’s bothering you?”

“Leave my mind,” he said, and smiled cleverly, with a little flattering face. “It’s all smashing good.”

“Why aren’t you content with me with her?”

“Didn’t I say she is adorable? Just leave my mind, will you?”

She looked at him persistently, “Don’t bluff me, like you have done with your skank avatars. I am real and I know you too well!

“You wouldn’t like what I am thinking!”

“What is wrong with her?”

“Nothing is wrong with her! Just . . . let’s bloody hope it is me and not a ‘replica’ of me with her on Hortus, shall we?” His tone was bitter, as he tried to hide his resentment over his phobia.

Tanatha’s mouth opened in complete surprise, “Oh Narmer, you are remarkably relentless . . . relentless as a shadow! Even now, with an update by the chief custodian which once again shows the scientific data on the safety of a metempsychosis transfer procedure; look, it’s quite safe, period!”

A sudden suspicious melancholy came over his silver eyes and he said, “I still find it dodgy . . . it’s too unnatural.” He shot her a puzzled frown before going on, “The ability of quantum mind transfer just does not calculate naturally at all.”

“Let’s not go there again—please!” Tanatha just shook her head disappointed and went on checking the vital signs onto the screen of each receptacle. She then glanced over the body at his receptacle with his name and suggested, “You know, a little original enhancement might do you good, and it might make you feel better about yourself and your shortcomings.”

At her words, Narmer cocked his head with an eyebrow raised at her as if to say, “Have you any other clever ideas?” He glared for a moment at the body that would be him: a small, thin form of flesh of golden-ebony complexion with

an ivory head of hair and large, deep violet eyes. “No, no original,” he said quickly, “for now, I would rather adapt in Hortus with this default body-form issued,” he said with a scoff. Narmer then turned away altogether from the cocooned receptacle, because the anxiety was crawling down his spine.

Tanatha glanced over again at the body in the receptacle, mentioning, “Well, all the same . . . he is satisfactory. You know, I did not marry you for your looks.”

Narmer gave a half-smile and stated at her blankly, saying humorously, “Well, I certainly did; I like to think I married a hell of a smashing goddess!”

“Now, you’re talking rubbish!”

He turned serious and said, “What on earth did you marry me for anyhow?”

She turned slowly to gaze at him, replying, “Well, it’s likely because we happen to be the only dwarf Homo sapiens on Earth.” She thought it over and then added, “If I can recollect correctly, we married to support each other. I believe the reason, at the time, was to experience a pleasant awareness for each other. However, you are not doing what you married you for: you never have.” She then glanced over her shoulder at the body in the receptacle, “Anyhow, I am comfortable with your current choice of appearance.” She smiled with a little humor in her eyes, “Here we are again, soon to undergo another lifecycle change: out with this old, in with the new!”

Narmer shifted the conversation, and said with an aloof tone of voice, “Mhmm, by gully, compare to my training predictions, this body form appears to be much smaller than I anticipated.”

“Oh, you will get used to it like you have done in the simulation training.”

“I will have to, don’t I?”

Her eyes gleamed at him, “Just think, before long we will be there in Hortus, and it’s so electrifying!”

Narmer twirled a hand in the air and softly uttered, “Only if we exist!”

She quickly leered a smile at him and then quibbled to herself about how ridiculous he was being.



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When the nine days had passed, the Ark orbited Hortus as planned. Two shuttles with machinery and droids were waiting for orders to disembark on the planet’s surface with supplies and basic life forms for the initial phase of the settlement process.

Meanwhile, on Hortus, MENES lay immersed in a low sandy plateau, deactivated. On the spur of the moment, an unknown energy source unexpectedly signaled and reactivated it. A signal flash occurred, and MENES found itself completely engulfed in what appeared like an energized cloud. MENES made several efforts to function physically but was unable to do so. The sensors were

inoperable and could not detect anything. It was as if the machine was suspended in some other plane of existence. The energy source activated the analog communicative system, and instantly MENES became a transmitter, sending some unknown electromagnetic signals into space.



In a diligent manner, Tanatha, in her apish avatar form, appeared in a flash of aquamarine light on a top branch of the sky-high tree. She quickly wrapped her tail around a branch to steady her balance, by her husband's side. After settling, she turned to him irritated. She was about to telepathically say to him sarcastically that it was time for him to go through the metempsychosis transfer procedure and 'thank you' for nothing, for ruining her schedule. However, she stopped with a puffed sigh of frustration after realizing that his thoughts were silent and private and he was deliberately ignoring her. Tanatha took a mysterious breath, trying to gain self-control and patience. She puffed a little at his melancholy face and then glanced at the modified tree in silence. After a moment, Tanatha turned to his sullen expression and smiled. *'It is a much better tree — much wider — smooth branches.'* Narmer ignored her. He stood still, holding his stare to the East at a particular constellation, the Crux. On Earth, the constellation was seen largely in the Southern Hemisphere of the night sky, bordered by the constellation Centaurus. Tanatha then sighed at his silent out of frustration. She looked far over

the Earth's ancient landscape, surprised at the huge Rocky Mountains under the star-dotted horizon with a few thin light clouds. As she took in the view further, she turned to him, and lifted her bushy eyebrow after noticing that it was too quiet there and realizing that there were no animals in sight. 'Where are *those ghastly animals?*' she asked telepathically.

'*Deleted,*' he answered telepathically with a dignified look of his creation. '*I wanted quiet.*'

Tanatha shook her head and remarked cynically, '*Madonna!* You know Testa Dura, you can be incredibly weird; but that's normal for you, isn't it?'

Narmer glanced at his wife disdained and returned to his gaze to the constellation.

She stared at his messy, apish hair, framing his aloof face, and puckered her mouth in distraught. She said, telepathically, 'Will you stop ignoring me? I don't have to tell you that we can't be doing things out of schedule. You know the emperor authorized the chief custodian not to permit it.'

Narmer stubbornly kept his silence going.

'Oh Narmer—stop it! Let's get going, it is time for your metempsychosis transfer—and—what are you waiting for?' she asked telepathically, as her eyes pointed at the Alpha Centauri star system.

'The sunrise; it has been so long that I forgot the last time I saw a sunrise.'

‘*What . . . our Earth’s sun?*’ she questioned, looking at him with a strange, funny face and at a loss.

He gestured a nod in agreement towards her, ‘I came here to see my last sunrise in this body form.’

Tanatha accompanied him in his gaze of the East with confusion. ‘Hmm, you making it seem so—genuine! Well, you do realize that you have not seen an earthly sunrise for over two hundred and thirty-three years and that actual reality is long beyond history.’ She paused for a moment and then said telepathically, ‘There are three beautiful real sunrises in Hortus to look at — please get over this sunrise fixation.’

‘Huh, the past, you say?’ He said telepathically with an eerie smile; his left eye twitched when he looked at her perplexed face. ‘My memories of earthly life cling to the dust and, of what I can remember of it, have become quite vague.’

‘Why does it have to matter? Narmer—it is what it is!’

‘It’s bloody matters! Without memories, life would have no purpose, now, wouldn’t it?’

Tanatha puckered her mouth up and pouted. ‘It is reasonable to say that it is normal to experience memory loss, especially as long as we’ve lived. What matters is now, today—this moment. Come, forget this game—it has finally happened—let’s get this done so we can move on to our new life in Hortus and—!’

Narmer swiftly and sternly interrupted her with yielding eyes, saying telepathically, ‘*I’ll go after the sunrise!*’

While Tanatha spoke telepathically to Narmer, the blue virtual sky was slowly wavering from red to orange colors under some clouds. ‘You must get a hold of yourself! *Madonna*, don't let the fear of a metempsychosis transfer bring you down! Think of our colonists; you are the governor, and there's much work to be done. Our first shuttle disembarkation is due, and as you know, certain matured microorganisms and plants have to be deployed on the island in time for them to integrate with the planet's primitive ecosystem. Without it, we can't organize our colonization.’

He nodded agreeably. ‘I am mindful of what I must do. It will all proceed on time—but after this sunrise!’

Tanatha gazed at the yellow-red-orange clouds. ‘Well then, with that thought, I might as well sit still here and watch your measly virtual sunrise.’



Thereafter, as Tanatha and Narmer watched the earthly sun peek through a gap between two mountains, its bright yellow-red-orange rays augmented threefold, streaming through the gaps of clouds. The moment came when suddenly as by shock of some frequency of an unknown electromagnetic wave made them both feel uneasy. A floating sensation came upon them as everything in the virtual reality devoid of colors and details. They both lost their apish avatar format and became themselves as they actually were in reality. Narmer eyeballed the virtual

malfunction as if he was losing his vision. “What?” He voiced, stopping the telepathy, being that they found themselves inside what looked like a webbed crystal cloud-like dome.

“Narmer, why am I not receiving your thoughts?”

“The telepathic matrix must be offline,” his lips lightly trembled as he spoke, “but what could have caused the malfunction?”

“It is obvious that your software program crashed and that is what you get for deleting all those animals and — ”

Narmer suddenly interrupted her with an outcry. “Silence!” His apprehensive eyes along with his perturbed face suddenly broke off her train of thought. He then called, “chief custodian, end this program!”

They both held still for a moment in the colorless mist, listening and looking for any sign of acknowledgement from the artificial intelligence, but there was no response. At that, Tanatha and Narmer grew more apprehensive. They continued waiting there for another moment for the virtual machine to configure and to automatically shut down and then to transport them back to their Regenerative-Therapeutic Torpor Capsule. Only when nothing happened, the two looked dismal at each other, knowing that something was terribly wrong. They became extremely alarmed when they felt a presence with them, as if some sort of phantom-life had taken them to another world.

This time, Narmer tried telepathically to end the calamity. He shut his eyes and tried hard to transmit. ‘*Chief custodian—would you respond? Shut down this goddamn program!*’

Again, there was no reaction whatsoever from the Ark’s artificial intelligence.

It was then and there in dismal silence that Tanatha and Narmer cast aside any expectations regarding virtual recovery. Suddenly they became more alarmed when they started seeing sprinkles of unidentifiable colors floating around them in different forms and sizes.

Tanatha felt dreadfully puzzled. She never experienced this type of a virtual malfunction before. She looked at her husband hysterically, eye widen, and with her mouth gasping for words. “What is happening?”

