

THE GROOTERS



Book 3

Henrik Hillerström

The Grooters Book 3

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Part 33 Pitcairn

Richie gained awareness on the deck of a small sailing boat that was rocking around in the wind. But the course seemed steady. He looked around in all directions. Water. Water. Water. And more water. Alone with water.

He could see a big circle with a star on the mainsail.

“OK,” he thought. “No need to panic, this is just a dream.”

He was glad he knew how to sail, and although the seas were fairly high, the weather was sunny and he felt confident he could steer the boat wherever needed.

He looked at the coordinates: 25°S 150°W.

“Not good, I must be in the middle of the South Pacific somewhere.”

Then he heard a voice from the cabin: “I’ll be up in a minute!”. Richie recognised that voice and he felt not only relieved, he could sense a feeling of warmth in his heart. That feeling was confirmed sixty seconds later when an elegant brunette with a Polynesian flowered dress came up on deck, a flower in her hair and two exotic cocktails in her hands.

“Emily!” exclaimed Richie. “So glad to see a familiar face, I was very confused here for a while.”

Emily kissed him and gave him the drink. They savoured the wonderful fruit drink, and then Richie asked: “What are you doing here? What are we doing here?”

“I got kicked out of my job after four years in office in Washington. It was a fun experience, though.”

Richie smiled at his former President wife. “And now what?”

“I have a new job.”

“Captain?”

“Sort of.”

Richie was confused by his lover’s cryptic answers, and pushed for more clarity.

“I wished your answers could be as clear at the ocean water here and as your crystal blue eyes.”

“Sorry, just teasing you, my dear. My new job is to set up a thriving society on a remote Pacific island.”

“So, you switch from steering one of the biggest nations on Earth, to a tiny dot in the biggest ocean on Earth? Isn’t that a downgrade?”

“I see it rather as an upgrade. First in lifestyle, with far less stress, and then in intellectual challenge. For almost two and a half centuries, this island has struggled to try and build a perfect society.”

Now, Richie got intrigued. What could this elusive island be?

“So, what’s this island?”

“You’ll see very soon,” answered Emily with a mysterious smile that only enhanced her breathtaking beauty.

A few minutes later, Emily pointed to the south-west and they could see the tip of an island on the horizon. Two hours later, as they were approaching the island, Richie recognised this absolutely unique rock in the middle of nowhere: Pitcairn Island.

“So, what were we doing out at sea?” asked Richie,

“Just a Sunday excursion fishing,” replied the brunette, pointing at the white boxes that Richie presumed contained the day’s catch. “And a nice opportunity for some alone time, just the two of us.”

They were now approaching the island, famous for its infamous Bounty mutiny history.

Richie remembered having seen a documentary about Pitcairn where special-built motor vessels had to come and pick up visitors anchored a few hundred meters out at sea, because of the treacherous cliffs of the island.

“Aren’t we going to anchor here?”

“No,” said Emily. “They’ve now found a way to lift up and park a few sailing boats onshore. But we’ll lower the sails and do the last stretch on electric motor.”

Richie was amazed by the luxuriant vegetation of the island, just as he imagined from photos and videos he had seen online. A few islanders came down to help them get the boat ashore. An ingenious system folded the mast and the fin keel.

“*Wuy-a-wey!*” said Emily to the islanders.

“*Wuy-a-wey!*” they responded.

They had electric quad bikes to climb the steep hill to Adamstown.

“Only for the luggage and for people who are above 80 years old,” said Joe who was helping them get their boat onshore. “We want people to keep fit here.”

Richie was surprised by how many people there were.

From the *Landing*, they walked up the now much better named *Hill of Beauty* road until they came to the centre of Adamstown, busy with several small shops, two cafés and a restaurant. “Adamstown feels so much more alive compared to the impression I got from the Internet.”

“Yes, there were simply not enough people living here back then.”

Emily got some vegetables in the grocery store, then told Richie: “Let’s go to my place. Because the good news is that Rocco takes care of Modella and the kids for another two days. Lucky me.”

“What? Modella is here too? With Sanna and Evita?”

“Yes, it’s your Dream World.”

“But didn’t we live in Tuscany?”

“That was Modella’s Dream World.”

“You’re right, I guess we’ll need to find a compromise.”

“Don’t worry about that for the moment. I’m here to explain important things to you about this island, and you’re here to take care of me, my former First Gentleman,” said Emily teasingly, rubbing her body against his.

They walked on for another twenty minutes and ended up at a small cosy two-storey house at the top of the ridge. The view of the Pacific Ocean from the upper floor of the house was breathtaking.

“Welcome to my place. Not big, but it has everything I need. Pitcairn is the most beautiful project that a billionaire ever sponsored,” she said and gave him a kiss.

“Did I sponsor this?”

“Yes, you sponsored the repopulation of Pitcairn. But much more than money was needed.”

“By the way, do you live alone here?”

“Yes, I like my independence. But don’t worry, all my needs are met. I can invite handsome men like yourself anytime I want. I can play with the neighbours’ children if I want. I can meet people at the square in Adamstown, and I meet people at work every day. Everyone cares about everyone’s well-being here.”

“That sounds wonderful,” said Richie, now no longer worried that Emily did not have a family. He thought to himself that it’s better to have a wonderful extended non-blood family, than a blood family with constant relationship drama.

Emily put on some soft music.

♪ *Yksinäisen keijun tarina – Chisu*

“Do you customise your playlists for every man you seduce?”

“Yes, and not only my playlists. Love languages too. And the way I dress.”

Richie was in paradise. He wondered how anyone could resist a woman like that. Actually, they probably couldn’t.

He gave Emily a long kiss, then said:

“So, how many people live here now? It was about 40-50 people last time I checked.”

“Yes, the population had stagnated at a dangerously low level for over half a century. Now, about 500 people live here permanently, and the island is almost self-sufficient. This critical mass of inhabitants makes the place fun and adds enough variety for people not to get bored. Then, at any one time, we also have on average about 50 visitors.”

“But how is that possible? I remember the U.K. government pumped in millions over decades but were not able to incite people to come and live here. Despite it being paradise.”

“It remains an extremely remote place. The key trigger that enabled repopulation was when Pitcairn re-discovered its original purpose.”

“And what was this original purpose?”

“To be a social experiment for how to build a harmonious society. This worked to a certain extent in the 19th century and even up to the mid-20th century, when this island was the closest you could come to paradise on Earth.”

“Social experiment?”

“Yes, remember the reason why the Bounty mutineers and the Tahitians, mostly women, ended up on Pitcairn: it was because they were dissatisfied with the way their respective societies worked back then.”

“Like what?”

“Well, England in the late 18th century was not all flowery, and Fletcher Christian and his mutineer mates were justifiably disapproving of the English authorities’ misuse of power. As for the Tahitian women, they did not like the infanticide and other issues going on in Tahiti at the time. That’s why they followed the mutineers, they were not forced to. Polynesian curiosity probably played a role too: you don’t colonise the biggest pond on Earth without an inherent curiosity of the unknown.”

That made Richie think of the Crystal of Curiosity that the Grooters had found in Sweden very recently. Which had the shape of a sailing ship.

“So, about a decade ago, a multidisciplinary team of architects, urban planners, sociologists, psychologists, as well as cultural and linguistic specialists got together to brainstorm ideas on how to repopulate Pitcairn, because many of the inhabitants were starting to become very old.”

“And how did they go about?”

“One of the major insights was to learn from history. They could only come to the conclusion that the biggest reason for all the initial murders on the island, until only one male adult remained, was the unmet romantic and sexual needs of the men.”

“I read about that. And I’m glad that most people nowadays are a little better at handling their emotions, they don’t just kill others out of jealousy.”

“Yes, but we have to think in terms of unmet needs, and even today, most people don’t have all their needs met. And even if they don’t kill each other, these unmet needs lead to a plethora of neurotic issues.”

“Fair point.”

“So, learning from history, one major insight in planning the ‘new’ Pitcairn, was to put in place rules that made sure that no person on the island walks around sexually frustrated. Because here, islanders cannot just take a car or a train to the next town to get their needs met.”

“I get it.”

“If the sexual energy is not flowing in a healthy way, it flows in unhealthy ways ending up with killing, raping, stalking, or any form of bodily or mental diseases. You may have heard of the fairly recent underage sex scandals here on the island?”

“Yes, I have. So, more sex is the solution?”

“Healthy, quality sex. And remember that sex is only one of many human needs, and we must look at the big picture of people’s needs, which fall into the following main categories: basic

needs (food, clothes, housing), relationships, and meaning.”

“And I suppose Modella worked on the housing part of the project, as an architect?”

“Exactly, she has done an exceptional job making sure we got architectural harmony, which is an important part of social harmony.”

“What was the process?”

“One of the first things was to sit together with the islanders and get clear on an overall vision for the future of the island. That vision then needed to be reflected in the built environment. We agreed on the goal for Pitcairn to be a social experiment and then we brainstormed what main building or place would best represent such a goal.”

“And what did you come up with?”

“Because the purpose of Pitcairn is to be a social experiment, with the goal to create a harmonious society, we decided on a round meeting ground with a cairn in the middle. The cairn is a memorial to all human attempts to build good societies on Earth.”

“That’s nice,” said Richie.

“Yes, and this ground is surrounded by various socially important buildings: café, restaurant, pub, church. A mix of English and Tahitian heritage. And next to these central buildings are various small shops, so everything one needs is in one place. That’s what you saw earlier. We also agreed on an architectural style and building materials to be used all over the island.”

“What else?”

“Given the big increase in population we aimed for, we decided to have a few hamlets further up, with their own café where people could meet, so they don’t need to always walk down to the centre of Adamstown, which can be tricky, especially when it is raining a lot.”

“And more practically, how did you start the build/replanning?”

“We started with a thorough survey of the whole island, involving among others a geomancer who helped us understand the existing energies on the island and recommend auspicious locations for the new buildings. That geomancer worked together with Modella who also did some serious ghost hunting at the beginning of the project.”

“Yes, I’m fully aware of her capacities to see and communicate with the beyond.”

“The built part was overall the easy part. The trickiest part of the whole resettlement project was to find the right people with complementary competencies.”

“I’m extremely interested to hear how you cracked that nut,” said Richie.

“Patience. First, let me remind you why you are here, I’ll tell you more tomorrow,” said the sex-positive former president, and loosened one of the shoulder straps of her dress.

Emily’s curves were as enticing as in the White House, and a big reason why Richie had risen in love with her.

They had a wonderful love-making session, and after that Emily cooked a nice dinner for them, which they enjoyed with candle lights on the house terrace.

After that they went to the hamlet café, where a few islanders had gathered to play ukulele. A woman was singing along with a soothing voice. This was a wonderful experience, the ultimate of what the southern seas island life had to offer.

Emily rested her head on Richie's shoulder, and said:

"You make me so happy, thank you."

"I may not talk much, because I'm a Finn, but I can assure you that you make me happy too," replied Richie, hugging Emily.

After an enjoyable evening where Richie had got to know a few more islanders, they walked back to Emily's home and fell asleep early. It had been a wonderful, exhausting day.

"Wake up, Richie!" said a feminine voice, and Richie was glad that voice didn't belong to Leo and that his Dream World travel wasn't over yet.

"I'm here," answered Richie, pulling Emily towards him. He had slept so well, and felt very energised. He didn't know if the reason was his lover's vicinity, or the remote island's fresh air. Probably both.

"Let's go for a swim at *St. Paul's Pool*," said Emily, already fully awake.

"That sounds refreshing, I'm in."

They walked down the whole way to the ocean, and Richie was able to admire Emily's superb silhouette jumping into the water in her flower-patterned bikini.

He followed her and they swam around as two young lovers.

"That was amazing," he told Emily after the swim.

"Yes, isn't it amazing that they've found ways to prolong the NRE?"

"NRE?"

"*New Relationship Energy*. Aka. pink-tinted glasses. Scientists did some tinkering with our brain chemicals. In our favour."

"I get it. Yes, it's an amazing feeling."

They walked back to Adamstown's central ground and decided to have breakfast there instead so they didn't have to walk up to Emily's place, and so that Richie could get a better feel for the island's social life.

"Good," said Richie, after they had downed their first fruit juice and piece of bread. "Now, tell me more about how you found the right people to come and settle on this island."

"That chapter wasn't obvious. Because we were looking for 500 people among 8 billion, we needed to first get clear on what kind of people we thought would suit this island."

"And?"

"The thing is that it is very expensive to move here, so any wrong recruitments end up very costly, which means we did not have a lot of margin for error."

"So, what main criteria did you go for?"

“The first criteria was emotional maturity. The island could no longer afford psychologically unstable people who would explode in anger, jealousy, or who were not mature enough to discuss problems or face the truth.”

“OK, and where did you look to find these people?”

“Mostly polyamorous and self-development communities.”

“Makes sense.”

“Second, we chose people who were willing to learn the local Pitkern language, a mix of English and Tahitian. That’s the local culture. Unique in the universe.”

“Anything else?”

“Yes, we also looked for complementary competencies; and for people with multiple skills. So, if we already had five electricians, more would be redundant. And we favoured people who knew more than just one trade. Pitcairn islanders have by necessity been very versatile.”

“Interesting,” said Richie.

“And at the same time, we were very aware of people’s needs, and we listened to what they needed, and did our best to accommodate for every new settler’s needs, as well as for the needs of the population already living on the island.”

“Sounds like you’ve thought through everything.”

“We thought we had. Then came the reality check.”

“What do you mean?”

“In an initial phase, all new settlers were very enthusiastic and everything went fine. Then, after two-three years, we noted some frictions between some people, while everything remained smooth between others.”

“And what happened then?”

“Those frictions only grew bigger and bigger, so we had to address them. But we were clueless what had gone wrong, because when we looking at the situation objectively, everyone’s needs were met.”

“Sounds strange that there would still some frictions.”

“Yes, then finally, a genius IT guy living on the island came up with the idea to put in all the data of every person in a database, then run an algorithm to identify patterns between the people who got along well, versus those who had frictions between them.”

“And, did you find any patterns?”

“It took a while, but yes, we did. And that allowed us to take the necessary measures to get rid of those frictions.”

“Wow!” said Richie. “That shows the importance of having a critical mass of residents with complementary skills.”

“Yes, it does.”

“So, would you now say that Pitcairn represents the perfect society?”

“Yes, for me it’s paradise. However, this place is definitely not for everyone due to its tiny

size and remote location. And for those who don't like fish or coconuts."

Richie gave her a kiss, thinking that he too, liked paradise.

"But if Pitcairn has realised its purpose, it needs a new purpose, doesn't it?"

"Very good observation. Life is dynamic, and we constantly need new goals to strive for. The goal we came up with is that we now teach individuals and especially future community leaders all that is required to build a harmonious society."

"But what worked on Pitcairn may not necessarily work elsewhere?"

"You're right, and we need to be humble about that. However, there are still many takeaways that our students can benefit from."

"I suppose all this knowledge is important for projects to settle on other planets?"

"Definitely, and getting things wrong out in space are even far costlier than getting things wrong on a remote island on Earth."

They finished their breakfast and Emily showed Richie her office, he greeted her colleagues, all very happy to see him.

Suddenly, Richie realised: "But wait, in small communities like this one, everyone knows everyone. And I was kissing you openly in the café while I'm supposed to be with Modella. And no one seemed to bother at all."

"You see," said Emily, "once people have all their needs met, they don't get hung up with what other people do, they mind their own business and let others live their lives, even if they personally do things differently."

"OK."

"And because of the limited size of this island, we create diversity in our relationships. So, tomorrow, you may sit in that café kissing Christella. And the day after, Modella."

"What, Christella is here too?"

"It's your Dream World. It's your paradise. And you're such a handsome man that any woman who truly loves you will want to share you with others. And don't worry, when we're not with you, we have other exciting options."

"So, you think that polyamory is the only way of reaching a harmonious society?"

"It's the best solution we've come up with so far. It works. That doesn't mean that other places can't find different solutions."

Then they walked on to another building.

"This is your office, Richie." And as soon as Emily had said that, Christella came to greet them, kissing him on the mouth. And her as well.