“I don’t bloody know!”

They looked on intently.

“Oh, *Madonna mia*, could this be another of the emperor’s authorized loyalty checks?” He murmured.

Narmer glanced at Tanatha, and he shrugged. He was not fully convinced, “These colors are incredibly too preternatural.”

Tanatha then yelled at the artificial intelligence. “Chief custodian, what is the cause of this illusion?” After no response, she then ordered in panic, “chief custodian—take me back right now to actual reality!” Tanatha then glared fiercely at her husband and questioned, “What’s wrong with your program?”

But Narmer was lost for words and he remained still, gazing at the colors with his arms crossed while she kept glaring him down, close to a cry. After a long, tense moment, the sprinkles of colors silently grouped together and took form into some unimaginable light form. They both watched the strange haze of light swirling and churning in front of them, and as they watched, they begin to fathom more and more the idea that perhaps it was some sort of an illusion of sentient alien of some kind.

Narmer immediately shouted, “What . . . are—you?” He mouthed the words, knowing that the thing was quite intangible. A series of preternatural colorful wave patterns emerged from the haze and to their amazement. Both Tanatha and Narmer were able to in some way to comprehend the language of light. They quickly understood that the light-colored wave patterns made by the intruder were translated by the aid of the probe: MENES.

“I am called Solon, the gardener who tends and cares for this heavenly garden. You are informed that your kind has infiltrated our place of existence and you are directed to return to your own place of creation, immediately.”

The colorful motifs and the language spoken by the native were fresh, calm and nobly dignified.

“Directed? That’s an impracticable plan.” Narmer uttered. At that point, Narmer reconsidered his wife’s remark about authorized loyalty checks and concluded that the light pattern was more likely a more vivid virtual

illusion of the new technology transmitted by Station Kuiper. *Yes . . . it has to be*, thought Narmer, *all the testing done on Hortus throughout the years has always shown no intelligent life form*. He snapped out of his semiconscious state, more peeved than ever at the empire's untrustworthy attitude towards him. "What trickery is this? Are we being tested? Chief custodian, end this hoax . . . END THIS NOW!"

Solon then answered softly and firmly, "Illusion? I am not; I am a celestial being—the gardener of this heavenly garden."

Both Tanatha and Narmer kept their numbed stare to what appeared to be an intelligent life form of the planet Hortus. A moment came about when they both began to acknowledge the non-compliance of the Ark's artificial intelligence. That their loyalties to the empire, after all, were not being tested. Rather, some sort of outside activity was inducing the artificial intelligence. It was at that moment they reconsider that the phenomena were for real. And suddenly they felt a deep coldness, as if a wave of ice water was dropped on them.

"But, we have no data proving your existence," said Narmer, diplomatically. "We would like to broadcast about you to our people existing by your neighbor star we call, Sun."

"Proceed, I wish harmony. Proceed to return to this star you call, Sun. You must Immediately take steps to rectify this conflict of trespass."

“But, we have traveled much too far and to go back,” pleaded Narmer.

“You are a fascinating fabrication, but not divine; the eye tells us very little about you, only that you are a creation of a celestial being.”

“What eye? You must mean our probe? But what celestial creature?” asked Narmer. “Why you keep mentioning celestial being?”

“The Gardener of your existence.”

Tanatha interrupted, “The gardener — what do you mean by that?”

Solon replied, “The celestial being you refer to as *Homo sapiens*.”

“Ridiculous!” Tanatha uttered softly. She tried to minimize the fearful thoughts that bombarded her mind but with little promise of relief.

Narmer then shouted, “You are in error, because you simply do not know us!” He momentarily paused to regain his composure and then he went on explaining, “We are *Homo Evolutis*, an evolution of *Homo sapiens*. What you call the eye, has misinformed you; because, I am sure you are not aware that the technology of *Homo sapiens* you have taken data from is obsolete. It should be obvious that we have evolved into our own genus.”

With a sharp flare of light, Solon negated Narmer’s explanation. “I have come to believe you are only of physical form, a reflection of your Gardener, the celestial being *Homo sapiens*. Therefore, I have concluded that your

purpose of existence is to flower the consciousness of the Gardener into full radiance of enlightenment. You must return to your heavenly garden of existence you call Earth.”

Narmer interrupted with a quick retort, “Let me repeat, my kind is an evolution of *Homo sapiens*. We have no gardener nor creator to speak of! If I were to guess, we are all cosmic accidents and if anything, I would say our creator is ourselves.”

“Discord exists in your heavenly garden, and divine life there, is gradually withering away. Return and aid the ghost of light of your Gardener in the process of becoming again consubstantial with their corporeal form. For without their corporeal form, your Gardener will not be able to bloom and flourish to the next plane of existence.”

“I do not understand; you speak as if we don’t exist. Are we nothing to you?”

“You are not of high energy; your Gardener is your creator. Therefore, your energy vibrates only in this physical time and space and you will end as simple matter.”

Narmer was both offended and angry at the thought of nothing more than a simple matter. *Was this intruder, right?* He thought. He then asked, “You would bloody harm us?”

“No, it is the elements of physical space and time that will take its course with you. I solely want to guide you to your destiny as other celestial beings have done with me. Go back to your creator’s heavenly garden of existence and bring forth its seeds in the physical time and space.”

Narmer's mind was racing; however, he comprehended everything the native had said. A grimace formed on his blue-skinned face because he was now convinced about something that he did not want to consider. *Does he dare oppose the native or just tuck his tail between his legs and return to Earth, as it demands?* He wondered. *The Solar Empire would never give in.* At that instant, he realized that at least the native life form, confined to the planet, could not reach space and harm them on Orticelli. Since the native needed the machine, MENES. What Narmer needed was time to think through it carefully before he got himself killed; he needed to delay for more time. "You have speculated wrongly about us; we come here in peace and goodwill," objected Narmer.

Composed, Solon silently sensed the energy of Narmer's lie by its magnetic field of view.

Meanwhile, Tanatha remained unconvinced. "Nonsense! This is not happening—it is a Kuiper's hoax," mentioned Tanatha with a look of annoyance on her face.

"Be bloody silent, will you?"

"I tell you, Narmer, this 'thing' is not real."

"Let me talk." He faced at his wife anxiously. He went on talking to the native. "We want to coexist with you on your garden, can we?"

"That is not to be, for the reason spoken of," answered Solon.

"What are you, a self-righteous life form that's eager to judge anything you do not understand or can't tolerate?"

Narmer then shouted. "The universe belongs to everyone!" He paused and after finding the words, he continued. "We are in a dilemma, going back will take years!" Narmer pleaded. "You must help us stay, because we have learned that an incurable plague from an ultra-microscopic organism taken on our planet, Earth. You see, my species had to leave and settle in other places in our solar system. So, you see we have to coexist with you."

But Solon showed again his flare of light, negating Narmer's plea. "It is futile and unrealistic to physically coexist with us. In this realm of existence of space and time, celestial beings tend their own heavenly gardens in order to develop and grow one's conscious awareness. I, Solon, leave you now, for you to contemplate your way back to your heavenly body. Go . . . follow your Sun! If you wish, I can guide you to the way of the cosmic law, but rest assure, I am to tend this heavenly garden without any cosmic infiltration of a rebel neighbor. Solon then vanished from sight.

Tanatha's and Narmer's mouths were wide open as if they were to swallow the universe. Instantaneously, the artificial world inverted to its former state. Tanatha and Narmer returned to their avatar primitive form of half-monkey and half-human. The sun appeared full again above the mountains; its white-yellow rays streamed brightly through the gaps in the clouds.

"You called," the voice of the artificial intelligence echoed inside Tanatha's ears. She breathed a sigh of relief

said to Narmer telepathically, ‘*Madonna!* The emperor’s military loyalty check is getting more and more sophisticated!’ She shook her head bewildered. ‘It is beyond me!’

Narmer said nothing.

‘*Well, it is over. We have to get going immediately. I’ll see you at the metempsychosis transporter.*’ She said telepathically. She then fearfully kissed him on the cheek, and then she vanished when she made a hand motion, indicating to the artificial intelligence to take her back to reality.

For a brief moment, Narmer gazed at the sun, seeing the ridicule he had endured. He wrenched away from the sun, feeling like the penalty of death was imposed on him.

A DYING CANDLE

Narmer could not believe where it ended, that his three hundred and eighty-two years of life was a dismal joke. He found that the native's communication with him was disastrous and unacceptable. He recognized that his own survival was more in jeopardy than he ever thought; as a matter of fact, Homo evolutis himself was in jeopardy. It has become now clear that he had not been dreaming regarding his status of being a completely replica individual. He just could not believe that his life was being snuffed out like a dying candle. By now, it became evident whom to blame: The Solar Empire. For the reason that the native had verified that he was right with his intuition, that his immortality was simply a theory proposed by the state scientific community, rather than a fact. The Empire's Metempsychosis scientific fact were either inaccurate or merely a falsehood to keep people from chaos and despair, and now he was certain it was the latter. He had explained the deception to his wife with much convincing detail, but she, being as she is, was skeptical, due to the lack of scientific evidence.

On the Bridge, among the robots and by the control panel, Narmer sat on the steward's chair pretending to be reviewing the disembarkation formalities and procedures. His heart was heavy as he stared at an overview of Hortus on the screen, which was now more mysterious and more of a crisis. Narmer directed an imperious gaze at the

mauve ocean, embracing the rusty islands. The fright crawled through him like a bunch of brown recluse spiders expecting to feed. For thoughts of his survival of one way or another kept coming back in his mind like echoes in a sealed cave. *Was it really very true or reliable of what the native extraterrestrial life form had told him about himself?* Such revelations were hard to swallow and much harder to digest. His mind moved frantically from one object to another, trying to come to other possible conclusions and therefore not coming to the harsh judgment of himself. However, nothing has harbored the terror of death. Being he had already perceived that he was not the master of his mind, but merely an evolved discouraged replica. *No, I won't give up my life; not when there is so much to live for!* he thought. Then all at once, between his fight and flight response, Narmer took a deep breath and reconsidered the native's judgment of him. *Can that remote thing be seized?* he thought with a spiteful shrug. His troubles were too deep and made him brood over his circumstances that threaten his life; he began to contemplate the difficult problem of a better negotiation process. As he envisioned the outcome of his life, he was quite aware that he had two options: to either trust the Metempsychosis process for his immortal salvation or live his remaining years of his mortal life in dignity. His mind went to how long he would be able to survive under the most terrible age circumstances of one hundred and twenty. He has estimated that after that age of one hundred and thirty-three, the biological aging process would be

painful and rapidly accelerating; at that point, leaving to speculation about how long he would last. He sat grimacing in silence, thinking. His sour blue face looked as if he had just eaten a lime. He waited as several port scanners activated, because he wanted to scrutinize the native's powers and abilities. He was looking for any of the native's weakness that will have him somehow prevail, and he was determined that somehow it would show up.