"No need for introductions here," thought Richie.

"Did you guys have a good fishing trip yesterday?" asked Christella.

"Yes, it was wonderful," said Emily.

“Thanks for taking care of Richie,” said Christella.

“You’re welcome. I’ll just keep him for a few more hours to show him around some of the farms on the island. Then he’s all yours again.”

“Thanks, love,” said Christella and kissed Emily again.

Richie followed Emily who now showed him all the small farms on the island: coffee, honey, fruit trees, goats, chickens, and a slightly bigger area for wheat and various vegetables.

“What a rich island!”

“Yes, the climate is perfect, with heat and sufficient amounts of rain. But we need to be careful so we don’t overuse the land. We practice sub-tropical permaculture, and so far it has worked fine.”

“Paradise, indeed.”

“Let’s walk up to the ridge, the views are amazing. After that, let’s go home, you need to pay your guide,” said Emily with a very naughty look in her eyes.

“Saying that, do you actually use money on this island?”

“Not between us, that would be ridiculous. We only use money for exchanges with outsiders. So, visitors who come here pay for food, souvenirs and accommodation. Then we use that money to buy things we need for the island, like for example building materials, or computers. We also earn money from online services like teaching and a few residents have their own online businesses, but all the residents’ incomes are pooled to make sure that everyone can afford everything they need.”

“So, this is not a place for people who are uncomfortable with sharing?”

“Precisely.”

The view from the ridge, 300m above the ocean, was incredible. From there Richie could also get a better overview of Adamstown and the other small settlements on Pitcairn.

After this long tour of the island, they went back to Emily’s place, had a nice late light lunch, which wetted their sexual appetite. Richie made sure his guide got well paid.

♪ *Violonne-moi – Corynne Charby*

“Well, that was your last Dream World travel,” said Leo back in the Dreamcockpit.

“Damned!” exclaimed Richie. “I was in paradise. Literally.”

“We look forward to watch your paradise,” said Boss.

RICHIE JOHNSON – THIRD DWT – 10.07.2018

“Yes,” said Modella after they had watched Richie’s Dream World. “That paradise could be even better than Tuscany. Maybe you could convince me to move there...”

At the same time, Modella felt a little worried that Emily had appeared again in Richie’s Dream World. Was she jealous?

“Did anyone observe any clues for our crystal hunt?” asked Boss.

No one answered.

“Anything else?”

“Not for the moment,” said Modella, “but everything about how that island is organised will serve us at some point, I’m convinced of that.”

“Great,” said Boss. “Who’s next?”

“You are,” said Leo. “And I bet you’ll end up with new women again...”

“I wouldn’t bet against that,” said Verity, and everyone laughed.

“OK,” said Boss. “Thanks for betting on me. It’s *apéro* time. Let’s call it a day and then I will do my last Dream World travel tomorrow.”

Part 34 Blend

Boss gained consciousness in a very dark corridor, or maybe it was a tunnel – he could only see a tiny light in one direction.

He walked towards the light which slowly grew brighter. This tunnel reminded him of some descriptions of near-death experiences he had read about.

But above all, it reminded him of his own near-death experience after the big car accident when he was seven years old. As he was still blocked, seriously injured, in the back seat of the destroyed car, he could feel that he was becoming lighter and could see the whole accident scene from above. He saw how the ambulance crew and fire brigade fought to open the doors.

At some point, Boss left the scene and found himself in a tunnel with a bright light at the end. When he arrived at the end of the tunnel, he was greeted by some of his deceased family members, including his uncle who had just driven the car into a big tree.

They all told him: “Go back! Your time has not come yet. You still have a very important mission to accomplish on Earth.”

“But it is so wonderful here, I feel so good,” the young Boss had responded.

“You need to go back!”

So, Boss turned around and suddenly woke up in the ambulance that took him to the hospital. That event changed his life forever.

♪ *St Peter's Gate – Chris de Burgh*

After that childhood experience, seeing this tunnel again, it was no wonder that Boss was worried that it might now be time for him to die. Had something gone wrong with Professor Dimenport's machine?

But he was relieved when he arrived at the end of the tunnel: no deceased family members there to greet him. Just a wooden door. He opened it and entered what looked like a regular, albeit very elegant office.

No one was there, so he walked up to the main office desk, a beautiful old mahogany desk. The wall behind the desk had ceiling-high bookshelves, and in the room there was also a nice chesterfield sofa, as well as two armchairs around a coffee table. And there was another table with four chairs around it.

“Probably for meetings,” thought Boss.

He sat down in the comfortable office chair at the desk and in front of him was what looked like some kind business or education award, made of glass. Then Boss saw the circle with the star inside it, which made him relax a little. On its both sides were two wooden plates on a holder, one with *liberté* written on it, and the other one *responsabilité*.

And next to his computer, he could see a stack of his business cards:

Boss Pibolodari

BBP Consulting

Paris XVème

Suddenly, someone knocked at the door.

“Enter,” Boss said out of routine.

A stunning brunette entered. She was dressed with a white blouse and a short but elegant black leather skirt with matching stockings and high heels.

“The more elegant a woman is, the shorter her skirt can be,” thought Boss, admiring what he saw.

“My name is Assista, I’m your personal assistant. Here is the client invoice you asked me to prepare for you yesterday. Shall we look at it together? I have a question I need to clarify.”

“Sure,” said Boss.

Assista walked up to Boss’ desk, and lay the document in front of him. She got very close to him, touched him gently on the arm, then said:

“For this invoice to *Panycom*, I’m not sure if we should invoice the two hours when Georgia got involved with *Panycom*’s COO.”

“Involved?”

“Well, he’s quite good-looking... and Georgia, one of our consultants, has a soft spot for tall men.”

“What are we doing here exactly?”

“Here at *BBP Consulting* we help firms to reorganise so that they can improve the job satisfaction among their employees. They need to do this to stay competitive, otherwise the employees go and find a job somewhere else.”

“Ah! That sounds like a great purpose,” said Boss, thinking of his parents and about 50% of people in his dimension that were dissatisfied with their jobs.

“I think so too, and that’s why I love to work here. She gave him a kiss.”

“OK...” thought Boss, wondering if he had an affair with his PA.

“Affair?” laughed Assista. “Affairs are hidden. I prefer to call it a lifestyle. Remember BBP’s motto: *Blending Business & Pleasure?*”

“Sounds like a winning combination, I like that,” said Boss, who again had forgotten that people in his Dream World could read his mind.

“You came up with it, actually.”

“Hmm...” said Boss, then continued: “So what was it with that invoice?”

“My question is if we shall charge *Panycom* for the two hours when Georgia had sex with the COO?”

“Looks like she’s living up to our motto.”

“You’ve always been good at recruiting competent people, Boss.”

“Thanks. I’d say we charge one hour. But please call *Panycom* first and ask them if that’s OK with them.”

“OK, I’ll do that straight away,” said Assista and headed for the door.

“Thanks,” said Boss, “and once you’ve sent out the invoice, could you please come back to tell me more about BBP, looks like I have some Dream World travel amnesia.”

“Sure,” said Assista. “See you later. Do you want me to bring coffee?”

“No, I’ll go and get one myself, but thanks for asking. Where’s the kitchen?”

“Down the hall.”

“And one more thing.”

“Yes?”

“You look gorgeous, Assista.”

“Thanks,” she said, slightly blushing. Then she left the room.

Boss reflected for a while: he knew how important the topic of job satisfaction was for him, and concluded that his subconscious mind had probably created a Dream World where he would get some answers as to what constitutes a truly satisfactory working environment.

He quickly went through BBP’s website, whose wording was a little cryptic, but he was sure that Assista would be able to enlighten him more.

Then he went for a coffee. On the way, he saw some of the office rooms. Everything looked like a normal office environment with people on the phone, some working on their computers, some in private discussions, and some meeting in a conference room, seemingly brainstorming ideas.

But despite these normal appearances, Boss could feel a special energy. He couldn’t yet put his finger on what it was. But it felt right.

He went to prepare his coffee, then walked back to his office and waited for Assista.

Not long thereafter, his attractive assistant knocked on the door again.

“Let’s sit down in the couch if that’s OK with you. I have so many questions,” said Boss.

“With pleasure,” replied Assista.

“First, what does *BBP* stand for?”

I think you registered the company as *Boss' Business Planning*, or *Bold Boss Pibolodari*, I'm not sure.

“OK.”

“But we prefer to call it *Blending Business & Pleasure*, or *BooBs & Penises*.”

“And how exactly do we assist our clients to improve job satisfaction among their employees?”

“It's not rocket science. The most important thing is to genuinely care for your employees, something you're really good at and teach our consultants to explain to our clients.”

“Sounds easy in theory.”

“In practice it's not that hard, either. You simply have to listen to your employees. All of them. Because not everyone has the same needs.”

“What do you need, for example?”

“I struggled a long time to be truly honest with myself about my needs. I used to work for some abusive and incompetent bosses in the past, until I found BBP. My main needs are meaning, respect and fun.”

“Please elaborate.”

“In the past I just took a job for the money, without caring about what product or service the company sold. Now I'm convinced I need to work for a business with a solid ethical purpose, which gives meaning to my life, and where I know why I get out of bed in the morning.”

“I'm glad to hear that. What about respect?”

“After some bad work experiences, I also noticed how important respect was for me. Simple things like saying thank you for jobs I do, or respecting me by talking nicely, and dressing well. A work environment without gossip where people greet each other in the morning and say goodbye before they leave in the evening. No one putting others down, people supporting each other, chipping in a little extra when there are important deadlines.”

“I thought such things would be obvious.”

“Not all employers seem to understand that, unfortunately. Or fortunately, because that is a business opportunity for us, to help others understand all the benefits of caring for their employees.”

“And fun?”

“For example, going for drinks after work with colleagues.”

“I agree, if you don't feel like hanging out with your colleagues from time to time, then you're probably not working in the right place for you.”

“Exactly. But there is never any pressure to do anything. Then there is also the area where respect and fun meet.”

“Not sure what you mean.”

Assista smiled in a composed manner, as if this conversation was absolutely normal.

“You, and my other colleagues here at *BBP* respect my sexual needs. On the other hand, I am never forcing anyone to have sex with me, it’s always consensual,” said the sensual assistant.

“It feels like we’re all on the same wavelength, given the *BBP* motto.”

“Yes, but remember the plaques on your desk: liberty needs to be balanced with responsibility. We have some important work to do, but we think we do a better work by *blending business and pleasure*.”

Boss looked his stunning assistant deep into the eyes, then said:

“And do you happen to have any important responsibility in the next hour?”

“Yes.”

Boss was a bit disappointed, but was sure there would be other opportunities to get more closely acquainted with his hot PA.

“Then I better let you go do that important thing,” said Boss.

“My important responsibility at the moment is to take care of my wonderful boss. If this isn’t a dream job, I don’t know what is,” said the outgoing beauty and moved a little closer to Boss.

Pleasantly surprised, Boss moved closer to Assista as well, and soon they were in full embrace. She then unzipped his pants to prepare for what was to come.

After their respectful and fun interaction, they adjusted their clothes, and Assista said:

“You make me feel like a million bucks, thanks Boss.”

“You’re welcome, I couldn’t dream of a more wonderful assistant.”

“I’m here to please.”

“Let’s get back to work: I have more questions. Don’t things get easily out of hand if everyone fucks around like this in the office? What about productivity?”

“That’s a very valid question, Boss,” said his professionally glowing assistant. “And the answer is a little counter-intuitive. Talking about productivity, let’s be honest: in most workplaces women daydream about their male colleagues, and men want to fuck their hot female colleagues. So, the genius insight you had starting this business was that one can be more productive by short-circuiting daydreaming, porn surfing, gossiping, stalking, etc.”

“So, you think the net productivity improves?”

“We now have data to back it up. Both for ourselves and for our clients.”

“Great.”

“The thing to understand is that when female employees no longer need to spend their energy constantly setting up sexual barriers, and men no longer spend their energy on creepy behaviour, then everybody wins, including the bottom line.”

“Sounds logical.”

“So, instead of just daydreaming and walking around sexually frustrated, we take care of each other so that we then can get some actual work done.”

“All this makes total sense. But in the dimension where I come from, there are so many rules, a few written but most unwritten, that prevent more relaxed working environments like this one. So, how does *BBP* convince its clients to relax their rules to improve job satisfaction?”

“The first thing is that we tell them the hard truth: if their business does not have any meaningful purpose with a solid ethical foundation, they will never reach complete job satisfaction among their employees. It doesn't matter how much money they make. So, some clients need help with strategic reorientation.”

“What more?”

“For other clients, who may have a good purpose, but are still stuck in old ways of thinking and managing we explain to them the importance of respecting their employees, not trying to micromanage them or have them do stupid or unnecessary tasks. Let them use their own creativity to solve problems. All that has a positive impact on the bottom line.”

“OK,”

“We also tell them that if they want to hire the best employees, they need to be competitive.”

“Competitive in what sense? Huge wages?”

“Remember: meaning, respect and fun. Huge wages are no longer a major competitive factor. Actually, they are now a huge red flag, questioning the ethics of the company. However, underpaying is not respectful either, so there needs to be a balance. What's more important is the overall positive work environment. I mean, if I could choose, would I choose a regular boring job where people gossip around and hide stuff from each other? Or would I prefer to work in a place like this where I get respected and complimented?”

“I guess I know the answer.”

“And by complimented, I mean both verbally and physically. By fucking me, you compliment the efforts I make to look good, and that's a fun working environment. It's also about honesty: you are a charming and handsome man, and you make me feel alive.”

“It goes both ways, Assista, you are extremely beautiful and attractive and inspiring to work with. You too, make me feel alive.”

“With BBPs efforts, we help companies upgrade their mindsets, and now more and more companies are organised similarly to *BBP*. This means that companies that are control freaks and remain stuck doing things the old way and disrespecting their employees, will lose quality personnel.”

“And that's where we intervene?”

“Yes. Any person honest with themselves would rather work in an environment like this one, and our mission at *BBP* is to make sure there will be many more such companies to choose from in the future.”

“Sorry to bother you with the same question again, but how do we manage to keep the sex escapades manageable?”

“The thing to understand is that when people touch each other regularly, it generates oxytocin, the ‘love’ hormone, and it relaxes people so they are not building up sexual barriers or sexual frustration. This leads people to have slightly less, but more quality sex, than sex emanating from a place of neediness.”

“OK.”

“That being said,” added Assista, “we also have to be aware of the *Coolidge Effect*, which does admittedly lead to some initial disturbances when a new employee joins the office, especially if she’s female.”

“It’s our biological programming, I guess.”

“Yes, and the great thing here is that we’re not fighting nature or our natural instincts.”

“Another question,” said Boss, “what is the underlying meaning of the two words on my desk: *liberté* and *responsabilité*?”

“Great question,” replied Assista enthusiastically. “These words have quite deep meaning, which is why you have placed them so prominently on your desk. First, liberty is about us having the freedom to fuck around in the office. And elsewhere.”

“Yes, I kind of got that one.”

“Now, freedom is also linked to responsibility. Yes, we have the sexual freedom, but we also have responsibilities.”

“What responsibilities are you referring to?”

“The responsibility to make sure no one is hurt in the freedom process. And the responsibility to handle any unwanted emotions that bubble up with this lifestyle.”

“You mean like jealousy?”

“Yes, that’s a big one.”

“And how do people handle their jealousy?”

“There are different methods. Some go and see a therapist. Others go out and shout in the woods or next to the *périphérique*. Or shout into a pillow. Others do a lot of sports. While others simply talk it through with the partners involved, like emotionally mature adults.”

“Very interesting, thanks. I’d like to get back to how we help our clients: it can’t be all about setting up an open-sex environment? I mean businesses have stuff to accomplish.”

“You’re perfectly right, which is why BBP also has a department that helps individuals find the right career for them. But I don’t want to overstep my competencies here and suggest that

you talk to our head of that department, Carrera. She's amazing at helping people find their career paths, and will be able to explain more in detail how she works."

So, Assista took Boss by the hand and they walked up the stairs to the offices on the upper floor. There she knocked on a door. A female voice told them to enter.