A few minutes passed when Tanatha rushed through the bridge doors, looking as frightened as a startled rabbit. Even then, instead of accepting the encounter with the extraterrestrial native, she maintained her practiced of denial. "Narmer, have you sent a report to Station Kuiper about our virtual malfunction experience?" She asked like an actress playing a role in someone else's dream of the way life ought to be in the Ark.

Narmer looked at her oddly. "No, I haven't."

"Well, the sooner it is done the better. Obviously, there is still a malfunction going on with the A-gravity field, and it is affecting the Ark's chief custodian operation. Or it is still possible that we are in some serious military tested phase."

Narmer shook his head at her, knowing quite well that she was in denial of their encounter with the native. He suddenly became unresponsive to her presence, and he went on madly involved with the scanning process.

Tanatha sighed, waiting for his response. She then said, "if I were you, I would refrain from reporting this unlikely encounter with an extraterrestrial. Frankly, I still believe it

was a military loyalty check-in by our well-organized emperor."

Narmer's eyes shot a bit wider and bends his face to her face. "How convenient for you to believe that," he blurted the words out as if he wanted to seize her and shake some sense into her. His eyes returned to the scanner, still waiting for data.

Only a moment passed when suddenly Narmer saw some foreign fluctuation on the screen. "I believe I am getting something down there, but the chief custodian is taking its bloody sweet time to process the data—ha, yes, a signal is developing!"

Tanatha narrowed her eyes at him, huffing and puffing out of frustration. "*Madonna mia*, what are you doing?" she whispered. Her eyes momentarily pointed to the robots. "Can't you see the robos' confusion? You must make a report!"

"Not now! I will explain later." He whispered, as he went back to being involved with the scanning.

"But why?"

"I need to scan evidence of the extraterrestrial native existence. Besides, it will take years for the report to reach Station Kuiper. You must understand that it is essential to know how this life form functions and how to go about subjugating it."

"Oh Narmer, you can't be serious! If such an intelligent life form existed, it would have found a way to contact us a long time ago by the probe. Just look how it used MENES. I

still believe this nightmarish experience is the work of the Emperor's military testing."

Narmer narrowed his eyes at his wife, and then voiced a pleading whine, "Why can't you accept the truth?"

Tanatha, with a distraught and inconsolable face, blurted out, "You are frightening me to hell—that's why!" Her silver eyes narrowed back at him, facing him with a stubborn and unconvincing expression on her face. "Apparently, this supposed life form is certainly too incomprehensible to anyone outside itself, for it won't coexist with us. What a great prank! It names itself the Gardener! It even considers itself to be 'the planet'. It makes no sense whatsoever."

Abruptly, Narmer raised his head with a sudden, startled thought. "Isn't MENES probe equipped with both digital and analogue electronics? Mhmm! Come to think of it, all-natural signals are analogue in nature."

Tanatha looked confused.

Narmer eyed her with a positive gleam of feline spite. "By George, that is how it is done—by analogue! That is how that thing is able to reach us—by analogue, utilizing MENES."

"*Madonna*, what are you talking about?"

"I am talking about communication and that I need some kind of an edge to negotiate with it."

She huffed, "You can be so uncooperative sometimes!"

"I have thirty-two more years of life experience left in me, and I am not wasting it! It will be me, not my successor,

that's going to pass on a legacy of truth to the colony. Is that clear?"

"As usual, you make no sense. What truth?" she demanded, leaving her open-mouthed.

"That we are mortals, that is what! This—thing—'Solon' somehow knows the bloody truth. It is aware that we never existed in the past life cycles. Somehow, it is aware that we are just a copy of a copy of someone else's past lives."

Tanatha panted and then sighed, disoriented. "Well, I am not going there with this silliness; you have no proof, just a gut feeling. It is becoming rather clear to me these malfunctions have gotten you all in a frightful dither!" She paused to regain her composure before going on. "*Madonna*, Narmer, would you please get a handle on yourself? The chief custodian is working on repairs right now. Hypothetically, if there really is an intelligent life form, it will say and do anything to help us from what it considers our best interest. An intelligent life form would welcome us—and understand this—I not going back to reliving years of boring life cycles in this box of illusions!"

"Lives?" Narmer scoffed. "Can't you see that Metempsychosis transportation is a myth? A MYTH!" He yelled in a painful manner.

The yelling only made her feel worse about herself and increased her fear. She pleaded, "Please, Narmer, this is not the time for another of your paranoia obsessions—"

But he interrupted her, saying, “Can’t you see your mind is a copy and it is not the original?”

Tanatha turned blankly at him like a poker-faced alien, which was met with a resentful utter, “No-no . . . I don’t want to see!”

He clenched his jaw really tight and then he grit his teeth before shouting, “THEN GO—BE A MINDLESS BLOODY FOOL, LIKE OUR PREDECESSORS!”

Tanatha’s eyes went to the security robot entering the bridge as Narmer’s unbelievable rage built up inside him.

“*Madonna*, stop scrutinizing everything, Narmer!”

“Fine, be a bloody blind fool!” He grit his teeth again before taking a breath. “There’s something I’ve kept from you, and now you need to know about it.”

“I don’t want to know, Narmer, stop scrutinizing everything.”

“No, you’ve got to know that we have not been getting much response from Station Kuiper and I have suspected that—”

“Stop-stop frightening me, Narmer!”

But without hesitation, he went on, “I have reasons to believe the Antigone pathogen has spread out to the colonies of the solar system and the pathogen has also infected the crew of Alexandria.”

“What?”

“I am talking about the possible end of a civilization we left behind two hundred and thirty-three years ago.”

“It is always something with you,” Tanatha mumbled, followed by a grunt.

Narmer sighed in frustration. His mind was racing everywhere and getting nowhere fast; his temper outbursts had become more and more frequent. “WHY CAN’T YOU AGREE WITH ME FOR ONCE?”

Then, suddenly, Narmer heard the monotone male voice of an approaching robot. “Governor Narmer, your vital signs have reached a critical level of concern.”

Narmer shook his head and did not say anything. He kept his gaze on the monitor.

“Medication will ease your discomfort,” a security robo-0115 firmly advised.

Narmer turned to the robot, overshadowed by the affliction of stress. “HELL NO—DON’T DISTURB ME — SHOW ME THE DATA!” he said with a ghastly, paled blue face. Narmer cast his eyes back at the monitor. His head then tilted slightly as he raised his eyebrows at what he saw. “What? There was something showing there!”

“I find no added data detected of the crystalline,” reported the security robot.

“I see that!” Narmer griped, looking at the monitor with the glowing eyes of desperation.

Tanatha lamented, “There’s your answer! The robots have determined that none of our instruments have exposed intelligent life.”

“Affirmative, we have no such records,” reported the robo-0115.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, Narmer dashed up to Tanitha, shouting, “Yes-yes, of course—what was I bloody thinking?” He pondered his next words thoroughly, and then he called out loudly, “Yes, if the communication is not in analogue mode, it does not exist for the chief custodian and the robots!” He straight away touched some icons on the console screen, ordering, “Chief custodian, apply analog-to-digital conversion with the probe, MENES.” He turned to his wife, saying, “This way the master computer will be able to scrutinize that life form down there.”

“The probe, MENES, is a malfunctioned instrument and will stay deactivated.” Said robo-0115.

“REACTIVATE IT!” he shouted, as he sat down in a frenzy.

“Such activation of the malfunctioning instrument is not acceptable by the Solar Empire,” responded robo-0115.

Seeing where it was going, Tanatha tried to stop and calm her husband, “Narmer, listen, will you please accept that facts are facts.”

“What are you bloody talking about?” Narmer interrupted. “MENES is the only instrument with analogue technology. IT MUST BE REACTIVATED!” He shouted again, while tapping the screen trying to re-activate the probe himself. “I’ll show you—!” Then, when Narmer stood up again and attempted to hurry out to the living quarter and to his Regenerative-Therapeutic Torpor Capsule, the security robot suddenly grabbed him and held him for arrest.

“Let go, robo! I must go to the virtual world! The evidence of the native’s existence lies there by the way of the probe.”

“Negative. You are unwell and out of order,” said robo-0610. “Your blood pressure abruptly increased to a severe high of 191/101.”

He shouted on top of his lungs, “I AM ORDERING YOU TO LET ME BLOODY GO!” He then looked at his wife for support, but his wife bit her lip, looking unsure at him.

“Sorry, *mio caro uomo*, we must continue to follow the Empire’s protocol,” Tanatha said, looking more unconvinced at him than ever.

“We’ll die, Tanatha!”

She puffed, “You, of all people—you are jeopardizing our mission.”

“Affirmative,” said robo-0610. “The Solar Empire’s prime directive will not be interrupted. Organisms must be disembarked at the appointed interval.”

A wire-like syringe instrument then came out of the robot’s wrist and suddenly Narmer felt the injection of a clear gaseous vapor into his neck. His silver eyes budged, as a churning darkness came over him. He gave a thrilling moan, as he collapsed in the arms of the robot.



Narmer’s vision was dark and blurry when he opened his eyes. *What—? Where am I? Am I in—death?* He thought, as

he glanced around to find where he was. He was completely disoriented. He felt the sticks and stones of pain from his body reverberating intensely within his skull. Narmer braced himself, his teeth gritted and after a paralyzing moment of shock, his vision somewhat adjusted and gradually he began to focus better.

After some other moment of wonder, he recognized that he was inside a tube in the medical quarters. Narmer was confused because he forgot why he was there and what he was doing there. The reflection from inside the clear tube showed someone else; his face has dramatically changed into a much tighter and stiff face of a teen. His head was now remarkably smaller, possessing a chalky white skin complexion, accompanied by a fine cloud of cotton-like hair.