"Hi, Carrera," said Assista, "Boss wanted you to explain what your department does."

"Thanks, Assista," said Carrera, raising from her chair and going up to Boss, kissing him on the mouth.

A stunning Venezuelan beauty, Carrera wore a tight-fitting sleeveless black dress. She had big earrings, a golden necklace with two teddy bears hugging on it, as well as some armbands on her wrists.

"Very feminine... am I involved with her as well?" wondered Boss, although very much enjoying the softness of that kiss. "No wonder Venezuela has won so many Miss Universe titles."

"Shall I leave you guys?" asked Assista.

"No," said Boss, "I'm sure it would be good for you to listen in, too, so you have a better grasp of what Carrera and her team are doing."

"Great," said Carrera, gently touching both Boss and Assista. "Let's all sit down on the couch."

"By the way, it's an amazing view you have from your office," said Boss pointing at the Eiffel tower in the background.

"You're one of the few bosses who seem to think more about their employees than about themselves," said Assista, caressing Boss and giving him a kiss.

Then Boss thought to himself: "I may not get the best view outside, but I get some wonderful compensation inside..."

Once they were sitting on the couch, Boss addressed Carrera: "So, I'm curious to hear how you go about helping individuals find the right career for them."

"Sure. Often, BBP's corporate clients send us some of their employees that they know are not a good fit for them. We help those individuals get clear on their career paths, and they may re-join their employer in a different role, or find a new employer."

"And do you reckon you have a big success rate?"

"I have to admit that it's not 100% because finding out one's true path in life is probably one of the hardest things in life. However, I'm still satisfied with our 80% success rate, that we still aim to improve upon."

"Great job, Carrera. Now, let's say I am a goalless employee working for a big corporation. They have sent me to BBP. How precisely do you go about helping me?"

“Well, I think part of our good success rate is that we have a rather unconventional way of helping people. Remember BBP’s motto. So, if our client is male, we start by lining up four or five girls from our team, including myself, and we ask them to pick one.”

“OK...,” said Boss.

“Then,” continued the hot Latina, “we tell them that their chosen girl will have sex with them if they find their career path. I can assure you they are motivated to find that path.”

“What about female clients?”

“We line up a few of our male colleagues.”

“And how do you know when a client has found their path?”

“It’s when they can give solid arguments as to why they have chosen that path. It needs to go further than just arguing that they want a career in marketing because they have studied marketing at university. Or engineering, or whatever.”

“What other arguments would you count as ‘solid’?”

“For example, it could be that they have an ancestor who has done the same profession. Or it’s a profession that people in our city and culture are good at. Or it’s linked to a passion they have. Or there can be hints in people’s names.”

“In people’s names?”

“Oh yes! Look at my name for example. Or Assista. Or yourself. Although, most of the time, the hints are not as straightforward. Sometimes the hint can be hidden in a middle name, or be an anagram of a name, or have the same initial letters.”

“Really?”

“Yes, studies have shown that people named Cal are more likely to become carpenters, and people named Dennis are over-represented in the dentist profession.”

“That’s amazing insights,” said Boss.

“Yes, and based on that understanding, we now have a great algorithm that proposes various professions based on the letters in our clients’ names. We use that list as a start when discussing career options with them.”

“And do you have a specific way of coaching clients to lead them to finding answers for themselves?”

“Yes, we use the YCCT technique.”

“YCCT?”

“The *Y Career Counselling Technique*.”

Carrera stood up and fetched a pen and a piece of paper from her desk. Then she went back to the couch and started to draw something on the paper on the coffee table in front of them. Boss and Assista eagerly followed, curious to learn more.

The Latina drew a big ‘Y’-formed road with small dots along the way. She also scribbled a few explanatory words next to these dots.

“Aha!” said Boss. “So, the two branches of the ‘Y’ are about choosing between taking a regular job and starting one’s own business.”

“Yes,” confirmed Carrera.

Most steps of the process were self-explaining, except a few letters that Carrera had circled: C, G, A, T.

“What do these letters stand for? Aren’t they the same letters as in...”

“... our DNA,” completed the hot Venezuelan. “Well observed, indeed. They stand for *Counselling, Guiding, Advising* and *Therapy*. That being said, the whole career searching process aims at aligning your career with your DNA, to maximize your output and wellbeing.”

“So how does this process work?”

“Researchers found out that the best career counselling methods were the ones where the counsellor challenged the client’s inconsistencies to help him or her come up with their inner truth, in this case finding out what they really love to do.”

“This sounds similar to criminal interrogation techniques.”

“Because it is. Except that softer methods are used and the clients are most of the time cooperative. It’s in their own interest: if they find a career they love, not only will they do a better job, they will also feel much better. They become unstoppable. And they’ll get to *blend business and pleasure*,” added Carrera, putting a hand on Boss’ thigh.

“Interesting.”

“Yes, so what you have to realise is that, when done correctly, this professional counselling method pushes our ego into a corner.”

“This sounds like a major win for the Grooters’ Pact,” Boss replied, again thinking about his parents’ issue of job dissatisfaction.

“It is. And one of the twists of this method is that it asks people how they would like to express themselves in the world.”

“Express themselves?”

“Yes, finding our right career boils down to finding out how we want to express ourselves in the world. For example, it could be through writing, or orally, technically, artistically, physically, relationally, or financially.”

“Now that you say it, that makes sense.”

“And BBP’s career counsellors look into detail at their clients’ cultural and family backgrounds, because in many cases, that’s where their inherited talents are.”

“But we don’t always know the details of our ancestry.”

“You’re right, but there are now ancestry DNA tests that we can do. And once we are aware of that, we need to learn as much as possible about the cultures that are part of our DNA.”

“OK, but maybe not all Italians want to become cooks nor all Germans engineers. Or all Americans actors.”

“Good point. All societies need a healthy mix of talents. Finding our true calling is oftentimes more complex than simple stereotyping, especially for Grooters like you who have several cultural backgrounds. On top of that, your own life experiences have to be added to the counselling mix. Remember that we are all influenced both by our DNA and by our environment.”

“Sounds great.”

“Now, because we need a lot of input in order to better guide our clients, we have developed a new form of CV. Because most regular CVs are for human machines, with employers far too often only interested in the output the ‘machine’ can produce.”

“And what’s different with this CV?”

“It goes much further into detail, and is anatomically structured.”

“Anatomically structured?”

“Yes. From head to toe: what intellectual interests does the person have? What music do they like to listen to? What do they like to talk about? What do they love to do in their private time? Do they have any manual skills? What sexual preferences do they have? In which direction are their feet pointing?”

“I guess some of these questions are too sensitive for regular workplaces?”

“The thing is we cannot ignore some aspects of a person just because of ‘sensitivity’. Also, we think it’s unhealthy to completely separate professional and private lives. Because that means you need to put on a mask in many situations. It’s not genuine. We invite people to consider the possibility of *blending business and pleasure*.”

“Wow, thank you so much Carrera,” said Boss. “This has been so enlightening. How can I thank you?”

“Right now, by giving me an orgasm,” said Carrera frankly, as if she would be asking for a coffee.

“Shall I leave you guys?” asked Assista.

“No,” said Boss, “I will need your assistance to take care of Carrera. She deserves a double treat.”

“Well, that was your last Dream World travel, Boss,” said Leo.

All the Grooters watched Boss' last Dream World travel.

"That was a very different management style from what I was taught at business school," laughed Richie.

"I definitely need to change employer," said Verity.

"OK," said Leo, "now we only have one single Dream World travel left. Webbo's up. But I suggest that we take another incubation period to digest Richie's and Boss' last dreams and see how they integrate into the bigger picture."

"Sounds good," said the other Grooters.

"And Webbo," said Leo, "you better make sure to make the most of your last Dream World travel."

"I will, promised. You'll get your money's worth."

Part 35 Fantasies

When Webbo opened his eyes, he could see a desert landscape below, and he could feel the wind on his face... What was this? He saw the circle with the star on the back of a sculpted swan's head just in front of him.

"Isn't this amazing?" said Sarika who sat just next to him on the comfortable cushioned couch.

"I can't believe it!" exclaimed Webbo. "Is this an actual *vimana* we are flying with?"

"It is," responded his Indian goddess. "A modern prototype of a *pushpaka vimana*."

"And how does it fly?"

"It is mind-controlled, and the underlying technology based on old Vedic scriptures."

"Cool!" said Webbo, amazed at the open design of the flying machine. It looked like a golden small garden gazebo with a white swan at the front, like the Vikings had dragons at the front of their ships.

"I knew you would like it," said Sarika, giving him a kiss.

"And what's the city down in the desert here?"

"Jaisalmer."

They flew down and hovered just a few meters above the city walls, literally seeing it from a bird's perspective. Then they flew around the fortified city, so they could see it from all angles.

"It's wonderful," said Webbo.

"Too bad I have to fly you back," said Sarika.

"Back to where?"

"Back to school. Your third year is starting today."

After that Sarika had the *vimana* gain some altitude and speed up. About half an hour later they were back in Jodhpur, 300km to the east.

Sarika landed in front of Splendour University.

"Don't forget your luggage, Webbo," she said.

"Aren't you coming?"

"I've already graduated, remember? But don't worry, Chantal and your other admirers will take good care of you."

They hugged and embraced and kissed for a long time.

"I'm going to miss you, thanks for everything," said Webbo.

"Going to miss you too." said Sarika, waved him goodbye and took off again.

“Welcome back!” Webbo could hear behind him as he watched the *vimana* soar into the sky.

He turned around: “Nice to see you again, Chantal!” he said, giving her a kiss.

“Hope you will not miss her too much,” she said, having observed their good-bye embrace.

“She will always have a special place in my heart,” said Webbo honestly.

“Sarika got a job in France working on designing and building the Splendour sister school there. Maybe you can join her there next year?” said Chantal tenderly hugging him. “In the meantime, I’m the lucky one.”

Webbo couldn’t believe that women were actually raving about him. The Kama Sutra effect?

Chantal took him by the hand, “Let’s go to your room, and let me present you your new roommate.”

“OK,” said Webbo.

They went up to Webbo’s old room. As they entered, he felt a kind of void, as Sarika’s side was empty.

“She hasn’t arrived yet?” wondered Webbo.

“She sure has,” said Chantal, giving him a sensual kiss and stroking herself against him.

“You’re my new roommate? I’m so happy!” he said and hugged the French girl.

“Yes, now we just need to decide which room to take. Yours, mine, or eventually another one? Sarika has moved out, and so has my former roommate and admirer Nathan.”

“What would your choice be?” asked Webbo.

“I’ve considered it, and all rooms are great, so it will be more of an emotional decision. In my case, I would vote for a new room, so that both of us can detach a little from our previous experiences, and focus on our last year of studies.”

“That sounds like a wise idea,” said Webbo.

They both moved their belongings from their respective rooms to a new room in the other wing of the palace.

Once they were done with that, Chantal said: “Let’s go down to the bar a celebrate the start of a new study year.”

They ordered champagne at the bar and sat down on a leather couch in the comfortable lounge room.

Webbo then asked Chantal: “What’s your biggest dream for yourself or for the world?”

The French beauty pondered the question for a while, then said:

“I wish that people would mind their own business. And by that, I mean that I wish they would respect other people’s dreams and concentrate on building their own dreams instead of focusing on gossip, envy, jealousy or non-constructive criticism.”

“I fully agree with you. And that’s one of the aims of The Grooters: to describe various kinds of Dream Worlds to inspire and incite people to build their own dream lives.”

“What a wonderful aim,” said Chantal, hugging Webbo.

“And what’s in store for our last year here at Splendour?”

“We take the game to the next level.”

“Tell me more.”

Chantal starts with mentioning the French book series *Osez... (Dare...)* where she among many other things learnt about the three rules for women to dress sexy.

“And what are those rules?” asked Webbo.

“I like to call them *Dare to Take Me* rules: *DTM: dénudant, transparent, moulant*. Which means that if women are serious about wanting to attract men, they need to show some skin, wear see-through clothes, and the clothes should be tight-fitting to show their nice curves. Too much is not always better: the art is to balance these three ingredients to look sexy and elegant without looking cheap.”

“You’re definitely leading by example,” said Webbo, observing the French goddess at his side. “And as a man I can say that I very much appreciate *DTM*.”

“Thanks. It makes me feel very feminine and powerful at the same time.”

“What do you mean by powerful?”

“It creates a more powerful masculine-feminine polarity which gives men stronger erections. Which is something I end up benefitting from,” said Chantal frankly with a naughty smile.

“But any form of power can be abused. How do you prevent that?”

“Good point, Webbo. I guess the main way to avoid abuse of power is to be conscious that one has much more to gain by not abusing that power. So, for example when a woman abuses her sexual power by flirting with men she is not at least potentially interested to have sex with, that leads to unhealthy horniness for them, and unhealthy relationships between men and women.”

“Is it that simple?”

“You’re right, it’s a little more subtle: it’s also about the woman ‘putting down her weapons’ so that both she and a potential partner can relax. In other words, tearing down her sexual barriers. And she needs to sort out any possessiveness or jealousy issues.”

“Easier said than done.”

“Indeed, but it’s an absolute necessity for healthy relationships. Only then can she be honest about her true desires and attract men with healthy horniness who can make her fantasies and dream life come true.”

“I start to get it.”

“Yes, and if we look at it more practically, if she has stuff to hide and non-sorted issues and keeps up a sexual barrier, her partners’ erections will not last as long. On the other hand, if she is open and loving, her partners’ erections will be more long-lasting and penetrating.”

“I can confirm that,” said Webbo, gently touching Chantal.

“It’s also important to touch each other regularly every day, which gives oxytocin and makes men less aggressive, and women less controlling.”

“I wish all people understood that.”

“We also need to respect the sexual needs of potential partners by not rejecting them, like in the video that Sarika showed you. And quickly assess compatibility so that no false expectations or hard feelings ensue.”

“Yes, that video is so powerful, and I think leads to positive relationships here at Splendour.”

“Similar rules would lead to similar results elsewhere too.”

“What else do those *Osez...* books teach you?”

“Some of the stuff we’ll need to practice as part of our final exam.”

“Which is?”

“The topic of the third year here at Splendour is: *fantasies*.”

“Fantasies?”

“Yes, our assignment for this year is to discuss, plan and put into practice our wildest fantasies with our main admirer/roommate.”

“Sounds like the kind of assignment I like.”

“Yes, and there is a game-changer.”

“A game-changer?”

“Indeed. We now have a new contraception method here at Splendour, meaning that we do no longer need to worry about pregnancy, uncomfortable condoms, or side-effects of chemical pills.”

“Amazing!” said Webbo, thinking about the underlying stress created by the contraception issues.

“And what about STDs?”

“With genuine love and good hygiene standards, it is my belief that we shouldn’t have to fear sexually transmitted diseases. Personally, I don’t think that God invented sexual pleasure with a disease label attached to it.”

“Neither do I,” said Webbo, kissing Chantal again. “I think president Roosevelt once said that *the only thing we have to fear is fear itself*.”

“Yes, but it’s important that people who do fear STDs wear protection as long as they have not managed to overcome their fears. That emotional job is not easy and takes time.”

“And what about pregnancy?” wondered Webbo.

“Women simply use the *Natural Cycles* app to monitor the natural cycles of their ovulation periods and refrain from having sex for those six days a month. The app gives customised information and takes into account the varying lengths of the period for every woman.”

“Six days without sex?”

“Which gives us time to actually get some studying done as well,” joked Chantal.

“Or you could use protection during those days.”

“Yes. So, make sure you keep some condoms at hand in case I get horny on my red days. As for the greens days...”

Chantal did not need to make a drawing.

“So, you no longer use the pill?”

“Too many negative side-effects, one of them being that women’s brains don’t work properly which leads them to make the wrong choice of partners, something that can in part explain the divorce statistics in your dimension.”

“Thanks, you’ve taught me a lot. Now, what about this year’s study? Fantasies, you said? I guess we’ll get good use of the two libraries downstairs?”

“We sure will. And the playrooms in the basement.” answered the naughty girl.