Suddenly the bed slid out from the tube of the machine where the robot waited to give him a vapor injection for the pain. "Medication will ease your discomfort," firmly said the robo-0369, on the moment of administering.

Standing by Tube [B], Tanatha unconsciously glanced over to the robot, after noticing its tone of voice was a bit lower and slower than usual. Then unconsciously he turned his attention to the green light of the crematory device which signaled the completion of the genetic coded gem.

Narmer still felt paralyzed with painful electric static throughout his elfin body. "How long?" he painfully asked the robot.

“The medication will achieve a peak pleasant effect in 12 to 14 minutes,” answered the robot.

“No-no, dead . . . how long was I dead?”

“Your preceding life form lifeline ended three-days ago. Resuscitation was successful with the metempsychosis transfer procedure.”

Heavy with emotion, the young Narmer gazed up unblinkingly into the robot silver face, while thinking of the void he had felt before being resuscitated back to life, recalling that he was not who he had been created to be: who he represented.

Meanwhile, Tanatha walked over to the bed of Tube [A], obtaining her husband's new genetic coded gem. She lifts the gem to her face, looking at it in a holistic way, thinking, *Oh, how I miss you my son! How I missed our earthly days! I think of you all the time! You are always with me with our virtual family; your smile is everywhere, my love!* She longed for the moments of joy with her son on earth more than she cared to admit. Her virtual family simulation was no match for feeling the full force of the love she desperately craved for. Because the virtual wasn't real; because she missed those real moments of intimacy on earth more than she imagined.

Faced with her husband's new altered body in real life, Tanatha was now a little uncomfortable, but she managed so with such a brightness about her. As she approached her new husband with an embrace of his arrival, a sudden thought of dying struck her suddenly and fiercely. She

puckered her lips, working her mouth nervously, but then she quickly pressed her fingers on her temples, as if ringing in her ears, reasoning, *No! I trust the science given*. She smiled a little, rubbing her temples, reassuring herself. *I am safe! I know that science tells the truth like it is designed to do*. For a moment, she quietly watched him with the robot without interference, adjusting her mind to the suddenness of the revelation of his small, whitish body form. *How strange is it that life changes so quickly—feelings come and feelings go, like a breath of fresh air*. The artificial reality was no match for feeling the full force of the love she desperately craved for, because she missed those moments on earth more than she imagined.

“Look at me, *testa-dura*, I am here — ” She said softly with a false grin and nodded slightly to reassure him all was well.

From his peripheral vision, Narmer frowned at the uneasy expression shown on his wife’s face. Upon the sound of her soft voice, his chin turned to the left side and somewhat forward, with eyes blazing at her; he was seeking for an answer of what happened to him.

She saw him numbed and confused, and said, “The chief custodian’s information given is that apparently you were dying from a spinal infection and that the metempsychosis transfer procedure was imminent.” Then, after a short silence, she turned optimistic, and said, “Look-look,” she gave a big smile, masking her dissatisfaction with a show of pride for him, “I have your new soul gem!”

Narmer stared peculiarly up at the crystallized imprint of his obsolete face, and then at her. He turned his head to the robot and shouted, "Explain!" At those words, while the robot described what occurred, he glanced at the empty bed of Tube [A], and it was then that some memories surfaced, where he understood that a Metempsychosis Transfer had occurred. His face told Tanatha how much the static feeling was bothering him all over his young body.

"*Madonna*, don't panic *mio caro uomo*, you're just having a brain zap. Don't you remember your last Metempsychosis Transfer procedure?"

Unexpectedly, a rush of throbbing pain shot up his feet. "Oh, oh-oh my feet!" he said in a groan, and then answered, "No, I can't really remember."

"Well, there's only so much brain neuron capacity, isn't there?" she questioned, dismissing the memory lapse.

"I feel like someone flicked off a switch and my eyes blacked out for a few seconds." He answered, looking at the robot that was watching in attendance.

Tanatha half-smiled. "Well, I would suppose you would after your fourth metempsychosis transfer procedure," she chuckled. "Let's be pleasant about it, you know I hate gloom and sadness. It will all come back to you in a few hours."

Narmer suddenly rubbed his chest, saying, "This bloody aching feels as if some subatomic string worms are eating away every cell of me." He rubbed down across his miniature muscled torso, looking for relief.

“Due to the genetic absorption of your predecessor’s electromagnetic field, pain is common after a metempsychosis transfer procedure, but you will recover,” said the robot, sluggishly. The robot then explained to him in a standard method of what happened to him as well as the recovery procedure of his new body.

The robot ended by saying, “Diva Tanatha, we await your first phase of the debarkation command.”

Tanatha replied to the robot, “Oh yes, of course Robo 0369, while the Governor is recovering, I will steward and oversee the debarkation process.” She then turned to her new husband, “You rest for now, and in a couple of days you’ll be fully functional.”

Narmer gave Tanatha a vague chagrined look, “A couple of days of this?”

Tanatha grinned, encouraging her husband to relax, “Yes, *mio caro uomo*, this is what we have waited for. For years we’ve spoken about it, dreamed about it—you’ll see, it will all come back to you.” She stressed her words with a deep-down feeling that something was missing—that something was not normal—that she was still stuck in hell. She turned to the robot, “Robo 0369, what percentage is the functioning level of your program?”

“Functioning level at one-hundred percent.”

Tanatha looked at the robot confused. “Then . . . do change your system voice and speech rate back to default level.”

“Affirmative,” the robot responded back with its default voice.

She eased up a bit and behaved like a good, sensible woman, since the robot seemed to be normal again. Moreover, she kept her practice of denial and convinced herself that she was fine and it was just fear playing tricks on her.



Several hours of massive planetary electromagnetic interference has affected another shuttle transportation failure, delaying the embarkation sequence.

Tanatha pouted the delay while sitting at the helm next to the robot. *Oh! What a waisted of time!* she thought, watching on the view screen the planet’s discharges of luminous jets of red-orange sprites and flashes of lightning and flickering flames. They were flashing randomly above the troposphere and striking up through the stratosphere and mesosphere. She hated her position, which had brought her to such a dreadful state. She could not comprehend on what was going wrong with the shuttles, because they were designed to be able to handle such extreme weather. *Why were they returning?* The question weighed in her mind as she watched the robot struggles at controlling the shuttle as it went astray down below the planet’s surface.

She turned at the robot and asked in a discombobulated tone, “Robo 0369, why are we having such difficulty with these shuttles?”

The robot answered, “the vessels . . . are in a . . . protective . . . mode—”

But before Tanatha had a chance to dwell on another question, she suddenly stumbles again on the robot’s slow and erratic respond.

The robot went on saying, “the survival . . . of organisms is . . . of utmost . . . priority.”

“*Madonna*, I hope this planet’s ranging tempest storm ends soon!”



Later, upon the last failed shuttle rides, Tanatha hurried out of the bridge and down through the corridor to go see her husband. She had been so busy that she had not visited him since the first embarkation attempt. Now she was deeply concerned after the third failed attempt. She moved her short legs as fast as she could, for she was deeply worried. She marched through the self-sliding doors of the nursery room, stepping up to the intensive care platform where her replica lay on the bed of Tube [B] for her metempsychosis transporter procedure. On entering the open recovery area, Tanatha was startled to see her husband walking with the aid of a walking frame. He appeared to be lethargic with weakened legs. “What happened—did you fall?”

“Fallen? No, I did not fall!” he responded in a weak voice. His breath was shallow to the point where he looked abnormal and powerless.

“Well, the last time I was here, you have considerably improved. What happened to you?”

“Oh—don’t be concerned, I’ll be all right once I conform to this small-weightless body form.”

“But you should not be experiencing trouble after all the years of simulation training you’ve done.”

“Considerably, we’re in actual reality, and the recovery procedure has been difficult!” He said with a tone of voice emphasizing an undesirable outcome. “Well, I don’t know, that robot over there said that my vital signs are in order.”

Tanatha shook her head and became more worried than before. “But . . . but by now, you should be walking and being yourself again.” Tanatha uttered almost in a whisper. She then softly bit her tongue for divulging her fear.

“Oh Tanitha . . . don’t be concerned, nothing is hurting. I am still feeling all right. It is just this sense of weightlessness, a kind of light headed-surreal feeling that I have to get used to. I don’t know any more — there’s these bloody waves of warmth and coldness going through my entire body.”

She looked at him with pity and surprise. “Well, I need you!” she said nervously. “You got to get better, because we got problems ahead of us and I can’t be doing everything here alone!”

“What do you mean?”

“Haven’t you been following the embarkation procedure on the screen?”

Narmer sat down to his bed, “No, not really.”

His lethargic voice was becoming more and more unsettling; Tanatha looked around for the robot and saw it motionless in the corner. *This shouldn’t be happening? He shouldn’t be like this after a metempsychosis transporter procedure?* She thought. She then turned to the robot, asking, “Robo-0369, what’s wrong with my husband? Why does he have these symptoms?” Tanatha saw that the robot was taking its time to answer because it was unable to compute the question.

After some seconds, the robot answered, “The sensory . . . exam evaluates satisfactory . . . results, therefore the . . . governor is achieving . . . satisfactory . . . recovery.”

Tanatha stood there gazing at the robot with more confusion and became more in denial about everything that was happening. She then moved around to her husband, who was sulking and blinking his eyes because of fatigue, saying, “Narmer, look, this robot is not functioning properly. Don’t you think the cause must be this powerful planet’s electromagnetic interference; something that we have not anticipated?”

Narmer’s face looked clueless of what she just said. The sense of lethargic was too much for him. Tanatha then saw him lying on the bed with a distant and distracted look in his eyes, as if he was about to go into a coma. In response, he somehow smiled sadly and shrugged, trying to convince

himself that everything will be fine. “If I didn’t know better, I’d say it’s your staggering extraterrestrial native who done this to us!” She immediately made sure of herself, trying to make herself think she was stronger and more courageous than before. “DAMN, FINISH THIS ELECTRO MAGNETIC INTERFERENCE!”

“What are you bloody babbling about?” he said in a whisper voice. He started blinking to stay alert, but he was losing the fight to stay awake.

Tanatha rubbed her face, she was completely baffled by his strange behavior. “I am talking about the emperor’s illusion that was put on us in your previous life cycle.”

Narmer’s misty eyes blinked out of sleep and stared blankly at his wife.

“Don’t you remember?” Tanatha saw him falling asleep once more. “What’s wrong with you?” she asked, pleading really hard in a grief-wracked voice; the question was more to herself than to her husband. Her doubted eyes glanced over the doors, walls and ceiling for any indication of what to do in this emergency. Thoughts flowed through her mind for a solution. And then, all of a sudden, an abysmal lifeless void came over Tanatha’s mortal spirit. She understood that the pathogen, Antigone, must be the cause. *Madonna, yes — I think I can remember those times, those faded times.* Her eyes opened wide when she mumbled “Antigone!” *Damn that hellhound disease, I had forgotten the symptoms, and now—it has returned to me once again!* She then thought in horror. *So, it must have been precisely the way it happened to Ark Alexandria.* Tanatha

realized the pathogen must have been present for all these years on the Ark in one or more of the dormant organisms. *But how did this happen, when both of these starships were purposely isolated for this particular infectious disease?* Tanatha felt too numb to search for solutions. Only she knew there was none; and besides it was too late to do anything about stopping Antigone. She peeked over a nearby fuzzy view screen for Hortus and saw the Ark drifting away towards the dark, distant space. She knew right then that with the pathogen on board, all hope of survival was gone. She was aware the pathogen would not take long to infect the innumerable amount of synthetic biological molecules of the Ark and ultimately destroy it all, along with her and her husband.

When Tanatha approached her husband's bed, she sat by his side, watching him sleep with an awkward silence for a respectable amount of time. The emptiness filled the place, as if energy had been drained away from the Ark. After a while, Narmer awakened, looking a great deal weaker than he was earlier. "I am not myself, you know?"

"It is Antigone," responded Tanatha.

"Antigone—what's that?"

"I am talking about the pathogens you have helped create some three centuries ago."

"I don't remember."

"No, you wouldn't."

They both sat in silence for a moment. She watched the robot moving slowly at a snail pace, recognizing it was quite

infected, and then to Narmer, “How foolish, *mio caro uomo*, our bleak life is like an eclipse.”

Narmer’s lips quirked to one side, and in an amiable worried expression, he slowly opened his eyes to her. Narmer whispered with a prideful glimmer in his eyes, “goddamn this forsaken universe and everything in it . . . but you . . . woman . . .!” His eyes then continued, staring open and straight at her. His breath was long, almost stagnant, and after a minute, he was stiff and dead.

The impact of seeing death right before her eyes felt like stepping on a serpent. She shivered as a tremor of horror ran down her spine. *O Dio mio, he is really, really gone!* She then shot up to her feet, taking no notice of the slight arthritic-like symptom throbbing in the joints of her feet. The throbbing became clear to her after a few steps, when her feet started to be sore. She then stoops down to rub her small delicate feet with her hands, and she also wiggled them, trying to get the circulation going, but her feet remained uncomfortable. *I have it too!* As she said those words, her thinking became distorted and irrational, swirling like a whirlwind. She continued rubbing her feet after completely realizing what had just happened. She then bit her lip; her eyes sought the room as her mind raced searching for an acceptable answer. And when she turned to look at Narmer again, his dead expression was somehow something that momentarily stopped her hysteria. *O Madonna mia—he has been right all along! I am only a replica.* She froze in horror of the thought. She could feel and hear her

heart pounding like a gong, vibrating and resonating over and over. Her mouth became much drier with every sound she uttered as if she has just swallowed a fly. In the end, a sort of emotional numbness took her completely over, which made her feel like nothing was real anymore, and right away she stopped seeing the man as her husband. *I can remember now—this is what happens with Antigone; it starts in the feet, and it crawls upwards to the spine and into the memory cells of the immune system, slowing down the body and ending life.* A second came about when the soreness was becoming rather bothersome; she then turned around toward the pharmacy section and asked the robot, “Robo-0369, my feet and ankles are feeling awful—I require medication!” Then she saw that the robot was moving in a strange way as if a slowly moving train was trying to gather momentum.

“Affirmative . . .” said the robot and cooperatively extended its mechanical arm to grab the specified medication.

When Tanatha realized what was happening to the awkward maneuver of the robot, she burst into tears of fear and started thinking about the native. *That life form is real, and it can help me; it said so it would! But, I have to hurry before it's too late!* She thought, as she wiped the tears from her cheeks and eyes. At that moment, she then approached the robot, which then administered a dose of medicine to her right arm; she wiped more tears from her eyes. For a moment, she struggled to regain her composure; though unsuccessful, she was able to shut-off from her mind the

memory of what was her husband's death, and as well as the sham past lives she had with him. She was now quite convinced she was not the person she pretended to be. She was merely a replica. On that thought, she attempted to run out the room, but her feet felt chained with soreness. She suddenly turned with a mournful look over to her replica inside Tube [B]. Her masterpiece appeared to be peacefully sleeping, like an enchanted princess, awaiting her destiny as a queen. Tanatha closed her eyes and cried out to the universe, "O *MADONNA MIA*, LET THERE BE A WAY? WHAT AM I TO DO?" Some more tears rushed out of the corner of her eyes, as her bosoms rose and fell with shaky breaths. Then, inside her heart, when her emptiness had won, Tanatha turned to the robot as if questioning herself. She saw her reflection on the robot's armored chest and suddenly thought of her life, questioning, *whom am I . . . what am I? Am I nothing but a passing shadow?* Her thoughts ran further, *what if my life was simply a materialistically created illusion of everything for my own benefit? Then, what greater good have I done?* She stood there like a stone statue, silent and numb, as she wondered at such a thought. And when she gave in, letting the dark void consume her, right away, from nowhere, a caring feeling came over her like a warm blanket on a cold winter's night, and her heart softens with a moment of unified peace. The love she suddenly felt was unconditional and eternal; it was a similar feeling she has for her son, but deeper, and right

then and there, she knew all would be all right. *I have time to do what I must do, but I must hurry*, she thought.

When she tipped her face back to look at her masterpiece, the sound of breathing now came on, deep and controllable, and a tranquil adrenaline suddenly surged in through her veins feeling weightless and energized. If she was to end, then giving birth to her beautiful creation was all that mattered. She slowly stepped off the platform with light and gentle movements. She gave her last glance at some of the eight hundred and eight-eight Homo evolutis receptacles, as she paced her way through the doors and through the corridor, feeling every bit if it was miles away. As she walked, she could feel the medication taking effect with the soreness slowly dissipating.

In her living quarters, she hurried as her thoughts wandered over the native's words of guidance, knowing the native life form did not want her to suffer, nor injure her. *This Solon—yes—it may know a way to stop this pathogen from spreading any further.* She moved faster to reach the regenerative-therapeutic torpor system. She glazed over to her servant robot and saw the room's technology and features were still in operation, and she exhaled a relieved sigh. Tanatha then aggressively called out, "Robo-0333 prepare me for the virtual world!"

"Complying." The robot metabolized fingers touch on the control panel, and as the capsule opened the robot helped her walk to the capsule. She entered inside like a starved lioness.



Finding herself in a virtual courtyard of her Roman villa, the springy turf under her feet felt like silk. Tanatha noted that the sunset had obscured the ancient Greco-Roman statues and sculptures to a dusk illumination. She briskly looked around the courtyard, and she stopped when she made out a boy's soft shadow flickering on a north-facing wall from the luminosity of the stone fireplace.

'Mamma . . .!' he telepathically called to her in Italian, as he was caring for the sanguine color roses climbing a wooden trellis archway of the courtyard.

Tanatha turned to look as she mentally heard the nine-year-old boy calling again.

'Mamma . . .!'

She hurried over to him, then wrapped her arms around his neck and quickly kissed him on the forehead.

'Look Mamma at our roses, they look durable, brilliant red and strong, but they have lost its fragrance. He sniffed and smelled showing off his care for the plant. 'What do you think is happening?'

Tanatha looked at her son as if it was the last time she would see him, because she knew with a heavy heart that she will never see him again. '*Sweetheart, don't be concerned right now about the roses. Hold me tight, and tell me that tomorrow everything is going to be better, even if it is not.*' The thought of not being there for him was too overwhelming. She pressed

her lips together, unable to say telepathically more, as the boy embraced her tightly, like a son's love for his mother.

Naenio softly pulled away to look at his mother with his cobalt blue eyes, and gave her a sheepish grin, telepathically saying, *'Don't worry Mamma, Papa will be back really soon with us, I don't know when, but my heart tells me he will.'* He cleared his throat and looked downward at her bare feet. *'Anyway, this is what I wish for us—to be a family again.'*

'But of course, you do! You're a good boy!' Tanatha said telepathically. She looked at him apologetically, professing he was real and alive in every way. Her mind pondered over her virtual life experiences and how life would have been if the circumstances were different: if only she was not entangled in the treacherous web that led to Narmer's death, she would have lived in a real world. By now, Tanatha came to terms with the fact that the artificial world was her life, an environment which had been tightly controlled by her, that she has no choice but to accept that this was her only life and her only death. *'Sweetheart, listen, I am going away and I want to tell you how much I love you.'*

The confused boy looked her, telepathically saying, *'But, it will be dark before long! Where were you thinking of going?'*

Tanatha went on saying. *'Oh, hush now! Sweetheart hush . . . I want to tell you that I think of you always, that I've ever loved anybody like I love you.'*

'I love you too, Mamma!'

Tears welled up in her eyes once more as she leaned forward to kiss his boyish lips. ‘Yes, sweetheart, you’ve loved me—so nobly, so unconditionally—but that was in another time, in another place, in another life with another woman.’

‘What are you saying?’ The boy said, looking at her strangely.

With a short pause, she raised a dismissive eyebrow and telepathically said, ‘Oh, *nothing* — *nothing at all*.’

The boy was quite confused. ‘But . . . where are you going?’

‘I don’t know, Naenio . . . I have no idea where I am going.’ She paused, thinking for a moment before coming to a decision. ‘I am here alone in a mysterious world! Apparently, I have always been alone, and I will always be alone. You see, Sweetheart, I am dying and there is nothing to do but to care for the things that matter.’ The boy’s face kept showing wonder and confusion as she went on, ‘I have no choice but to trust the native will accept my offer.’