Chantal and Webbo already knew each other fairly well, having been admirers since the first year. However, they both had had other roommates and had only spent time together sporadically, so they were really looking forward to more intimacy this year.

“I have an idea,” said Webbo, stood up and walked to the bar. He asked the bartender for some pens and paper.

“I think I know what you have in mind,” said Chantal giving him a kiss as he sat down again.

“Yes, let’s write down our respective fantasies and see how we can create a program for the coming year.”

“Fantastic idea!” said the French jewellery student.

They both spent a few minutes to search the naughtiest places of their minds, and wrote a few words on their respective sheets. Once they were done, Webbo said: “OK, so this was my idea, which means you get to start.”

“You win. Well, before I go into any details, I’d like to explain three keywords that I want to wrap my fantasies in.”

“Now I’m intrigued.”

“The first main keyword is *crescendo*: I want to push my boundaries further and further in the coming months. Linked to this crescendo is what I call *opening up*. I want you and my other admirers to open me up more and more.”

“The second keyword is *sexual freedom*. I also want to leave room for spontaneity so that I can best respond to my current mood and sexual needs. Also, you will not always be available, and... spoiler alert... I do also fantasise about other men.”

“And the third?”

“The last keyword is *being seen*, and by that I mean feeling that others take pleasure in looking at me, be it at a cocktail party, or down in the playroom. That makes me feel alive. Your turn.”

“Thanks for your openness, Chantal. You’re so beautiful that I can guarantee that we will find people who want to admire your superb body, adorned with the wonderful jewellery that you design.” He gave her a kiss.

“Thanks, Webbo.”

“And I’d say that your last keyword complements me well, because for me, one of the main things that turns me on is to see you taking pleasure, and one of my fantasies is to see you having sex with other men or women, both as an observer... and a participant. Now, show me what you’ve written down.”

Chantal unfolded her piece of paper:

Tantra – Bondage – 3 – 4 – 6

“I can see the crescendo there. Those numbers leave a few questions open: what gender combinations do you most fantasise about?”

“For the threesome, I’d like to try both. For the foursome, I think couples’ play.”

“And for the six?”

“The ultimate feminine power: simultaneously pleasuring five men. But I’m not ready for that yet, hence the crescendo.”

“Thanks for sharing this with me, you’re so beautiful, a true jewel,” said Webbo, kissing her and leaving a hand on one of her breasts for a while.

“Your turn to show me what you’ve written,” said Chantal.

Webbo opened his paper:

Remote – Bondage – Threesome – Gang Bang

“Looks like we’ll be able to find some common ground,” said Chantal looking Webbo deep into the eyes. “First question: what do you mean by remote?”

“I’m a tech wiz, remember?”

“Now I get it. Remote control.”

“Yes, there are creative toys that I’d like to try out, crescendo guaranteed.”

“I’m in! And for the gang bang, how many men do you have in mind?”

Webbo thought to himself what a difference it makes when women are sex positive: he feels that he can truly relax, no hidden games or hypocrisy, relationships are more fun, and probably much healthier too.

“Between five and ten maybe? You want to graduate with honours, don’t you?”

Chantal smiled.

“One condition: you let me pick them.”

“Sure. That’s part of the game.”

“Looks like I have a lot of homework to do before my final graduation test,” joked Chantal.

“I look forward to help you with your homework,” said Webbo.

To which the naughty girl replied: “Do you have the slightest idea how horny this conversation made me? Let’s go up to our new room.”

Webbo kissed her, and they left the bar lounge.

When they got to the room, Chantal put on her ‘special’ playlist.

♪ *Bouscule-moi – Elsa*

“Listen carefully,” she told Webbo, who got the message and adapted his lovemaking to his partner’s arousal level.

As they lay in the bed after their hot session, Webbo said:

“That was mind-blowing.”

“You’ve learnt a lot in the last two years,”

“I go to a good school,” he said teasingly. “And you were amazing too.”

“If you thought that was mind-blowing, you’ll like what lies ahead of us this year.”

“I am sure I will.”

“To give you some inspiration, I thought we could watch a film together.”

“A film?”

“Yes, it was done three years ago by a group of the architecture and filmmaking students here at Splendour.”

“That sound promising,” said Webbo.

Chantal turned on the TV, they sat back comfortably in the bed, and she pushed play on the... remote control.

Pin Me Up

Starring Pippa & Phuoc

Pippa smiled to herself. She was satisfied with the work she had done in the last year and could already see many positive changes in people’s lives, including her own.

As a social designer in her small town, Pippa had observed that people’s relationship needs evolved all the time and could be different from one day to the next, so she came up with the idea to have people wear pins of different colours to signal their current relationship needs. She had designed a small discreet pin with a heart-formed shape that clearly stated what a person was looking for.

For example, wearing a **grey pin** means *Do Not Disturb*, something a person may choose if they work on an important project and need private time even if they also want to get out in public,

walk in parks or read/work in the library or a café. Or if for any other reason, they simply do not wish to be disturbed.

The **blue pin**, on the other hand, means *Talk to Me*, for persons who want to get to know new people, or just have a chat, but who have their intimate relationship needs already met.

As for the **yellow pin**, it says *Touch Me*, but non-erotically, with tenderness; this is if someone just needs a small oxytocin booster. This could be default in bars and at networking events, if the community so chooses.

The **green pin** is the green light that says *Date Me*, where the person has put in some extra effort to look attractive, for example wearing a nice shirt, dress or lipstick. This pin means that the person is looking for romance and wants to get to know a potential partner more in-depth and there is a fair chance that physical interactions may follow.

Finally, the **red pin**, the *Fuck Me* pin, is a more obvious sign, often associated with a provoking or sexy outfit. Flirting with and respecting the other person will still be expected, but so will releasing sexual intercourse.

All ‘higher’ pins usually include the lower ones. So, a person looking for a date is by definition open to conversation and touching as well.

Also, wearing **no pin** is for people who are not actively looking for anything at the moment, or who have not yet decided what pin to wear.

So, Pippa introduced this pin system in her small town, and it was a quick success. People either embraced it, or moved somewhere else, not able to cope with such transparency in human relationships.

Now that we’ve set the scene, let’s follow Pippa for a few days to see what her life looks like.

Monday

Mondays are normally no pin days for Pippa, when she is starting a new week, seeing where it leads. Mondays are great for her to discuss projects with her colleagues and set goals for the coming days. If she is out for lunch alone, she may wear a blue pin, it’s always nice to talk to someone new, broadens one’s views and makes us a more interesting person.

Tuesday

On Tuesdays, Pippa usually wears a grey-pin, so that she can fully concentrate on various projects she is working on. After work, both on Mondays and Tuesdays, she takes time for herself, maybe cooks or watches a movie, and continues to write a novel she wants to publish.

Wednesday, afterwork

Today, Pippa went to an afterwork party at the bar next to where she works. She is wearing an elegant black sleeveless dress, knee-length, looking professional. And she wears a yellow pin. Both men and women approach her, talking to her, and gently touching her to fill her up with the oxytocin and tenderness that she needs at the moment.

Thursday, lunchtime

Yesterday's event boosted Pippa's mood and today she feels ready for romantic encounters. Her green pin is on. She is having lunch at the cafeteria where she works. Still professionally looking, she wears a black miniskirt with a light blue blouse. She has a few more armbands around her wrists than usual, feeling very feminine. She has put her hair in a ponytail and wears a nice necklace with matching earrings.

She's been having eye contact with a good-looking Asian guy sitting a few tables away. Her green pin makes it totally clear that she is open to dating, so the guy has no rejection to fear. He comes over and introduces himself.

"Hi, I'm Phuoc, nice to meet you. You look ravishing." He said this while gently touching her forearm.

"Thanks, I'm Pippa. You look quite handsome too," she said, feeling his biceps.

"Thanks. What about a drink at the Tender Bar after work at 5.30PM?"

"Sure, I look forward to getting to know you."

"Likewise."

"Romantic encounters are not supposed to be more complicated than this," thought Pippa, reflecting back on what had just occurred. "No games played, pure honesty: 'I like what I see, let's get to know each other.'"

Thursday, evening

"Hey Pippa, nice to see you again," said Phuoc hugging Pippa and giving her a kiss on the cheek, "What will you have to drink?"

"A glass of Chardonnay will be fine, thanks."

Phuoc went to fetch drinks, came back, then said:

"So, what do you do here in town?"

"I'm a social designer."

"A social designer? What does that mean?"

"I'm the one coming up with creative ideas for smoother and more fun human interactions."

"You mean like the idea of the pins?"

“Yes, that’s me.”

“Wow! If only you knew to what degree my life has improved since those pins were introduced. I get dates regularly, with wonderful women. And I don’t get disturbed when I am in concentration mode.”

“So, what do you need to concentrate for?”

“I’m a house designer.”

“Cool, like an architect?”

“Yes, very similar, just simpler, smaller projects, mostly one- to three-stories residential houses and buildings.”

“And what does your dream home look like?”

“Maybe I can convince you to come to my place and judge by yourself?”

“I’d love to see a house designer’s own place.”

“I already have an anchor partner. Her name is Emma. Are you OK with that?”

“I love variety too,” answered Pippa. “Lucky woman, Emma, do you have a photo of her?”

“Sure.” Phuoc took out his wise phone and showed Pippa a picture of a stunning red-haired woman.”

Pippa licked her lips, then looked Phuoc into the eyes: “I’d love to get to know her too, sometime. But tonight, I’m busy getting to know her partner.”

“And Emma is busy with two of her colleagues.”

Once they had finished their drinks and had some tapas as a light dinner, Phuoc took Pippa by the hand and they walked over to his place, maybe ten blocks from the bar. The fresh air and walking felt nice, and at some point, Phuoc stopped Pippa, put his hand around her waist and gave her a sensual kiss.

“You’re so pretty,” he told her.

Pippa blushed and this time she initiated the second kiss. After that, they walked on to Phuoc’s place, a charming little two-story house. Or was it one-and-a-half stories? Pippa wasn’t sure.

The entrance door opened into the kitchen, with a small lounge area to the right. The very unique feature of Phuoc’s home was that there were two ladders, one on each side of the main living/kitchen area.

“These ladders save a lot of wasted space normally taken up by regular stairs. Plus, that it’s always a nightmare to find good uses for the space under the stairs.” Then he pointed to the right:

“That’s Emma’s quarters and what happens on that side is none of my business, except if I’m invited in.”

“So, your quarters are on this side?” asked Pippa, pointing to the left.

“Yes, bedroom and bathroom on the ground floor. Study and TV lounge in the loft up the ladder.”

“I’d love to see the loft,” said Pippa.

“Sure. Let’s grab a drink and go up there.” Phuoc quickly prepared two lemonade Martinis.

“You first. That way I can catch you if you fall,” he said.

“And you can see the colour of my underwear.”

“And I can see the colour of your underwear.”

Pink.

“This is so nice and cosy,” exclaimed Pippa, as she walked through the loft door to see a comfortable sofa to the right, with cute small tables on each side, both with a small shaded lamp on them. And towards the gable window, there was a small office space.”

The great thing with that loft was the glassed door and two windows looking down on the kitchen area. So, the loft could be closed off.

Phuoc added: “Great feature so that I can concentrate working while Emma is noisy in the kitchen. And vice versa.”

They sat down on the sofa, chatted for a while, then kissed again. Suddenly, Phuoc realised: “Wait, is that a pink pin you’re wearing?” He was sure the pin was green earlier during the day and evening.

“Yes,” responded the pretty social designer next to him, “I’m trying it for the first time.”

“And what does it mean?”

“It means make gentle love to me. Think tantra-style.”

Phuoc gave Pippa another sensuous kiss, this time a little longer. Then he stood up, closed the door and drew the curtains.

“Are we not alone in the house?”

“No, Emma is probably having a threesome right now.”

“But I haven’t heard anyone.”

“This house has been specifically sound-proof designed for such situations. Which means they cannot hear you either, so just relax.”

“Why weren’t all homes designed that way?” wondered Pippa.

Phuoc continued: “Have you heard of eye-gazing?”

“Don’t think so. Do you mean looking each other in the eyes?”

“Yes. It’s simple: we sit for a few minutes just looking each other deep into the eyes.”

They did.

“Wow, what a powerful experience,” said Pippa afterwards.

They kissed again for a very long time. Then Phuoc, in a few quick moves, turned the sofa into a bed.

“Some more designer’s magic?” wondered Pippa.

Phuoc grinned, then started to slowly undress her. Very slowly. “Show me where you want to be touched.”

She showed him.

And the pleasure went on for a few hours.

Then Pippa said, “It’s getting late, I’d better get home to catch some sleep before work.”

“I understand.”

“Thank you so much for tonight, Phuoc. We will see each other again.”

“Very soon, I hope.”

“Very soon.”

Friday

Friday turned out to be a busy day at work, finishing some projects before the week-end. No pin today, Pippa was a very satisfied woman after last night, not needing more. At least not in the next 24 hours. In the evening, she met up with her girlfriends to brief them about Phuoc and love-conducive architectural design.

Saturday after lunch

Pippa was ready for more, she was quite horny actually, thinking back on her Thursday night with Phuoc. She put on stockings, stilettos and her favourite tight-fitting silver sequin party dress. She added a matching choker collar and a red pin on her chest. She looked herself very satisfied in the mirror and thought: “I like that pin-up girl. Maybe someone else would too?” Then she took a selfie and sent to Phuoc with a short note: “Anything planned tonight?”

Fifteen minutes later, she received a reply: “Now I do. Come over to my place at 6PM. Dressed like that. Phuoc.”

Saturday night

Phuoc opened the door, looking great and fresh. Pippa felt she was in for a treat.

He gave her a kiss, then asked:

“How are you? You look absolutely stunning.”

“Horny. Thanks.”

“We’ll make sure to address that situation,” he said squeezing her breast and buttocks simultaneously. “But first, let’s have a drink and some dinner.”

He opened the fridge, took out a bottle and poured two glasses of wine.

“Chardonnay, which I know you like and it will be a good fit for the oysters.”

“I love oysters, thanks.”

They looked each other deep into the eyes.

Then Pippa continued: “Since I saw your place last Thursday, I’ve thought a lot about the link between social and architectural design. It kind of feels like your home is the architectural answer to my pins.”

“I think I know what you mean. Although I designed it before you introduced your pins, I think this house design covers most of the pins.”

“Please explain.”

“When I do not want to be disturbed, then I retreat in my quarters, and have good sound-proofing to both office and bedroom. That is your grey pin. As for the blue and yellow pins, the common area is a place where I can meet Emma regularly, and just talk or touch. Or have friends over for dinner. Or I go out on the veranda and can talk to passers-by. I can also sit on the veranda with my green or red pin and see what happens. As for the pink pin, I think we tried that one out on Thursday.”

“Yes, and as you can see, a happy client always comes back,” said Pippa. “Your house is definitely well-designed for pin(k) events.”

“Thanks. As for the red events, let us see what the design can do after dinner.”

“I very much look forward to that,” said Pippa, giving Phuoc a kiss.

The oysters, followed by some more wine and very tasty asparagus with béarnaise sauce, made Pippa even hornier.

Phuoc could feel that and rejoiced at his plan for the night.

Once they had eaten, he took Pippa by the hand, kissed her, and asked: “Do you mind being watched making love?”

“If I can’t see the people watching me. Unless it’s an open threesome, or more...”

“Don’t worry, you won’t see anyone and can focus on your pleasure, while giving our spectators pleasure at the same time.”

“That sounds good. Will you film?”

“No, only Emma and her lover may watch us. OK?”

“OK.”

“Good, then let’s begin the three-scarf program.”

“The three-scarf program?”

“Shh...” said Phuoc, putting a finger on Pippa’s lips, then kissing them.

“The first scarf is for your eyes...” As he said that, he gently blindfolded her. Then he kissed her again, and felt her hardening breasts under her dress. He turned her around and walked a few steps with her. Then turned her again.

“What is he doing?” wondered Pippa.

“The second scarf is for your right wrist...” He kissed her wrist and lifted it above her head, and attached it to...

“The ladder!” realised Pippa.