The boy stood still and quiet, behaving as if nothing had happened. Tanatha then boldly turned her head to the cream-colored moon that showed above the rose trellis archway and called out sobbing for the native. ‘*Do you hear me, Solon . . . !*’ Tanatha glanced around, waiting, before calling out again. ‘*I am aware you have been observing me closely, haven’t you, Solon?*’ And when she turned to look at her son, he vanished as if being awakened from a dream. She continued sobbing her heart out when the familiar floating sensation came upon her. At the same time, everything in

the artificial reality immediately became devoid of colors and details. ‘*Solon—!*’ she called again, as sprinkles of colors silently grouped together, “—Solon!” She looked up at it, waiting for the intangible substance to come to life.

The unimaginable colors of light formed firmly, swirled, and churned in front of her, saying, “I, Solon, am aware of your plight, caused by your transgression of cosmic law.”

By now, Tanatha had completely lost her fears as well as her joys. She spoke diplomatically with devotion, her hands folded in reverence. “You have told me that you wish me harmony, that you want to guide me to my destiny.”

‘Agreed, for the sake of your celestial being. However, you, a fabrication, are soon bound to come to an end.’

‘You are the Gardener of your own life, aren’t you?’

‘I am the Gardener of this heavenly garden.’

‘Solon, have to be grateful for all the higher creatures who have protected you, guided you to your destiny.’

‘Yes, I am grateful. However, I believe you are not a natural creation of the cosmos. I have informed you that you are the product of the celestial being you refer to as *Homo sapiens*.’

‘But why such belief? Why do you accept something as true when you might not have all the correct information? Are you sure?’

‘I am not accountable for you or your Gardener!’

‘I see it differently, Solon. I now have come to believe there is a reason for our meeting. I’m sure there is a higher

purpose from the cosmic perspective in all of this, since I'm not from Earth.'

'Unacceptable, you come from this . . . this Earth!' Solon replied. Then, a sense of Tanatha's sincerity came into his mind.

'I am afraid not, since I am a replica that was born here on your own pathway of your garden, where I will surely die.'

Solon was silent for a moment before saying, 'will you elaborate on your logic.'

'I believe you are aware, Solon, that we both have a purpose to fulfill here in your garden. You, as a gardener, have a unique divine gift of energy that you are meant to share with the universe.' Solon's mood of colors softened as Tanatha went on, 'look at me, I am of energy like yourself, and like yourself, I am an individual with a conscious.'

'But you are a fabrication?'

'Likewise, I am still my own being given by consciousness as you are, aren't I?'

Solon did not respond.

'Tell me then, Solon, how can you go on demeaning me by conceiving that I am simply a fabrication; how can you conceive such a thing when my consciousness is energy and energy is everything seen and unseen?'

Solon momentarily reflected on the feeling of what existence could be, and then said, "I have never met such a physical form of life as you. Perhaps you are an exception

to cosmic law. Perhaps I should emphasize your individuality.”

‘You have said that you would help me, would you?’

‘Agreed. But you are bound to come to an end, and I do not have the ability to stop your species’ abnormal condition that you call ‘Antigone’.

‘Yes—I do understand. But I am not here for myself; I am here because I have an offering to make to you.’

‘What is this offering?’

‘My replacement, so far she hasn’t been infected, and she has been well trained to survive in your garden. I am offering her to be assimilated with you in your garden.’

‘Unacceptable! The ALL~mighty has bestowed me to tend my own heavenly garden in order to elevate my consciousness in my spiritual journey.’

‘What—a god?’

‘I am not familiar of what you call, a god; I only know the unknowable Creator of the cosmos.’

Tanatha became impressed with the native’s response, and said, ‘why, of course, the Creator who cares for all! And you honor it by your caring role.’

‘Agreed.’

Tanatha gave a nod of approval and said, ‘as you are aware, my garden, my species and my life’s pending extinction is about to happen. I implore you to not let the sum of human wisdom just vanish into nothingness. Besides, you would do well with my replacement. In her span of life, she will inspire and raise your consciousness in

your spiritual journey: just think about the wisdom of our species she would share with you and — ‘

Solon interrupted, ‘Why do you persist?’

Tanatha held her head high and said firmly in a raised voice, ‘Because I am what I am and at my end even for me, caring is all that matters.’

‘Your persistence is effective. I will agree, because the Creator has bestowed me the practice of caring.’

‘Will you trust me, Solon? My replacement will be as I am, and the seeds of wisdom from my garden-earth will be a good addition for you and for your heavenly garden.’

The conclusion came to Solon with the recollection of particular life experiences occurring during its early evolution as a gardener. Much-needed guidance came along the way at just the right time by the caring creatures of the cosmos. ‘So, may it be, I will take and nurture this replica creature. Have her in my garden with one of your transporter.’

Tanatha felt a rush of profound relief. The despair she was feeling turned right into a complete sense of purpose.

She was about to show her gratitude with a shaky smile when the native instantly vanished. The virtual scene rearranged back into the way it was before, and Tanatha was instantly transformed back to the Italian woman in a Roman villa. Tanatha then looked around for Naenio to kiss him once more goodbye, but the room was empty and utterly silent. She wanted to see him one more time. The love for her imaginary son tormented her. She looked

around for the last time, desperately looking. In her mind, unreal things were real things, and her fantasy life was as real as real it could be, and her love and caring for her son was immortal. The torment of leaving him for the last time was the most difficult thing she has to do. Yet, she stayed focused on her priority of getting back to her masterpiece. Her thoughts then moved quickly to the artificial intelligence, *'chief custodian, end this program.'*



Immediately upon finding herself in the capsule, Tanatha rushed out of it, staggering on her first steps with both swollen, red, and aching feet. She suddenly uttered a terrifying shrill as she was about to fall on the floor. Quickly, she grasped on one of the metallic arm of robot-0333 standing by the control console and then managed to stop the falling. *Oh Madonna, I am getting worse!* She thought, as she quickly twirled in circles one foot at the time trying to erase the throbbing pain. Time suddenly felt still to her, when she realized that time was running out. The robot's slow irregular movement at attempting to help her was also an indication that the pathogen was spreading faster than she had anticipated. At once, Tanatha faced the robot and order, "Robo 0333 carry me to the Nursery Room, I must get there fast." Hoping that the robot would be faster than she.

“Affirmative,” said the robot, but in a distorted slow-motion voice. The robot proceeded by picking her up in its arms and walked in a moderate pace towards the door.

Halfway down through the corridor, the robot was becoming more irregular and slower as if its power was running out of it. When Tanatha realized the robot was dying out, she quickly ordered, “Robo-0333, put me down—let me go!” When she saw the robot was being uncooperative and unwilling to release her, Tanatha took control by pushing and pulling herself away from the robot’s arms and onto the floor. Confounded, she stopped and gazed at the robot, who was standing in her way, becoming stiff, trying to clumsily move around. She stooped, aware of the terrible blunder she had made at being carried off by an infected machine. By now, Tanatha was deadly pale, and she was much weaker than before. Scared for time, she took a deep breath and slowly stood up, bearing the pain that can neither be avoided nor abolished. She then firmly eyed the nursery room doors and hurried by walking on the balls of her feet, as if making as little noise as possible. She kept her walks on tiptoes, endured the sharp, searing pain that was now echoing up her legs.

When she stepped into the Recovery Room, she quickly limped her way to the metempsychosis machinery using the medical cabin and table for assistant. The realization of her death came once more as she faced her masterpiece. She stood for a moment, glancing over with a solemn face at her

masterpiece inside the clear tube. She paused a second and wondered if her brief existence had any meaning. *No—it's an ending of a perfect morbid conclusion of my time, which I can never recapture. Of death: I guess that you either go on existing in some way, or obviously, nothing ever happened.* She ended the thought with a whisper to the replica: “let our wisdom triumph and be your guide, my dear angel—so be it.”

After, she limped over to the control console and touched some icons on the desktop to enable the machine to work automatically and stable. She then set the timer on the screen to five minutes. She continued on, touching some other icons, and she quickly held her finger down on the shuttle's icon, to start the computer take-over of the shuttle's launch sequence. *Oh good . . . the shuttle's dock area is not yet infected! She's got time!* She thought, as she hurried to the transporter.

Subsequently, as she lay inside Tube [A] of the Metempsychosis Transporter, Tanatha took her last look at the contaminated room. The robots in the room were barely moving and now the Ark's artificial intelligence itself was beginning to show malfunction signs. She turned her head and took her last look at her masterpiece laying in Tube [B] with a humble smirk; and then her eyes went to the screen and she was able to watch the Ark itself moving farther away from Hortus. She closes her eyes as she felt the beam of light hit her body, trickling up all around her. At first, her skin felt tight, then too tight, as if an enormous python had coiled her body and ready to consume her.

Within a second, her body warmed up and felt strangely soft. Tanatha didn't move. She kept her gaze on the light. And in that moment, while dignity blossomed inside her, while humility shone in her face, radiant like the setting sun, while the trembling echoes of her thoughts diminished into a thin air of blackness: *O Dio, Madonna mia—mercy . . .!*

EPILOGUE

After a quantity of astrological age had passed, after the great terrestrial floods of the new ice age had gradually subsided and the climate had warmed up, a new evolutionary development had taken place in the era of Virgo. The family of our solar system were now orbiting slightly away from our sun; being that our dwarf star was slightly larger than before: due to its continuation of converting hydrogen into helium.

Through the foliage-filled canyon of extinct volcanoes in an area of the earth once called Tasmania, the night has been longer and much sinister than ever before. The wintry days were usually cloudy and of the wettest and the coolest of times, and the lack of light has caused plant food scarcity for the vegans.

Under the most easily seen constellations of Orion, Canis Major and Virgo, in an area of the canyon, there was a small tribe of hominids cave dwellers scattered about outside their stalactite caves, gazing beyond the sparse, scattered dark clouds. Some of these dwellers were on branches of trees and others were standing on rocks or by a stone wall.

They gazed tensely at the stars, feeling the yearning for familiar star patterns, which they believed to be their ancient ancestors. Believing that in the deaths of their ancestors, their souls, like a form of fire, became the host deities of heaven. And so, they observed, tracing the star

motifs out and over the dark and boundless horizon of the east side with angry and fearful moans.

The older male hominid bravely jumped out of the dry branch of a tree; his left eye wrinkled as he claps his chest in dismay. He was followed by others in their proper order of rank, in their fearful belief that being so long in darkness, the god of wrath was winning over their god of fire: the Sun. For they feared the fire-god would die and descend into the underworld and never to be seen again.

With no knowledge of making fire, the hominids solely lived with their fire god as scavengers among the new species of predators. After all, the sun was the main source that brought them vision, warmth and security. Even though throughout their lives, this tribe had witnessed the chaotic battles of the luminosity of the day and the darkness of the night, their fire god had never rotated so far in their view or the lowest point in the sky. Now, from their perspective of northern atmosphere point, each sunrise and sunset looked still, smaller, scarcer and appeared to be moving much farther into the underworld. The days became shorter as a result of this phenomenon. Even in high noon, as bleak as it was, they saw the lunar light had darkened and their fire god no longer shone his light. The clouds, once white and kind, were now full of rain and for quite some time they had emptied themselves on them. Furthermore, they believed some of the host deities of heaven, twinkling brightly as well during the dusky day, had purely manifested itself for the sole judgment of their lives.

To the hominids, this for sure meant the dying of their fire god.

Among the shivers and the gnashing of teeth, the female oracle kept silent. She sat alone with her tail wrapped on a branch of a pepper berry tree, with her arms crossed on her knees and her hairy face pointing slightly upwards in the darkness of the eastern sky: waiting. She braced her arms against her body as she resisted the flow downstream of an extremely cold breeze that pierced her thick-haired skin, which covered her like a cloak.

The Oracle happened to be the oldest and the wisest of her tribe and the only one left to have seen the earth's rotation period go this far. In her early days, she remembered seeing with her mother the same exact phenomenon, but in a clearer and dryer sky. She now wondered if the same star patterns would emerge, hoping these host deities would be able to again free the fire god from the grips of darkness.

As the year's longest night passed, from her field of view, the Oracle looked on sternly at the eastern and then at the western horizon. She was concerned over her tribe growing more and more alarmed with the belief that their fire god would never return to rise into the sky to light up their world. She paid heed that their chest beatings and shouting were no longer of anger, but of grief, yearning and despair. Despite her reassurance, her tribe was feeling totally confused and empty with the belief that they as well as with their fire god would forever be bound to the underworld.

The Oracle puckered her mouth at their fear, as if there was a foul aroma. Her boldness gradually waned as the long nights became something even she couldn't help but dread. As she waited, she kept the thought that she was almost certain that the natural phenomenon that she was witnessing was of good and not of doom. For her mother thought her to have faith that the host deities' that she was tracking would give in to the way of new life to their fire god.

The sunsets and sunrises had been different and the Oracle had kept her observation of the horizon for the brightest star of the night: Sirius. This star was aligned with three other stars in the Orion belt, and she was fully aware that these virtuous host deities would indicate where their fire god would rise if it were to be resurrected; trusting that the god of fire would return to the north.

Soon after, from the clouds of darkness clearance, after the constellations as we know as Centaurus and the Crux were visible from the underworld, the Oracle all at once scrambled down from the tree. She held her walking stick from the ground and ran straight to the top of a sizeable rock. And as she stared deep into the horizon, after some time, when she was able to read the answer in the glittering virtuous deities. When she was sure that such a celestial condition would arise the fire god, the Oracle raised her stick, longing for the new day, and then she began to sound out a kind of 'kukuriku' call to her god. The tribe followed

as they huddled around her, comforting one another by imitating the boastful calls to their divine god.

Through the hour, the calling became louder and more boastful upon the familiar rising point of the brightest star of the night. Some easiness came over some of them when striking streaks of red-orange colors appears over the horizon, which seemed to be burning in the darkness away from some of the dark clouds.

The Oracle along with his tribe, maintained the calling until the sun appeared fully from the underworld, under the vicinity of the Crux constellation. The oracle then waved her stick to everyone for silence because the moment of truth had come.

Moment after moment . . . the moments of silence were as if time stood still. It came after some passing minutes that the Oracle was able to verify that their sun god had moved toward the North, while the Crux constellation was setting into the underworld.

It was then that the Oracle cheerfully gave her last ‘kukuriku’ call. From the rock that she was standing on, she dropped to the ground and bowed her apish head against the ground in gratitude. The tribe followed along with her action: The crisis was over. They cheerfully understood that from hence forth, their mighty fire god would be moving each day a bit norther, foreshadowing longer and warmer days.

As fatigue from anxiety as they were, the tribe called out in triumph.

The Oracle pensively puckered her mouth, then she raised her head towards the god of fire, while an overwhelming feeling of unconditional love awakens her a flicker of soul. The consolation of her spirit filled her heart with new insights, prompting her to shout the name: “Hawah . . .!”

GLOSSARY

A

Abraam (Avraham) meaning High Father, father of a multitude, many nations.

Alban Hills are the caldera remains of a quiescent volcanic complex in Italy, located 20 km southeast of Rome and about 24 km north of Anzio.

ALL~mighty. the creator of all things.

Alpha Centauri is the closest star system to our Solar system Solar at a distance of 4.37 light years. It consists of three stars: the pair Alpha Centauri A and Alpha Centauri B and a small and faint red dwarf, Proxima Centauri, that may be gravitationally bound to the other two. Alpha Centauri is over 4 light-years away and that's 25 trillion miles. And the problem is, space travel as we know it is slow. If [humanity's fastest-moving spacecraft] Voyager had left our planet when humans first left Africa, traveling at 11 miles a second, it would be arriving at Alpha Centauri just about now.

Amniotic sac the fluid-filled sac that contains and protects a fetus in the womb.

Analog Computers are used to process analog data. Analog data is of continuous nature and which is not discrete or separate. Such type of data includes temperature, pressure, speed weight, voltage, depth etc. These quantities are continuous and having an infinite variety of values

Antigone Derived from Greek meaning "against, compared to, like" and meaning "birth, offspring". In Greek legend Antigone was the daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta. King Creon of Thebes declared that her slain brother Polynices was to remain unburied, a great dishonor. She disobeyed and gave him a proper burial, and for this she was sealed alive in a cave.

Aristocles Palto was born 428/427 BCE, is real name supposedly was Aristocles, son of Ariston.

Aquarius is the sixth sign in Astrology zodiac signs.

Astrobiologists the scientific study of the possible origin, distribution, evolution, and future of life in the universe, including earth, using a biology, chemistry, and astronomy.

Astrological Ages are based on the precession of the equinoxes and the backwards wobble of the earth's axis through the constellations, which lie in a circle around the earth along the ecliptic, the belt of the equator. Ages are measured by the wobble of the earth's axis as the North Pole points down towards and marks each age or constellation in succession. This wobble takes 25,920 years to complete, and in one complete cycle there are twelve ages of 2,160 years each. Currently, that marker points to the constellation Pisces, and we are said to be in the 'Age of Pisces'. These ages flow backward through the astrological signs as the earth's axis wobbles in a backward direction through the zodiac.

Arrivederci means in Italian, until we see each other again.

Anti-gravity (also known as non-gravitational field) is creating a place or object that is free from the force of gravity.

Avatar is an icon or figure representing a particular person in computer games, Internet forums, etc.

B

Biosynthetic Polymers are combinations of synthetic or man-made polymers and biopolymers, or those based on natural polymers produced by living organisms. Polymer is a large molecule, or macromolecule, composed of many-repeated subunits? Because of their broad range of properties, both synthetic and natural polymers play an essential and ubiquitous role in everyday life.

Biotechnology the exploitation of biological processes for industrial and other purposes, especially the genetic manipulation of microorganisms for the production of antibiotics, hormones, etc.

C

Carbon based is a key component of all known life on earth. Complex molecules are made up of carbon bonded with other elements, especially oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen, and carbon can bond with all of these because of its four valence electrons. Carbon is abundant on Earth.

Caro uomo means in Italian, the phrase, “dear man”.
Celestial body is a positioned in or relating to the sky, or outer space as observed in astronomy: *a celestial body*.

Cin-cin is an Italian toast, which I believe means the equivalent of “to your health”.

Charobim, Chafik is a well-known impressionist and naturalist Egyptian artist who painted the “Peaceful and Tranquil Egypt of the last Century”.

Cynosis is the bluish or purplish discoloration of the skin or mucous membranes due to the tissues near the skin surface having low oxygen saturation.

Corporeal is relating to a person's body, especially as opposed to their spirit.

Corporal life of flesh and bones, of tangible or physical life source, of the human body; bodily.

Cosmic Law is a certain procedure in Nature which all things and beings are bound to follow.

Crystalline is a structure and form of a crystal; composed of crystals.

D

Dark matter halo is a basic unit of cosmological structure. The formation of dark matter halos is believed to have played a major role in the early formation of galaxies.

Diva is It is derived from the Italian noun *diva*, a female divine creature. ... The basic sense of the term is goddess, the feminine of the Latin word *divus*, someone deified after death, or Latin *deus*, a god. Divine Creature or a Celestial being, a being in a divine status, created by the creator, God.

Digital Computer as its name implies, works with digits to represent numerals, letters or other special symbols. Digital Computers operate on inputs that are ON-OFF type and its output is also in the form of ON-OFF signal. Normally, an ON is represented by a 1 and an OFF is represented by a 0. So, we can say that digital computers process information which is based on the presence or the absence of an electrical charge or we prefer to say a binary 1 or 0.

Dimensional worlds or multiverse is the hypothetical set of finite and infinite possible universes, including the universe in which we live.

DNA or deoxyribonucleic acid is the hereditary material in humans and almost all other organisms.

E

Ecosystem is a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

Electromagnetic is relating to the interrelation of electric currents or fields and magnetic fields.

Embryonic is an animal in its earliest stage of development, before all the major body structures are represented. In humans, the embryonic stage lasts through the first eight weeks of pregnancy.

Emotional disintegration is evidenced by profound helplessness and self-pity.

Enlightenment means Our Path to God: finding God in the quest for spiritual enlightenment, the meaning of life, and inner peace.

Entomology is the branch of zoology concerned with the study of insects.

Eris is a distant dwarf planet about the size of Pluto in the Kuiper belt.

Eon an indefinitely long period of time: age.

F

Ficus a tree, shrub, or climbing plant of a large genus that includes the figs and the rubber plant.