“And the last scarf is for your beautiful left wrist...” Phuoc secured her left wrist to the ladder and gave her another kiss while his hand started to explore her genital area.

“No underwear. Naughty girl...”

“Saves some time,” replied Pippa, exuding sexual confidence.

“And wet you are...” noticed Phuoc as he put his hand between Pippa’s legs.

“It’s not like what you’re doing to me makes me less horny than I already was... Just pin me up!”

♪ *Pin Me Up – Dimie Cat*

“You’re talking too much.” That being said, Phuoc put a ball gag into her mouth, held firmly in place with a strap around her neck.

What Pippa couldn’t see now was that the scene was eagerly followed by Emma and her lover from behind the windows up in her loft.

Phuoc kissed Pippa again on the neck, then whispered in her ear:

“You’re so delightful...”

Then he squeezed her breasts and started to tease her clitoris with a vibrating dildo. After a while, he inserted it in her vagina and Pippa could feel her orgasm approaching fast.

But Phuoc took out the vibrator and said: “Looks like you need to cool down...”

“What an exquisite torture,” thought Pippa, because she couldn’t say it. Then Phuoc inserted his expert fingers and teased her past the point of no return. What an orgasm!

He gave her a few more kisses all over her body, then said: “Good girls get orgasms.”

Then he started to untie her left wrist.

“Soon free again,” thought Pippa gladly.

As if he could read her mind, Phuoc said: “That was just Act One, I’m not done with you yet. Our spectators need to get their money’s worth.”

Phuoc knew Emma’s voyeuristic tendencies well, and was sure she would be very satisfied tonight. Because Pippa was extremely beautiful and definitely did not fake any pleasure.

So, Phuoc untied her wrist, but just so he could take off her dress. He didn’t need to take off her bra, because she didn’t wear any. Then he attached her again to the ladder, wearing only her high heels and nylon black stay-ups. And mouth gag and blindfold.

“You’re so pretty, Pippa,” he whispered to her, feeling her naked breasts and kissing her again.

Pippa still couldn’t answer.

Then Phuoc turned off the lights and switched on a spotlight that only lit up both of them, like actors in a theatre, leaving the rest of the room in total darkness. So, the spectators could continue to watch. Unseen.

After that, he took off Pippa’s blindfold.

“It’s time for you to see what’s going on.”

No reply, only some kind of grunt noise.

Now Phuoc took off her mouth gag.

“And it’s time for our spectators to hear what’s going on.”

“I like when you pin me up to the ladder,” said Pippa, finally able to talk again.

Phuoc kissed her everywhere. Pippa’s moaning got louder and louder. Then he went down on her, licking her pussy until she couldn’t stand it any longer. How badly she wanted him inside her...

He stopped his lingual teasing, undressed, and Pippa could finally get a glimpse of his magnificent erection. And feel it... Phuoc quickly pressed his body against hers, heightening their respective arousals.

After a while, he put his manhood at the entrance of her vagina, and asked:

“Is the red-pin lady ready for some penis?”

“Ready? I’ve been ready since I entered the door tonight!”

“My turn to enter then,” replied Phuoc, lifted one her legs, and penetrated her.

Pippa gasped and begged him to fuck her hard, not caring about who was watching and what they were hearing. She was not afraid to acoustically express her pleasure. This was red-pin night.

It did not take a long time until Pippa exploded in yet another orgasm, this time more powerful than the first one.

Like the invisible spectators, Phuoc loved to watch his female partners orgasm genuinely.

Once Pippa had come back to her senses, he untied her.

She kissed him passionately. And in an unexpected twist of events, Pippa managed to pin him up against the ladder and tie his wrists to it.

“Act Three’s on me,” she said teasingly. Phuoc hadn’t ejaculated yet.

She kissed him all over his body, until finally she reached out for his erection, which she eagerly took into her mouth. Once she felt that he was about to come, she let him cool down for a while, then she put his penis into her pussy until it was time for him to cool down again...

Then the expert beauty took his erection into her mouth again, and didn’t let loose until she had swallowed a major load of cum.

“Where had she learnt all this?” wondered Phuoc.

Phuoc was glad he was attached to the ladder, because he could hardly stand up after that earthshattering orgasm.

Pippa kissed him on the mouth, made him taste a little of his own semen. Then she untied him.

“Bad boy,” she told him. “Now you’ve made me horny again...”

“It’s your fault, you’re so fucking sexy and irresistible.”

Those were the kinds of things Pippa liked to hear, a clear reward for her efforts at the gym and in the swimming pool.

“Let’s turn off that spotlight and proceed to Act Four in the bedroom,” said Phuoc. “I think our spectators at this point are so horny that they are no longer able to follow anyway.”

After a few more love sessions in the bedroom, they fell asleep exhausted in each other’s arms.

Sunday, breakfast

Phuoc had prepared a copious breakfast, for some reason they were both very hungry. They looked each other in the eyes, their relationship would never be the same again.

“Your ladder design gets my full stamp of approval,” said the pin-up girl.

“Thanks. And your pin designs certainly get my approval, too.”

“The power of design.”

Monday, again

Pippa was back at work. Her favourite colleague was not blind and could clearly spot her unusual radiance. She said: “Pippa, you have stuff you need to tell me...”

The End

“So, did you like it?” Chantal asked Webbo.

“A pleasure for the senses: great storyline, beautiful actors, nice architecture, fitting music. Very inspiring, such a high level of creativity.”

“I agree,” said the naughty brunette. “Anything else?”

“The aesthetic was amazing and I was surprised that they had decided to show everything.”

“What do you mean, ‘everything?’” wondered Chantal.

“I mean normally in love scenes in movies they show nothing, or just silhouettes, or if they feel daring, they may show the woman’s breasts. But this film even showed his...”

“*Lingam*? Yes, such a beautiful penis. Here at Splendour, we do not do gender discrimination. We show beautiful breasts, and beautiful penises.”

“I like such a positive attitude.”

“Another reason we show the *yoni* as well is to underline the importance of opening up.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Do you know what the opposite to open is?”

“Closed?”

“Yes, but more precisely, it is death.”

“Death? Please explain.”

“If women don’t open their legs, no babies are born, and the human race dies. And I can assure you that women who open their legs are more likely to feel alive. If a store doesn’t open for business, it dies. If we don’t open our mouths to eat, drink or breathe, we die. If a boss is not open for new ideas, his business will die sooner or later. And in general, people who are not open to new ideas will die inside, they’re just zombies. As for parachutes... I think you get the point. In other words, open equals alive.”

“Wow... what a powerful insight, I had never thought about that before. Also, when our chakras are not open, we feel less alive.”

“Good point. Anything else you got out of the film?”

“Yes, there is a small problem.”

“What, a problem?”

“Yes, with the crescendo.”

“What do you mean,” wondered Chantal.

“I mean that when you show me things like this, I get so aroused that it upsets the crescendo sequence.”

“Not sure I understand.”

Webbo got up to his desk and fetched something in the drawer.

He went back to Chantal in the bed, gave her a kiss, then took one of her arms and tied it to the bedpost. Then he tied her other hand.

“What I mean,” said Webbo, “is that we’ll need to take the bondage before the tantra, which will have to wait until tomorrow.”

“Stop speaking and just fuck me,” said Chantal, probably as aroused from the film as Webbo was.

“That was your last Dream World travel, Webbo,” said Leo, “which concludes all of our 18 Dream World travels. Well done, guys!”

WEBBO MARAJ – THIRD DWT – 17.07.2018

“It looks like there are a few ideas for our in-house architect in this film-within-Dream-World,” said Leo.

“Well, it’s part of my job to make sure all the needs and wants of my clients are met,” said Modella, keeping a straight face.

“What else can we learn from Webbo’s last year of school?” asked Boss.

“That it’s possible to have open conversations around topics many people don’t dare to admit to others, and sometimes even to themselves,” said Richie.

Verity intervened, thinking back on her happy Canadian experience: “I’d say it’s a positive invitation to have us think out-of-the-box when it comes to relationships: as soon as additional partners are thrown into the game, the game becomes far more interesting.”

“Yes,” confirmed Boss. “It’s simple maths: the number of combinations and situations one has with only one partner is by definition much smaller than if one adds one, two or even more persons to the game.”

Modella added: “I agree, and think that Webbo’s Fantasies Dream World makes it clear that most of us will have at least some fantasies that include more than one partner.”

Part 36 Loves

Geneva, Switzerland, 18 July, 2018

Since she'd come back from Québec, Verity had been obsessed with finding additional clues to decode love.

Browsing the Internet as well as her extensively populated memory, she came across Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, and an intuition told her that could be a source for more knowledge on love.

Her online research led her over and over again to one name: Panayiotis Tzatziki, a Cypriot urban planner. She wrote him an email and he told her to meet him at the Paphos lighthouse on Friday afternoon.

“An urban planner?” wondered Modella

“I understood he is a very unusual type of urban planner. He's also an architect and an Antiquity expert,” said Verity.

“Who knows?” said Richie. “Sometimes we get answers in the most unexpected places. Modella, maybe you should join Verity? Because you're an architect, you may better understand certain things that he will share.”

Verity wrote again to Panayiotis to ask him if it was OK if she brought an architect friend with her. It was.

Paphos, Cyprus, 20 July 2018

Two days later, Verity and Modella flew from Geneva to Paphos on the south-western coast of Cyprus.

The lighthouse stood on a small hill with magnificent views on the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

“Τειά σου!” Verity greeted Panayiotis with one of the few Greek expressions in her vocabulary. Despite her incredible polyglotism, Verity did not speak Greek. However, she was aware of the Greek etymology of many words in other languages. And, because she was fluent in Russian and had some basic maths knowledge, she could easily read the Greek alphabet.

“Nice to meet you, Verity,” said the middle-aged man, dark-haired with a moustache, looking very much like she imagined a typical Greek or Cypriot.

“And this is my friend Modella. She is an architect from Buenos Aires, interested in avant-garde projects.”

“*Encantado,*” said Panayiotis, who had travelled a lot for his profession over the years.

Verity then explained to Panayiotis the Grooters' Pact and how they had been able to access their Dream Worlds to get clues to help their parents, and to hopefully prevent an upcoming pandemic.

“Very interesting,” said Panayiotis.

“What a wonderful place,” Verity told him as they walked up to the nearby elevated viewing platform from where they could see many of the ancient ruins as well as a 200 degrees panoramic view of the Mediterranean Sea.

“Indeed, but it could be much nicer. Just look at these old ruins, they are not very useful, are they?”

Verity had never considered the usefulness of ruins. Neither had Modella, despite having worked on quite a few renovation projects.

Panayiotis continued: “If we really love a place, would we let that place remain in ruins?”

They could not find any counter-argument to that.

Also, him mentioning this made Verity aware that one could love more than just people.

Her exceptional brain made a quick connection: “*Topophilia?*”

“Exactly!” confirmed the Cypriot. “See the ancient agora below us?”

Verity had already spotted the former square marketplace on Google Maps. “*Agoraphilia?*”

“Yes! Young lady, I understood you are here to learn more about love. And I think you are in the right place. Did you know that the Greek language has at least seven different words for love?”

“You mean like the Inuit have several words for snow?”

“Precisely. You’ve certainly come across a few of them already, like *philia*.”

The lovely human encyclopedia added: “A form of deep friendship?”

“It is a very encompassing form of love that you can feel for a life partner, but also for a childhood friend, or for nature (*biophilia*). Or as we just saw, *topophilia*, the love of place. *Philia* can also be used for loving anything, be it animals, hobbies or abstract concepts.”

Verity now started to realise that there was so much more to love than the classic romantic love she had been focusing on. And this discussion made her aware of her own strong *bibliophilia*.

“What other words for love do the Greeks have?”

“Another well-known word is *eros*, which is physical love, or sexual passion. I don’t think that one needs much explanation.”

“I get the picture,” joked Verity.

“Associated with *eros*, we also have *erototropia*, better known as *ludus* in Latin, which is a playful, flirtatious, noncommittal love. It is most often associated with lovers, but can also be applied to children playing together, teasing each other playfully.”

“I hadn’t thought about that, glad we can learn so much from old Greek thinkers.”

“Yes, we are lucky to have such a rich history in this part of the world.”

Modella, who had recently found love, did not interfere in their conversation. But she listened attentively.

“So, what’s next?” asked Verity.

“*Pragma*.”

“Sounds like pragmatic.”

“Closely related. *Pragma* is a committed, longstanding, companionate love which ideally kicks in after the honeymoon phase so that lovers don’t spend their lives ‘up in the clouds’. *Pragma* enables them to take pragmatic *pragtical* steps to build a family, start a business together or build a house that will consolidate their love in the long term.”

Verity felt a sadness in her heart hearing this, as this may be the major form of love that she has been missing. Panayiotis could feel that and said:

“With your new awareness of all these facets of love, I am convinced that you will soon find a partner with whom you can experience several forms of love, including *pragma*.”

“Thanks, yes, it feels like I start to get a firmer grasp of what love truly is about.”

“Then we have my favourite form of love, *agape*.”

“*Agape*? Never heard of that.”

“Unfortunately, it is quite rare in our current modern individualistic societies. *Agape* is a universal, empathetic form of love that stretches to nature, strangers, or even God or other humans whom you’ve never met. It’s a kind of unconditional love for all of humanity. I try to connect to *agape* when I design cities, I try to feel love for the people who are going to live in those cities in the future.”

“I’m eager to hear more about your city planning projects,” said Modella.

“Sure, I’ll just finish the list of love words. Next is *storge*, which is a familial form of love, typically the love parents feel for their children.”

“I didn’t know there was a specific word for that kind of love, although I know that most parents love their children.”

“Having words to describe things is very important. Then we have *philautia*, or the love of the self. It is about self-compassion and caring about yourself, so that you ultimately can care more about and love others.”

“But isn’t self-love egoistical or selfish?”

“Good observation, Verity,” said Panayiotis, “there are aspects of self-love that are negative when one becomes too self-obsessed. The equivalent, directed toward others is the Greek term *mania*, an obsessive unhealthy form of love, often in form of emotional dependency, possessiveness or jealousy.”

“Wow, thanks for sharing all this. Have we covered them all now?”

“We could eventually also add the word *xenia*, or *philoxenia*, the Greek word for hospitality, which is a form of love towards foreigners and guests.”

Verity had never thought about hospitality as a form of love and was now so thankful for Ancient Greek wisdom.

“*Ευχαριστώ!*” said Verity. “Thank you so much for sharing this wisdom with us.”

“You are very welcome,” replied Panayiotis.

“Now, I think both of us are very curious to hear about your plans for this place.”

They walked down to the nearby amphitheatre ruins and sat down on the steps. Then Panayiotis said: “I want you to imagine this *odeon* fully alive, not just being used once or twice a year for a tourist performance, but a place being used every night it does not rain, at least during the summer half of the year.”

Verity and Modella tried their best to imagine this ancient stone structure being used to its full potential, perfectly located leeward of the small hill where the lighthouse was standing.

Panayiotis continued:

“Now, don’t just imagine an isolated theatre. Instead, imagine it being part of a resuscitated neo-classic town in this perfect location.”

The Grooters girls admitted that they could only get a fuzzy picture in their minds of how such a place could look like.

“I know, it’s not easy to imagine,” admitted Panayiotis.

“But will UNESCO allow it?” wondered Modella.

“UNESCO is about preserving cultural heritage, isn’t it?”

“Yes...”

“My plan is not to destroy cultural heritage. On the contrary, it is to enhance and revive that cultural heritage. In the case of Paphos and this region, it is the cult of Aphrodite.”

“From an urban planning perspective, I reckon that’s quite a challenge?” asked Modella.

“Indeed. I’ve been working on this dream for a decade already, and it may take another one until we start to rebuild this part of Paphos.”

“So, what’s your main challenge?”

“There are two sets of challenges. The first is architectural: how do we rebuild ancient Roman and Greek villas with their beautiful mosaics, and how do we make sure these buildings are energy efficient and earthquake proof? Solar panels on the roofs are not aesthetical.”

“That’s a typical architectural dilemma,” confirmed Modella.

“I know, and still, that’s the easy part of the project.”

“So, what’s the hard part?” wondered Verity.

“To figure out the complex relationships of Aphrodite and what she really stood for. Also, her abundant love life is hard to reconcile with people’s current beliefs that strict monogamy is the only way to live.”

“OK,” responded the girls.

“If we assume for a moment that she was this multi-faceted goddess associated with *love*,

lust, beauty, pleasure, passion and procreation’, as Wikipedia puts it, then how do we build a city that reflects of all this?”

“Yes, and how do we build it in an elegant way to make it socially acceptable?” wondered Modella.

“I wouldn’t try to please everyone,” said Verity.

“Guess you’re right,” said Panayiotis.

“One thing I would suggest,” said Modella, “is that you try and figure out what would be the main building that represents the ethos of Paphos and the people who are going to live and work here.”

“That’s an interesting perspective,” replied Panayiotis. “I’d say some form of ‘Aphrodite’s temple of love’ would be appropriate to have as a main building, unless we count the agora as the main place?”

“But agora is a marketplace,” said the blonde architect, “something that exists in most cities. On top of that there is not a direct link to Aphrodite. So, I think a ‘temple of love’ would be more appropriate,”

“There was one in Old Paphos, now named Koukليا, about 17km south-east from here, not too far from Aphrodite’s Rock, a bit further down the coast where Aphrodite was supposedly born.”

“Only ruins left, I suppose?” said Verity.

“Good guess, yes.”

“I have understood there were quite a few temples of Aphrodite built in Antiquity?”

“Indeed, they are all over the place in Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. From historical records, it is a bit unclear if there was one here as well on this archaeological site where we stand now.”

“I suppose you’ve discussed this with local historians?” asked Verity.

“Yes, and done my own in-depth research too. But this island has so many layers of history that it’s quite tricky to find out the precise historical facts.”

“That may be good news,” said Modella. “Because it means you have room for creativity and no one can come and tell you that your project is not culturally or historically aligned.”

“Good point,” said Panayiotis.

“I have two main questions regarding a potential main building being a temple of Aphrodite,” asked Verity. “Where would you locate it, and what would be inside it? Which aspects of love did Aphrodite represent?”

“Ha!” exclaimed Panayiotis. “Well, we know that Aphrodite was a lot about lust, passion and pleasure, so I would say that she definitely covers *eros* and *ludus*. But guess what? After the Trojan wars, a certain *Agapenor* came to this place, founded Paphos, and built a temple to Aphrodite!”

“*Agape!*” recognised both Modella and Verity.

“Yes, ‘love for everyone’. So, my urban planning vision for rebuilding this site is to cover all forms of love that our ancestors thought up. The ones I mentioned to you earlier.”

“And would all fit under one roof in the temple?”

“No, I don’t think so. But remember that Aphrodite also represents beauty, so I’d like an architecturally beautiful building that can be seen from the sea and from all other directions.”

“Which means you would locate it at the top of the hill where the current panoramic view is?” said Modella.

“That would make most sense, I think.”

“I agree with you.”

“As you can see, the area is quite big, almost a square kilometre, with a perimeter of almost 4km. This means we can divide it into different areas focused on different aspect of love.”

“For example?” asked Verity.

“One area could be dedicated to the sexual and passionate aspects of love, covering *eros* and *ludus*.”

“So that part could become something like *Cap d’Agde* in France?” wondered Modella.

“Yes, but with far nicer architecture. By the way, note that all the letters for *agape* are included in *Cap d’Agde*.”

“Wow, I’d love to help you design this place,” said Modella.

“Would love to have you on board,” said Panayiotis. “It’s not so easy to find open-minded architects nowadays. And it’s important to have the female perspective as well, especially for a project like this one.”

“By the way, because Aphrodite also represented beauty, I may have a few beauty tips as I used to work as a model. I am so inspired by all the beautiful ancient Aphrodite statues, and by some more recent paintings of her and even by some beautiful digital art representing Aphrodite.”

“Beauty is timeless,” said Panayiotis, admiring his two guests.

“What about the other parts of this planning project, reflecting the other aspects of love?” asked Verity.

“Then I imagine some beautiful gardens where lovers can stroll, and romantic restaurants and bars to watch the sunset. This would be for young couples as well as a place to solidify *pragma*, longstanding love, for older couples.”

“How wonderful,” said Verity.

“I also imagine a part where old friends can meet, *philia*, actually a place where anyone can come to meet friends, both old and new. Because ‘love for everyone’ also means we need to have places where people can come to find love and friendship.”

“What about *storge*?”

“This part of town would be for families,” said Panayiotis, pointing eastward, “with playgrounds and parklands for picnics. As for *philautia*, I envision a place filled with mirrors and where singles can come to improve their self-confidence. There would be volunteers helping them, welcoming them with *agape*, empathy.”

“And *xenia*?”

“I want *xenia* to be felt everywhere, all visitors to this place should feel lovingly welcomed. I want people working here to be humbly proud of their island, their culture, their history.”

“We could still leave some of the ruins, like the House of Dionysus or the Forty Columns Fortress?”

“Yes, that will be a historical reminder of the place. And we’ll definitely keep the amphitheatre, just restoring it. And the new structures should try and fit in as much as possible with those ruins, or rather, how we think those Antiquity houses looked like before they were levelled with the ground.”

They had now walked around most of the site, seeing it from different angles, the sea ever present. It was time for Verity and Modella to leave.

“Thank you so much for the tour and for explaining all these facets of love to us,” said Verity.

“And thanks for describing your wonderful project as well,” added Modella. “Please let me know how it advances, here is my business card. I can also help with identifying and removing unwanted entities.”

“Unwanted entities?” wondered Panayiotis.

“Yes, ghosts of deceased people who still linger around. I’ve met quite a few on our tour, and I’m not surprised due to this island’s long and complex history.”

“You mean this place is haunted?”

“That’s one way to put it. These ghosts mean nothing bad, but they can interfere with sleep and tranquillity.”

“I’ll keep that in mind, thank you. And thanks to both of you for visiting Cyprus and showing interest in our culture,” said Panayiotis.

“One last question,” said Verity. “After all these talks about love, what do you think it would require for Greek and Turkish Cypriots to love each other?”

“I wish I knew that,” answered Panayiotis with a sad look on his face.

The Grooters girls had a nice dinner in an old tavern in Paphos. They truly got to experience Cypriot *xenia*, and all men in the tavern invited the exotic girls to dance.

🎵 *Griechischer Wein – Udo Jürgens*

“What a wonderful mini-vacation!” Modella told Verity.

They then flew back to Geneva on the Sunday evening, giving them time for one and a half additional days of sightseeing.

Geneva, Switzerland, 23 July 2018

Back in the *Dreamcockpit*, Verity urged the others to help her brainstorm the concept of love, which she hoped may give them additional clues to get hold of the Crystal of Love, the only crystal now missing in their collection.

This time it was Verity standing at the flipchart. She started by making a graph of the *Physics of Love* that Aurora and Aaron had explained to her in Québec City:

1. *Attractive Energy*, physical attraction, but also emotional and mental attraction.
2. *Uplifting Energy*, next to which she listed the *Five Love Languages: Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Gifts, Quality Time, and Physical Touch*.
3. *Forward-Moving Energy*, which is all about working on a common goal or project, heading in the same direction as your partner.

“So far, so good,” she said.

The other Grooters nodded.

Below these energy explanations, Verity listed the Greek types of love she and Modella had just been taught by Panayiotis:

1. *Eros*
2. *Erototropia/Ludus*
3. *Philia*
4. *Pragma*
5. *Storge*
6. *Agape*
7. *Philautia*
8. *Xenia*

“All this seems familiar,” said Webbo.

“What do you mean?” asked Verity.

“It reminds me of the *Relationship Anarchy Smörgåsbord* that is taught at Splendour University. It’s about a conscious and mature approach to relationships, with the awareness that one single partner is unlikely to be able to meet all of our needs.”

“Very interesting,” said Modella, thinking about how Richie and Rocco wonderfully complement each other.

“Any other aspects of love that I have missed?” wondered Verity.

“Yes,” said Modella. “What you have covered so far is only about love between human beings. I think we can expand on the *-philia*. Remember Panayiotis’ *topophilia* and *agoraphilia*?”

“Of course! Let’s brainstorm.”

“Animals?” suggested Leo.

“Nature?” tried Richie.

“Yes, and yes,” said Verity.

“Although partly covered in the *Physics of Love*, I would add the love for projects, a hobby, a job, a profession or career,” said Boss, whose personal investigations for the Pact had convinced him about the importance to love the job you’re doing.

“And as Panayiotis mentioned, *topophilia*, or love of places which can extend to nature, towns and cities.”

“Love for art. And books,” said Webbo.

“And love for food,” said Modella. “And clothes!”

“And love for things,” added Boss, showing his wristwatch.

“Love of travel, experiences, and sports,” said finally Leo.

Verity summarised the brainstorm of the non-human aspects of love on the flipchart:

- Nature
- Animals
- Projects, hobbies, jobs
- Art
- Books
- Food, drinks
- Things, clothes
- Experiences, travel, sports.

“It feels like we’ve truly covered most aspects of love now,” said Verity.

“We could maybe somehow add that many of these forms of love can have negative sides, as with the Greek *mania*, or *zoophilia*, or *necrophilia*,” added Webbo.

“Yes,” said Leo. “And we also have to be aware of the questionable fact of people pretending they love their pets while at the same time restricting their freedom.”

“Good point,” added Richie. “Which I’d say is also valid for human relationships, where people keep their partners in cages, golden or otherwise. How often do you hear people saying that their partners don’t let them ‘breathe’?”

“Wow,” said Verity. “Are we love experts now?”

“I wouldn’t go that far,” said Leo, “but we certainly have some powerful knowledge to refer to if we encounter relationship or other life issues.”

“What’s next?” asked Modella. “Can we somehow use this knowledge to get hold of the Crystal of Love?”

To that Leo replied: “As an inventor, I am very aware of the creative process and when you’re looking for a solution there are a few phases. The first one is to do your homework, and gather as much information as you can about the problem. I’d say we’ve done that. Then the solution needs time to brew. In other words, we need to focus on other things for a while. And if everything goes fine, we should get some intuitive ideas for a solution in the coming days or weeks.”

“Well said, Leo,” replied Boss. “Let’s have a drink!”

Geneva, Switzerland, 26 July 2018

A few days later, Verity suddenly remembered something:

“Boss, you promised us you would show us that book club you’re a member of and where I found the Crystal of Love in my Dream World.”

“Sure, I’d be happy to. Shall we all go there this afternoon?”

“Great idea,” said Modella.

So, the Grooters all went to Geneva’s old town and Verity recognised the courtyard and the building from her 2061 Dream World. They walked up the stairs and Boss showed them the various salons and the main reading room. But what made that book club unique was all the small adjacent rooms, some stocked with books only, and other with tables and armchairs to read, study or write.

Not many people were around, just two other club members reading newspapers in the main room. Verity asked Boss if he knew which room was the one where she had found the crystal.

“I think it’s this room behind here,” he told her and showed her to a room that was behind another small room.

It was just a small room, but with bookcases covering all the walls. And there was an armchair at the window, overlooking the lake.

“Thanks,” said Verity.

Boss added: “I think this small room has some books that are not very often in circulation. I remember having borrowed one book here, and the last time it was checked out was in 1923.”

“Incredible,” she said, “that’s almost 100 years ago.”

She sat down in the chair, and Boss went back to the others. Verity liked the silence of libraries in general, but especially the silence that could be found in small rooms like this one. It was very meditative, and one reason she loved her profession as a librarian, so she could regularly escape to places like this.

Suddenly, something caught her eye. She thought she saw a tiny light from behind the books on the upper shelf at the back of the room.

She moved the armchair to that part of the room and stood on it so she could check what it was.

Verity removed about a dozen books on that upper shelf and indeed, there was something. It was a kind of leather pouch, but there was definitely a light emanating from its opening, despite the lace that closed the pouch. It was a red light.

She grabbed the pouch carefully, then opened it. Her heart started racing. Was this what she thought it was? Yes, it was. There it was. Now Verity held the Crystal of Love in her hands. This time for real.

She looked behind her, glad no one had seen her. She put back the crystal in the pouch, put back the books on the shelf, and put back the chair by the window. Then she put the pouch in her handbag, and closed the handbag.

She then walked back to the others, and whispered to Boss:

“We must leave.”

“What?”

“Trust me.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, we must get home as fast as possible.”

The other Grooters were very disappointed they had to leave so quickly. And they couldn't understand Verity's urge, because normally she's very predictable.

In the car back home, Boss asked her what this was all about. Although he didn't understand, he could feel there was something special about Verity's strange behaviour.

When they came home, Verity asked them to all gather in the living room and sit down on the couches. Then she asked her Grooters friends to take a good look at the crystals on the mantelpiece.

There they were: the Crystals of Beauty, Creativity, Nature, Knowledge, and Curiosity.

After that, Verity made some room among those crystals. Then she opened her bag, took out the leather pouch, opened it, and took out the Crystal of Love.

She held it in her hands, but soon realised that she did not need to hold it because it was hovering by itself in the air. Like in her Dream World.

The other Grooters were so surprised that they hadn't been able to say a word, they were transfixed by the beauty of the glowing red crystal and its incredible energy.

Verity passed the crystal around so that the others could convince themselves that it was actually for real.

Once everyone had held the Crystal of Love, Verity put it on the fireplace, in the middle of the other crystals. There it hovered, glowing with warmth.

Almost seven months had passed since they had found their first crystal in Sydney. Now, their search had culminated in an explosion of joy.

♪ *Crystal Love – Atmosphera*

They all hugged each other, especially Verity, whom they felt they owed a lot to for finding the Crystal of Love.

Then Boss took Richie by the arm, went to the kitchen and asked him to take out champagne glasses and some snacks, while he went down to the wine cellar to get two bottles of his favourite *Louis Roederer Cristal* champagne.

They enjoyed the quality champagne even more than when they had had it after discovering their second crystal in Marrakesh. Finally, they had managed to gather all the crystals. Or so they thought.

Part 37 Crystallica

Geneva, Switzerland, 27 July 2018

The Grooters were all a bit groggy the morning after, having celebrated their success with champagne, and a wonderful dinner with more wine and digestifs. Even Verity had a glass.

A good breakfast helped them regain energy. As they were about to finish eating, Webbo asked:

“Now what?”

“What now what?” asked Richie.

“Now that we have all the crystals, now what?”

“You’re right,” said Modella. “We now need to make the Crystallica operational. Or does it work automatically just because we’ve collected all the crystals?”

“Are we sure we have all the crystals?” asked Verity.

“Not really,” admitted Boss.

“And how do we know when the Crystallica is activated?” asked Leo.

“I think I remember Goldilocks saying that Crystallica would be active when all the crystals were pulsating and glowing,” said Richie.

“Only the Crystal of Love is pulsating at the moment.”

“Maybe the crystals need to be connected somehow?” wondered Modella. “In the same way that the veins and arteries connect the human heart to the rest of the body. To allow the whole body to pulsate.”

“There is some logic to that,” confirmed Webbo.

“But how?”

“Maybe we should ask Goldilocks for help?” said Richie.

“Great idea,” said the other Grooters and Richie wrote to Goldilocks telling her the good news that they had now found what they thought were all the crystals. And they needed her help to activate it. Richie suggested she come over to Geneva.

She replied immediately, very enthusiastic about what was happening, and said they were lucky because from next week her show would have its annual break, so she would be available for a month.

“I guess we’ll just wait until she comes then,” said Webbo.

“There must be something we can do in the meantime,” said Verity.

“Let’s brainstorm,” said Leo.

They were now all sitting in the living room, admiring their hard-earned treasures.

Boss started: “Somehow, I think we need to connect them.”

“Yes,” said Modella, “but how?”

“I know we can connect the two lightbulbs with a copper wire,” said Leo, pointing at the Crystals of Creativity and Knowledge.

Webbo got to fetch some copper wire that had been left over from the installation of the security system back in January.

Leo and Webbo tinkered for a few minutes, and connected both light-bulb crystals.

Nothing happened, or so they thought.