Frankenstein or, The Modern Prometheus is a novel written by English author Mary Shelley (1797– 1851) that tells the story of Victor Frankenstein, a young scientist who creates a hideous sapient creature in an unorthodox scientific experiment.

G

Galileo Galilei was an Italian polymath: astronomer, physicist, engineer, philosopher, and mathematician, he played a major role in the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century.

Galactic cosmic rays are a form of high-energy radiation, mainly originating outside our Solar System and even from distant galaxies. The health threats from cosmic rays is the danger posed by galactic cosmic rays.

Genetic codes is the set of rules by which information encoded in genetic material (DNA or RNA sequences)

is translated into proteins (amino acid sequences) by living cells.

Genyornis was a large, flightless bird that lived in Australia until 50 thousand years ago.

Goldfinches is a European goldfinch or goldfinch is a small passerine bird in the finch family that is native to Europe, North Africa and western Asia. It has been introduced to other areas including Australia, New Zealand and Uruguay. Because of the thistle seeds it eats, in Christian symbolism the goldfinch is associated with Christ's Passion and his crown of thorns. Because it symbolizes the Passion, the goldfinch is considered a "savior" bird and may be pictured with the common fly (which represents sin and disease).

H

HAWAH translated means "to be" or "I am that I am".

Hamlet William Shakespeare play is set in Denmark and follows the prince Hamlet, who seeks revenge upon his uncle Claudius. Claudius murdered his brother, Hamlet's father, in order to seize the throne and also married his wife and hamlet's mother Gertrude.

Heavenly Bodies a planet, star, or other celestial body.

Heavenly Garden the planet and its ecosystem.

Heehawed rude laughter. The braying sound made by a donkey.

Hemp the fiber of the cannabis plant, extracted from the stem and used to make rope, strong fabrics, fiberboard, and paper.

Hologram a three-dimensional image formed by the interference of light beams from a laser or other coherent light source.

Hominid is any of the modern or extinct bipedal primates of the family Hominidae, including all species of the genera Homo and Australopithecus. *Homo* is the human genus, which also includes species of hominid: Homo sapiens.

Homo Evolutis is a new hominid species that may emerge from biotechnology that will be able to regenerate themselves indefinitely.

Homo sapiens is the specific name of modern man; the only extant species of the genus Homo.

Humanoid (especially in science fiction) is a being resembling a human in its shape.

Hybrid computer is a combination of digital and analog computers. It combines the best features of both types of computers. It has the speed of analog computer and the memory and accuracy of digital computer.

I

Incorporeal is not composed of matter; having no material existence.

Inner sanctum a private or secret place to which few other people are admitted.

Ionosphere is the layer of the atmosphere that contains a high concentration of ions and free electrons and is able to reflect radio waves.

J

Jaundice is a yellow coloring of the skin or eyes caused by too much bilirubin in the body. Jaundice can happen for many reasons.

K

Lake Karoun or Lake Qaraoun located Cairo in the Egyptian, not far from the Nile Valley. It is one of Egypt's most treasured natural landmarks and a resource that has helped support human culture for some 8,000 years.

Kuiper is a disc-shaped region of icy bodies - including dwarf planets such a Pluto - and comets beyond the orbit of Neptune.

L

LIGO is the world's largest gravitational wave observatory and a marvel of precision engineering. Linear time is a concept where by time is seen sequentially, as a series of events that are leading toward something: beginning, and an end.

Lovey used as an affectionate form of address.

M

Microbiology is the branch of science that deals with microorganisms.

Mio caro uomo or caro uomo means in Italian, the phrase, "My dear man or dear man".

Madonna or *Madonna mia* means in Italian, the phrase “oh my god” or specifically, “my Mary”.

Microorganisms is a microscopic organism, especially a bacterium, virus, or fungus.

Magnetic field is the magnetic effect of electric currents and magnetic materials. The magnetic field at any given point is specified by both a direction and a magnitude (or strength); as such it is a vector field.

Magnetosphere is the region of space surrounding an astronomical object in which charged particles are controlled by that object's magnetic field.

Metempsychosis is the supposed transmigration at death of the soul of a human being or animal into a new body of the same or a different species.

Minestrone is a thick soup of Italian origin made with vegetables, often with the addition of pasta or rice.
Museum Vrolik a curious collection dedicated to human and animal morbid, anatomical mutations from the Department of Anatomy and Embryology of the University of Amsterdam, founded by Gerardus Vrolik.

Mythology is a collection of myths, especially one belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition.

N

Narmer was an ancient Egyptian king of early Dynastic Period, circa 3100-3050 BC. He probably was the successor to the Protodynastic king Ka, or

possibly Scorpion. Some consider him the unifier of Egypt and founder of the First Dynasty, and in turn the first King of a unified Egypt. While *Menes* is traditionally considered the first king of ancient Egypt, Narmer has been identified by the majority of Egyptologists as the same person as *Menes*.

Nucleic acids which include DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) and RNA (ribonucleic acid), are made from monomers known as nucleotides. Each nucleotide has three components: a 5-carbon sugar, a phosphate group, and a nitrogenous base. If the sugar is deoxyribose, the polymer is DNA.

O

O Dio mio Italian for 'Oh my God'.

Olympus Mons is a very large shield volcano on the planet Mars. The volcano has a height of nearly 22 km (13.6 mi or 72,000 ft).

P

Paleoecology is the ecology of fossil animals and plants.

Paleolithic period or Old Stone Age, spanned from around 30,000 BCE until 10,000 BCE and produced the first accomplishments in human creativity.

Panini is a grilled sandwich made from bread other than sliced bread.

Paramour a lover, especially the illicit partner of a married person.

Pazzo un pazzo: meaning crazy in Italian.

Pecorino Romano is a hard, hearty sheep's milk cheese, aged for about 8 months, sharp in flavor.

Pisces is the twelfth sign of the zodiac, symbolized by the Fish.

Preternatural means beyond what is normal or natural.

Prosciutto is an Italian dry-cured ham that is usually thinly sliced and served uncooked.

Prosecco an Italian white wine. Prosecco DOC can be Spumante ("sparkling wine").

Q

Quantum Mind It posits that quantum mechanics phenomena such as quantum entanglement and superposition, may play an important part in the brain's function and could form the basis for explanation of consciousness. In the quantum universe, once our physical bodies die, there is an infinite beyond.

Quantum physics also known as quantum mechanics or quantum theory, including quantum field theory, is a fundamental branch of physics concerned with processes involving, for example, atoms and photons. Atoms, electrons, light waves, none of these things followed the normal rules. As physicists like Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein began to study particles, they discovered new physics laws that were downright quirky. These were the laws of quantum mechanics.

Quintilla (poetry) A poem of five lines with eight syllables or less.

R

Regenerative-therapeutic torpor system: a hibernation-like state.

RNA or ribonucleic acid, is a nucleic acid present in all living cells. Its principal role is to act as a messenger carrying instructions from DNA for controlling the synthesis of proteins, although in some viruses' RNA rather than DNA carries the genetic information.

Roma translated Rome, Italy.

Robo a name for a robot with an added number.

S

Sapienza Università di Roma The Sapienza University of Rome also called simply Sapienza or the "University of Rome" is a collegiate research university located in Rome, Italy.

Servitude the state of being a slave or completely subject to someone more powerful.

Silicone based All known life on Earth is built upon carbon-based compounds. But there is a possibility that life elsewhere may have a different chemical foundation – one based on the element silicon.

Software the programs and other operating information used by a computer.

Sonata (from Latin and Italian: sonare, “to sound”), in music, literally means a piece played as opposed to a cantata a piece sung.

Sovereign a supreme ruler, especially a monarch.

Space-time (noun Physics) the concepts of time and three-dimensional space regarded as fused in a four-dimensional.

Spumante is made with Moscato grapes (aka Muscat Blanc), therefore it's one of the sweetest sparkling wines you can buy from Italy.

Subatomic smaller than or occurring within an atom.

T

Tanatha (Urban dictionary) A very attractive and loving women. She has a strong attraction too younger guys. A cougar if you will.

Tarkin The Tarkine covers 450,000 hectares of land in the northwest of Tasmania which include cool temperate rainforest, sea misted dunes, large plains of button grass and mountains covered in forests. The area provides diverse habitat that protects over 60 species of rare, threatened or endangered flora and fauna.

Tasmanian The Tasmanian wolf became extinct on the mainland of Australia long ago because it could not compete for food with an introduced species, the dingo, a kind of wild dog. By 1933 it was believed that the species had become extinct in the wild.

Ti amo means I love you in Italian.

Telepathy the supposed communication of thoughts or ideas by means other than the known senses.

Testa dura Italian slang word for hard headed. Used for calling someone of being stubborn.

Titan is the largest moon of Saturn. It is the only moon known to have a dense atmosphere.

Triple star system is a star system or stellar system is a small number of stars that orbit each other, bound by gravitational attraction.

Troposphere is the lowest layer of a planet's atmosphere. Almost all weather occurs within this layer.

U

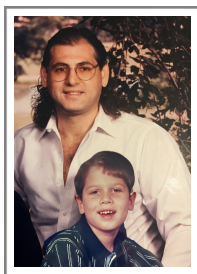
Unconditional love is known as affection without any limitations or love without conditions. This term is sometimes associated with other terms such as true altruism, or complete love.

Z

Zodiac meaning "wheels of life" (from the Greek word Zoe, 'life', and diakos, 'wheel') is traditionally used to refer to the Wheel of life in its twelve-fold division.

zoology is the scientific study of the behavior, structure, physiology, classification, and distribution of animals.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Luciano DeSanctis, a self-taught writer, lives in Jensen Beach, Florida. He's a widower with two sons who have special needs. Luciano loves learning and improving himself, and he's passionate about writing. After thirty years as a hairstylist and colorist, he's always wanted to write novels, poems, children's stories, and playwritings. Living according to the teachings of Christ, he finds purpose in writing about his experiences with people with disabilities. He believes his life has been dedicated to this purpose. So far, his passion for storytelling has been more enjoyable than anything else. *Lemon Dream* is his first novella and play. He's also written several other stories and children's books.

Thanks a bunch for checking out Luciano's books or eBook. You can find samples of his work at <http://www.booksofmine.org>, and you can also follow him on social media, like Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/booksofminepage>.



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