“Wait,” said Verity. “Let’s close the shutters and curtains, and turn off the lights.”

“Genius idea, Verity!” said Leo.

And indeed: when the room was in almost total darkness, they could see a tiny light emanating from the Crystals of Curiosity and Knowledge. There was definitely something going on.

“Somehow I had expected stronger pulsations,” said Modella.

“I agree with you,” said Richie.

“Yes, we are clearly missing something,” concluded Leo.

“What about the other crystals?” wondered Verity. “How are we supposed to connect them, especially those that are not piezoelectric?”

Verity had spent quite some time to study gems’ properties online, but still she didn’t have a gemmologist’s knowledge, nor instruments to be 100% sure what these crystals were.

“Do you think we need to hire a gemmologist for an assessment of the crystals?” asked Modella.

“I’d be careful about that,” said Boss. “I may be wrong, but given the size of these crystals, their worth is probably through the roof, and word may spread more than we would like about them if we involve a gemmologist.”

“Let’s wait and hear what Goldilocks has to say,” said Leo.

Geneva, Switzerland, 3 August 2018

The stunning trapezist arrived at the Grooters HQ and Webbo and Richie introduced her to the other Grooters. When Leo saw Goldilocks, he had a sense of *déjà-vu*, but couldn’t put his finger on where he may already have seen her. They all got along very well, and, again, the Grooters girls were happy to have some additional feminine energy in the house, this time staying longer than just until midnight.

They showed Goldilocks the crystals in the living room.

“Wonderful!” she said, then was silent for a while, totally focused on the crystals. Suddenly, she began to chant something in a language none of the Grooters understood.

“Probably Navajo or some similar language,” thought Verity.

Then Goldilocks stopped, and turned to the Grooters.

“This definitely confirms that the legend is true. Incredible job you’ve done to find all these crystals.”

“Thanks,” said Boss, representing all the Grooters. “So how do we now activate Crystallica?”

“By the way,” asked Webbo, “what was that chanting about?”

“I tried to communicate with the crystals.”

“And?”

“The message I got is that there are still a few crystals missing.”

“What?” exclaimed Leo.

“That could explain why we haven’t been able to properly activate it yet,” said Verity.

“Yes,” said Goldilocks.

“And what crystals are missing?” asked Richie.

“The only hint I received was this.”

Lady Luck & Logic Lad will lead you to the last two crystals.

“Logic & Luck?” asked Boss.

“That’s kind of how we’ve found the other crystals, isn’t it?” said Modella.

“Maybe we can start with logic?” said Leo. “What about going through each crystal, try and understand what it represents, and thus see if we can deduct the missing ones.”

“Sounds great,” said Goldilocks, with an enigmatic smile that the Grooters could not decipher.

“From what I’ve understood,” said Verity, “these crystals represent various things that will be needed to create our Dream Worlds.”

“I think you’re right about that,” said Leo.

“I concur,” said Goldilocks.

“Which means that we have to think logically about the main things that are necessary to create our Dream Worlds, or put in other words, an amazing future for humanity.”

“Yes,” said Richie.

“So, let’s take them in the order we found them. First, the Crystal of Beauty,” said Boss.

“That makes me think of Purotu, my last Dream World travel,” said Leo, and quickly explained to Goldilocks his Polynesian adventure.

“Indeed, beauty makes the world go round, as they say,” commented Webbo. “We definitely

want beauty in our Dream Worlds.”

“Next, we have the Crystal of Creativity, and creativity clearly something we want to see more of in the world,” said Verity.

“Yes, and again, that reminds me of Drugstorie,” said Leo.

“And me of Moovia,” said Modella.

“I’d say that all of our Dream Worlds were highly creative and beautiful environments,” said Boss, thinking especially of his adventures in Steamaru and Timove.

“Then we want Dream Worlds with a lot of love,” said Verity, pointing at the red hovering crystal.

“Yes, we do,” said Modella, and kissed Richie.

“And Dream Worlds need plenty of nature as well,” said Modella, “that’s good for our health.”

“We certainly do,” said Goldilocks, who was highly attuned to nature thanks to her connections with the Indigenous American tribes.

“Then we need knowledge, to help us navigate and create our Dream Worlds,” said Verity.

“We definitely need that too,” said Richie.

“Finally, we need curiosity to push us forward,” said Leo, pointing at the wooden ship with the crystal sail on the fireplace.

Silence.

“So, what have we missed?” Boss asked Goldilocks.

“I know one thing you’ve missed.”

“Tell us!” encouraged Verity.

“It is linked to the Crystal of Knowledge.”

“What do you mean?”

“Dig deeper: what does this specific Crystal of Knowledge represent? Where did you find it?”

“We found it on the Harvard campus in Boston,” said Verity.

“And what does Harvard represent?”

“Knowledge, I suppose,” said Richie about his alma mater.

“What kind of knowledge?” pushed Goldilocks.

“Primarily Western knowledge, I guess,” said Verity.

“Yes, and, more specifically, what does Harvard’s knowledge represent?”

“Written knowledge,” said Webbo.

“Exactly!” said Goldilocks. “Do you see where I’m going?”

“Now I think we do,” said Modella, remembering her conversation with Waugal in her Augusta Dream World. “My guess is that we would need another crystal that represents Indigenous and oral knowledge as well.”

“Of course!” exclaimed Verity, remembering the note that came with the Crystal of Knowledge they had found in Boston.

Books represent only half of human knowledge.

“Correct,” said the beautiful circus artist. “You’ll definitely also need a crystal that symbolises the other half of human knowledge. As Modella just said, the half linked to Indigenous oral traditions, and to all knowledge that is passed on orally from generation to generation, even for civilisations who use writing.”

“And where do you think we can find such a crystal?” asked Modella.

“The answer will come soon,” said Goldilocks in a calm, confident tone. The Grooters were not sure how to interpret that sentence. But they trusted her understanding of Indigenous knowledge.

“We should let all this sink in while we have dinner,” said Boss. “Goldilocks must be quite hungry after her travel here.”

“I am actually,” confirmed the aerial artist, “and a little tired, maybe I can take a quick power nap before dinner?”

“Sure,” said Boss, “I’ll show you to your room, it’s on the top floor where Modella’s and Verity’s rooms are. Professor Dimenport used to live in that room earlier this year.”

“Great, thank you so much.”

Half an hour later, the beautiful artist came down again, looking refreshed.

Boss, Leo and Modella prepared dinner for everyone, while the others conversed with Goldilocks, asking her plenty of questions about her shamanism as well as about her artistic career.

During dinner, Leo couldn’t keep his eyes off Goldilocks, admiring her exquisite beauty, but also trying to figure out what made him feel like that. And where he might have seen her before.

After dinner, they sat down in the living room, trying to better feel the crystals on the mantelpiece.

Suddenly, Goldilocks said: “I have a surprise for you.”

“A surprise?” wondered Richie, surprised.

Goldilocks took out a small package from her handbag.

“If I’ve understood correctly, Verity is the main knowledge keeper among the Grooters?”

The other Grooters confirmed: “Without the slightest doubt!”

Goldilocks handed Verity the package.

In the package was a leather pouch, similar to the ones that had contained the other crystals.

“Is this what I think it is?” said Verity.

“Open it,” said Goldilocks.

Verity did as she was told and took out a disk-formed crystal with an exceptional blue colour that reminded Richie of Emily’s eyes.

Verity passed around the shining crystal to the other Grooters and hugged Goldilocks.

“Thank you so much, we’re now one step closer to activate Crystallica.”

“You’re welcome, and sorry I had to wait a little, I wanted to get to know all of you first, and make sure you understood the importance of this missing piece.”

“We do understand,” said Boss. “Still, what a welcoming surprise!”

“So, what is this crystal called?” Verity asked Goldilocks.

“It’s the Crystal of Wisdom,” answered the wise shaman.

♪ *Wisdom Not Found in Books – Origen*

The blue disk-shaped crystal had a hole in the middle, and the Grooters quickly figured the purpose of it: to connect the Crystal of Knowledge.

Indeed, both crystals fitted perfectly together.

“Let’s turn off the lights,” said Verity.

It was already dark outside, so they just had to turn off the lights and candles in the living room.

What a wonderful sight. The Grooters and their North American guest could now see four crystals pulsating: the red Crystal of Love, as well as the three connected Crystals of Creativity, Knowledge and Wisdom, emanating white light, as well as two hues of soft blue light.

Seven crystals. One missing. They turned on the lights again.

“Did you already have this crystal when we saw you in Vegas last year?” Richie asked Goldilocks.

“No, but your unexpected visit encouraged me to redouble my efforts to find out more about Crystallica. And with my connections to various Indigenous tribes, we, together managed to get hold of the Crystal of Wisdom a few months ago.”

“And you didn’t tell us anything?” said Webbo.

“I knew you would get back to me,” said the shaman. “Remember, I’m very intuitive.”

“May I ask where this Crystal of Wisdom was found?” asked Richie.

“Through our worldwide network of Indigenous people, we were able to locate it in... Tibet.”

“Tibet?” wondered Verity.

“Yes, it had been hidden for over a century in a secret chamber in the basement of the Potala Palace in Lhasa. So, I travelled there personally with Lowligh Nightowl and we were able to convince them to give it to us so that we could help you build the Crystallica. I was very transparent with them and told them about you, the Grooters as well. They had also heard of the Crystallica legend and even helped me fill in a few knowledge gaps.”

“What an incredible story,” said Leo.

“You don’t happen to have another crystal laying around?” joked Webbo.

“I don’t, and I don’t even know what kind of crystal we are missing. But with all the Dream World travels you guys have done, you must have some clues?”

“Yes, maybe we should all think back on our respective travels to see if we can identify some patterns?” proposed Richie.

“Good idea,” said Verity.

They all sat a few minutes in silence. Then Webbo said:

“There is one recurrent theme in most of our Dream Worlds...”

“And what is that?” asked Goldilocks.

“Sex,” said Modella.

“Yes,” confirmed the others.

“That makes perfect sense,” said Goldilocks, “because sex is the most powerful creative energy in the universe. No wonder Crystallica doesn’t fully fire up yet.”

“So, you think there is some kind of Crystal of Sexuality as well?”

“Now that you mention it, I’m almost certain of that,” said Goldilocks.

“That feels logical,” said Leo. “We only need Lady Luck to find it.”

“Yes, where on Earth would we find such a crystal?” asked Modella.

“Khajuraho maybe?” suggested Webbo.

“Maybe you can use your remote viewing to see if you can find anything there?” said Richie.

“OK, let me go into the office and concentrate for a while,” said Webbo.

Fifteen minutes later, Webbo came back to the living room, and without him needing to say anything, the others could see on his face that he hadn’t found anything.

“Are you sure there is no crystal hidden in Khajuraho?” asked Boss.

“Yes, I’m pretty sure about that.”

“So, what do we do now?” wondered Verity.

“Let’s sleep on it,” said Boss, “and see if we get any intuitive ideas in the next few days. We can spend some time showing Goldilocks around, and we certainly want to go for a swim in the lake, that’s what summer is for, isn’t it?”

The next day, as the Grooters were preparing for breakfast on the terrace, they could see Goldilocks already out in the garden, with several animals around her: squirrels, cats, birds, butterflies. They observed her with amazement.

“She can communicate with animals,” said Richie.

“Seriously?” asked Verity.

“Wow!” exclaimed Leo, feeling warmth in his chest.

When she then came up on the terrace for the breakfast, Modella said: “It’s amazing how you are in tune with nature.”

“Did the animals tell you anything specific today?” asked Webbo, who also already knew about Goldilocks superpower, as she had told him and Richie when they met in Las Vegas.

“Just that they were happy to meet someone who understood them, and that they feel good in this garden, there is a lot of positive energy.”

“Good to hear,” said Boss.

After a long nice breakfast, they drove to one of the only true sand beaches on Lake Geneva, in Excenevex in neighbouring France. They played some beach-volley, relaxed, and swam several times in the refreshing lake.

In the late afternoon, they decided to visit the picturesque medieval village of Yvoire, just three kilometres away from the beach. And they had dinner in the port of Yvoire.

After a few glasses of wine, the discussions turned to past lives because Goldilocks had recently done a past life regression.

“So, what did you learn from the experience?” asked Modella.

“First, the hypnotherapist told me that people’s levels of masculinity or femininity will depend on the number of times they have been a man or a woman in a past life. So, if for example someone has been a man in several recent past lives, and they are now a woman, they are likely to have quite many masculine traits.”

“Which can be problematic to attract a masculine man?” asked Boss.

“Precisely. So, a lot of people need to do some work to balance their extra masculinity or femininity to reach a healthy gender polarity, where they feel good in their skin as a man or a woman and can then easily attract the opposite sex they fancy.”

“Very interesting,” said Richie.

“What else did you learn?” asked Webbo.

“That we can have what is called parallel lives, which is another incarnation at the same time. For example, it is not excluded that another ‘Webbo’ exists somewhere on this planet right now, representing another aspect of your soul.”

“Wow,” said Verity, “that’s kind of weird.”

“Yes, it certainly stretches your consciousness.”

“And what about your own past lives?” enquired Leo.

“I learnt that I was a nurse in my most recent past life. I guess that’s why I still like to take care of people. Actually, I care about all living beings, including animals and plants.”

“Tell me,” said Richie. “I’m just curious: we know your shamanic name, Goldilocks Dove, and your artist stage name, Sarah Queen, but what is your real name?”

“Oh, sorry, I forgot to tell you that. My name is Wendy Barter.”

That led to a powerful neural connection in Leo’s head: “*Of course! Blonde... nurse... Wendy... Drugstorie!*” He had been confused because in that Dream World, Wendy had first worn a nurse’s cap, and in his EBS adventure, she had had her hair in a pony tail, whereas when she arrived in Geneva yesterday, she had her curly hair loose. He liked all versions.

Leo’s heart was racing, how could he show his interest in her? Should he tell her about his Drugstorie Dream World? He then told himself that if his feelings for her were genuine, then she would be equally attracted to him.

He didn’t tell the other Grooters about this. However, he sought out some alone time with Wendy in the next few days, talking to her, getting to know her better.

Two days later, as they were all having lunch together, Verity said;

“It’s your birthday tomorrow, Leo, what do you want to do?”

“I want to spend it with all of you. Maybe we could rent a boat and go out on the lake?”

“Wonderful idea,” said Richie. “I’ll organise something.”

“And I have a surprise for you,” said Goldilocks.

“A surprise? Well, you certainly are full of surprises,” said Leo, thinking about the Crystal of Wisdom she had brought with her.

“Maybe because I grew up in Surprise, Arizona,” answered the enigmatic shaman.

Geneva, Switzerland, 7 August 2018

On the morning of Leo’s birthday, Modella, Verity and Goldilocks brought breakfast to Leo’s room.

“Thank you so much!” said Leo.

After a while, Modella and Verity left, and Goldilocks told Leo:

“The surprise is in your room, let’s see if you can find it.”

“What? In my room? Have you sneaked in to hide a present somewhere?”

Leo looked in his wardrobe, in the desk, and under the bed, but he couldn’t find anything.

“Looks like I need a hint,” he said after a while. “In French, I would say *je donne ma langue au chat*, I give my tongue to the cat.”

“OK, come closer,” said the beautiful trapezist.

Leo now stood facing Goldilocks, who then said, looking him deeply into the eyes:

“I repeat, the surprise is in this room.”

Leo finally got it: “You are the surprise!”

And he kissed her.

The Grooters had a wonderful day out on the lake. Leo’s and Wendy’s relationship quickly grew into romance. The other Grooters had seen it coming and were not too surprised.

Leo was in heaven. From his Drugstorie adventures, he had thought that Wendy was just a sex-crazed adrenaline-seeker, who happened to also be a nurse. But she was so much more than a gorgeous-looking woman. She was an accomplished circus artist, and she had the amazing gift of being able to communicate with animals, and was in tune with the Indigenous people of her part of the world. She taught him so many things.

Several days went by. On the one hand, the Grooters were glad to get to know Goldilocks much better, especially Leo, but on the other hand they felt a little anxious about getting no hunches about the last crystal.

Geneva, Switzerland, 16 August 2018

Then one day, about eight days later, they were all having lunch at home when the doorbell rang. It was a package delivery.

“*Monsieur Maraj?*” asked the postman.

“*Oui, c’est ici, merci,*” confirmed Boss, signing for the package.

Boss took the package, closed the door, and joined the others again.

“A package for you, Webbo,” he said and handed it to him.

The others were very curious.

“Something you’ve ordered online? Spare parts for your computer?”

“Actually, it’s a present for the girls. Well, not you, Goldilocks, I did not know you would join us back when I ordered this a few weeks ago. But if you’re lucky, maybe Modella or Verity can lend you theirs.”

“That sounded quite cryptic coming from Webbo,” thought Richie.

The girls now got curious: “A present for us?” asked Verity.

“Yes. Because we men can’t always be present, here is a present for you.”

Webbo handed them the package.

Verity and Modella helped each other to open it, looked into the box, then looked at each other, and started to giggle.

“Is this what we think it is?” they asked Webbo.

“Probably,” answered Webbo with a smile. “I’ll let you decide who gets which one.”

Richie, Leo and Boss were clueless about what was happening, as they still couldn't see what was in the box.

“Shall we count to three?” said Modella looking at Verity.

“OK. One... two... three!”

And the girls took out two glass dildos from the box, and stood them up on the table.

“I see that your Dream World education has given some fruits,” said Leo jokingly, addressing Webbo.

Goldilocks threw an enigmatic look at the two objects: these were not just two phallic-shaped sex toys. They were works of art. One of them was made of transparent glass with six small three-dimensional red hearts inside it. The other one was multicoloured, reflecting light in very unique ways. The one with the hearts was mysterious: somehow, she had expected the hearts to be the other way round, so when the dildo stood on the table, the hearts were pointing upwards.

“Maybe it was thought from the user's perspective?” she thought.

“I like the one with the hearts,” said Verity.

“And I prefer the coloured one,” said Modella.

“Great, then you're all set,” said Webbo.

“Thank you so much, Webbo,” said Verity and Modella and both went over to give him a hug.

Suddenly, Goldilocks grabbed the multicoloured dildo and said: “Just need to go to the bathroom, will be back shortly.”

The Grooters looked confounded at each other. Did the sight of two dildos make the erotic show queen that urgently horny?

But as unexpectedly, Goldilocks came back almost immediately.

“OK, she couldn't have had time to do very much in there,” thought Webbo.

“This is not glass,” she said.

“How do you know that?” asked Richie.

“Because glass does not glow in the dark.” Something she was able to check quickly in the windowless guest toilet in the entrance hall.

“So, what is it then?” asked Verity.

“Three years ago, I read in the newspapers about an opal exhibition at the South Australian Museum in Adelaide,” said Leo.

“You think it could be a genuine opal?” asked Modella.

“Webbo, where did you buy that?” asked Boss.

“Just a random Indian sex toy website online. Why?”

“Looks like Lady Luck has some humour,” said Leo, grabbed the opal dildo and walked over to the living room. The others followed immediately.

“You mean this could be our missing crystal?” asked Verity.

“Let’s find out,” said Leo.

Leo put what he expected was the Crystal of Sexuality next to the other seven crystals on the fireplace.

Nothing seemed to happen.

“Let’s close the shutters and turn off the lights,” said Boss.

They did, and could now clearly see the previous four crystals still pulsating, as well as the newest crystal glowing with its rainbow colours in the dark.

However, the Crystals of Beauty, Curiosity and Nature were still dark.

“Maybe we need to connect them somehow?” suggested Modella.

“Yes, but from what I’ve investigated, most of the crystals have the capacity to communicate wirelessly with each other,” said Goldilocks.

“No point attaching copper wires to rubies, emeralds and diamonds anyway,” said Verity, who had studied the specific properties of all major gems.

“So, what are we missing?” asked Richie.

Silence.

“Let’s think,” said Leo. “I am certain we now have all the crystals. So, it must be something with their arrangement. What do you think?”

“Could be,” said Boss, and re-arranged the order of the crystals on the fireplace. Still nothing.

“Let’s think, think, think,” said Leo again. “We must have received some clue that we missed in our Dream World travels.”

Then it struck Webbo: the hearts on the wall in his student room at Splendour University. And the hearts in the other dildo that arrived today. They were upside down. Without a word to the others, he just approached the fireplace, and rotated the Crystal of Love 180 degrees.

That fully unlocked Crystallica: now all eight crystals were pulsating. What a magnificent sight, they thought, and could feel the tremendous energy that had just been released.

The Grooters and Goldilocks stood there, transfixed, watching the amazing beauty of the pulsating crystals.

They could feel a warm energy entering their hearts.

After a long moment of silence, Modella asked Goldilocks: “What happens now?”

“Be ready for some major changes in the world.”

“Maybe this is worth celebrating?” asked Richie.

“It certainly is,” said Goldilocks. “I am not sure you fully realise the importance of what we have in front of us.”

“We think we do,” said Leo, and the others nodded. They all hugged Goldilocks and thanked

her for her invaluable help.

Standing there looking at all the crystals, Webbo whispered in Modella's ear: "Looks like I will have to get you another present."

"Thanks, Webbo, but don't worry, I have three of my own."

Webbo was amazed how naughty many women were although very good at hiding it.

Then Modella added: "By the way, do you think you could find out where this crystal was discovered?"

"Sure, I'll make a few phone calls."

A good while later, Webbo came back, and said:

"I managed to trace the Crystal of Sexuality. I called the online sex shop in India, who had gotten hold of it from a South-African based Indian exporter, who had bought it directly from a farmer who had dug it up on his property."

"So, it was found in South Africa?" wondered Goldilocks.

"Yes," confirmed Webbo.

"Ha! Interesting," said Leo.

"Well, when you think of it, we all know what African men are known for..." said Webbo.

Verity felt a slight tingling between her legs.

"OK, you win!" said Boss. "And where exactly was the crystal found in South Africa?"

"In the hills, just above Groot-Jongensfontein, on the coast about 300km east of Cape Town."

"That's an interesting name," said the Grooters hyperpolyglot.

"What does it mean?" asked Goldilocks.

"It means *big boys' fountain*."

"Well, that can certainly be creatively interpreted," said Modella, laughing.

"It also sounds almost like the *big fountain of youth*," added Verity.

"And the name reminds me of you all, the Grooters!" said Goldilocks.

"Great," summarised Boss, quickly drawing up a table on the flipchart: "then we now know where all the crystals were found:"

Crystal of Beauty	Sydney, Australia
Crystal of Creativity	Marrakesh, Morocco
Crystal of Nature	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Crystal of Knowledge	Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
Crystal of Curiosity	Löderup, Sweden
Crystal of Love	Geneva, Switzerland
Crystal of Wisdom	Lhasa, Tibet, China
Crystal of Sexuality	Groot-Jongensfontein, South Africa

“Well done everyone. Time to raid the wine cellar!” exclaimed Boss.

The Grooters and Goldilocks celebrated their major milestone of having gathered all the crystals and made Crystallica operational.

The Crystallica had given them a huge energy boost, and they were in a party mood. They had extended a slack line between two trees in the garden where Leo and especially Goldilocks had made an improvised show for the other Grooters.

The summer weather was wonderful, not too hot, although they still enjoyed bathing in Boss’ parents’ swimming pool.

“Too bad they didn’t have that pool back in the 1990s,” said Verity. “Although that would probably have diverted us from building the tree hut and making our Pact.”

“You’re probably right about that,” said Boss.

♪ *Ni festis unu nokton – Dolchamar*

The Grooters and Goldilocks had a barbecue on the terrace, jumped in and out of the swimming pool the whole evening. It was one of their best parties in a long time.

It started to get late, Leo had taken Goldilocks to the hut, and Richie and Modella had ‘excused’ themselves.

Verity was unusually relaxed after a few glasses of wine, and her brain made a few connections linked to the past months: first, her experience with Aurora and Aaron in Québec, then Webbo’s disclosure to Chantal in *Fantasies*, as well as her recent trip with Modella to Cyprus.

So, as she felt that both Webbo and Boss, and herself, were missing out on love that evening, she gathered her courage and whispered to Webbo:

“I remember your list of fantasies you discussed with Chantal. The threesome to be specific...”

“Yes...”

“Do you think Boss would also be interested?”

Webbo stroke her gently and said: “You are amazing, Verity. Yes, I’m almost sure he would be interested, just ask him. I’m in.”

So, Verity now whispered in Boss’ ear:

“I’ve heard *eros* may come and visit Webbo and me in my room. Do you want to join us?”

“I’d certainly like to, you look ravishing tonight, Verity,” hinting at her tight-fitting short summer dress.

“Thanks,” she said, hugging them both, and they all walked up to her room.

If nothing else, the Crystallica had boosted love at the Pibolodari house.

Part 38 Plan

Geneva, Switzerland, 17 August 2018

The morning thereafter, they all slept in and had a nice brunch on the house terrace, after which they decided to gather in the living room to brainstorm the next steps.

“How are you today?” Modella asked Verity.

“Comblée dans les combles...”

Modella felt so happy for Verity, because she had slightly bad conscience that she’d been so lucky to find Richie. She wished everyone could find true love.

“OK,” said Boss, “Crystallica is operational. Well done, everyone! Now, what’s the plan? Goldilocks, has your research on Crystallica given you any information regarding what happens now that it’s switched on?”

“What you need to understand about Crystallica is that it’s just an energy enhancer, albeit an extremely powerful one.”

“By the way,” asked Modella, “is this house in Geneva the best place to keep Crystallica? Could it be that it generates even more power if put in another, more optimal location, maybe where some ley lines cross?”

“That’s a very good question,” answered the shaman. “Yes, it may very well be that there is a better spot from an energy point of view. Then we also need to think of it practically: when your parents come back for Christmas, they probably don’t want Crystallica in their living room.”

“So, we need to find a safe place to keep Crystallica for the long term?” asked Verity.

“Yes, but where?” wondered Webbo.

“What I suggest,” said Goldilocks, “is that all of you brainstorm a few alternative safe places for Crystallica. Once you’ve done that, I can discuss it with my elders.”

“So, you’re not going to stay with us any longer?” asked Verity a little worried.

“No, my mission here is over and I want to take the rest of my vacation to travel around Europe, because it’s the first time I’m here. Leo, I hope you don’t mind teleporting to visit me in various cities during the next fortnight?”

“I’m sure I can get away a few hours now and then...” he said, enthusiastically looking forward to sight-see places with his new admirer.

“So,” asked Richie addressing Goldilocks, “for now, we just have to continue looking for solutions to our Pact?”

“Yes,” responded the blonde trapezist. “But from what I’ve understood from all your Dream World travels, I have the feeling that you already have most of your solutions. Now you just have to connect the dots.”

“And precisely, how do we do that?” asked Modella.

“I’d say try and imagine a project that is so big, so ambitious, that if you were successful, it would completely blow your mind and make you extremely happy, not just once, but over the long-term. Remember, you now have the power of the Crystallica to help you think more clearly and make ‘impossible’ things happen that you wouldn’t even dare to dream of before.”

“Wow!” said Richie, otherwise very hard to impress. “That sounds absolutely amazing.”

“OK, guys,” said Goldilocks, “my taxi is here. It was wonderful to get to know all of you and be part of this unique adventure. It’s not finished yet, so keep up your *groot* work.”

They all hugged Goldilocks, and Leo kissed her goodbye. Before she opened the door of the taxi, she turned around and told the Grooters: “And don’t forget to start thinking about a good long-term location for Crystallica.”

On her way to the train station, the Las Vegas artist realised that after having unsuccessfully gambled through many men in Sin City, she had truly hit the jackpot with Leo: kind, surfer body, Einstein-ish brain, and... sex on demand, or rather teleport on demand which is more or less the same. Typical long-distance relationship issues would not be a topic for them.

Back in the living room, the Grooters sat silent for a while, then Verity said:

“I do have a big project in mind.” She unapologetically dared to tell them about her mind-blowing mental, emotional and sexual experience with Aaron and Aurora at the *Château de Frontenac* in Québec. And how that had triggered her to want to share her exceptional *knowledge card*.

“I’m not sure how to express it, but I kind of feel an urge to share all the important knowledge I have accumulated over the years.”

“And how do you plan to do that?” asked Webbo.

“Well, given the breadth of my knowledge, I think that I want to start a whole university,” said the ambitious librarian. “A university with a magnificent library and wonderful architecture, energising classrooms and good sports infrastructure.”

“And what would differentiate this university from all others out there?” asked Richie, the typical question he threw back at all people who pitched to him.

Verity reflected for a while, then said, pointing at the blue Crystals of Knowledge and Wisdom: “Although I love books, I want this university to represent the full breadth of human knowledge, including all Indigenous oral knowledge. I want both knowledge and wisdom. But I’m not yet sure how this could be integrated into a university project.”

Leo intervened: “From what I’ve understood from the discussions I’ve had with Goldilocks, I’d say the main thing is that you will need access to nature. That’s Indigenous people’s libraries and classrooms. And once you’ve read some books on Indigenous cultures and the project has advanced a little, you can get in touch with Goldilocks who will certainly give you plenty of additional ideas and input.”

“Thank you so much, Leo. It feels like you just removed a small roadblock there,” said Verity enthusiastically.

“Access to nature,” said Boss, whose mind was working at full capacity trying to organise such a big project, “that is a very important point that will help us decide on the right location for the university.”

“Does anyone else have a project in mind?” asked Boss.

“Well,” said Leo, “if we’re allowed to think big, then I may have an idea as well.”

“Tell us,” said Modella.

“I’d like to start my own research centre.”

“Something like Purotu?” joked Webbo.

“Although some research was done there too, the main focus of Purotu was the teaching, so what I would be aiming for is closer to something like Arrendee. That being said, I’ll take inspiration from some aspects of Purotu, as well as from other Dream Worlds, especially Timove.”

“Any specific goals you want to achieve with your research centre?” asked Boss.

“Yes, I’d like to do truly multidisciplinary research that aims at finding solutions where departmental bureaucracy has failed.”

“What kind of solutions?” asked Richie.

“Solutions for less friction in life, so that the next generations will no longer have to struggle with some of the things we’ve had to struggle with.”

“You mean like all the problems we want to address with our Pact?”

“Exactly. We have received plenty of ideas and solutions in our Dream Worlds, but there will still be more research needed.”

“Anything else you aim for with your research?”

“Yes, to inspire the next generation.”

“How?”

“I want my research centre to investigate solutions that will help Mankind successfully settle on other planets.”

“I like to hear that,” said Verity, thinking about her space dreams.

“Finally, I also wish to work on small cool projects like finding out how Othman’s carpet flies.”

“Looks like you may have some overlap with Aaron and Aurora’s research,” said Richie.

“Probably, yes.”

“Cool,” said Boss. “Anyone else?”

“I have an idea that has been brewing for a while,” said Modella.

“You too?” asked Verity. “What is it?”

“Call me crazy if you want, but I’d like to build a whole town. From scratch.”

“Tell us more,” said Richie.

“Thanks to my architectural background I saw things, not only in my Augusta Dream World, but in all of our respective Dream Worlds, that inspired me to build a new place that could be absolutely amazing and that could inspire others to build beautiful towns as well.”

“That’s it?” asked Webbo.

“It may sound like just another development project. However, the true challenge, which regular developers hardly ever think about, is not how to erect buildings, but how to get people to live in harmony together. Put simply, how do you build a place where everyone gets along with their neighbours?”

“And?” asked Boss. “Do you have a solution for that?”

“Not yet. But I have a few leads.”

Then Leo added: “It sounds like you’re trying to build a whole town with in-built solutions for our Pact.”

“Yes, that’s a good way to describe it,” confirmed Modella.

“Any other projects in your cerebral pipelines?” asked Boss.

This time all the Grooters remained silent.

“Good,” said Boss. “Then let’s take a break before we continue our brainstorm.”

“Yes, but why don’t we continue the brainstorm in the treehouse?” said Modella.

“Wonderful idea,” said all the other Grooters almost at the same time.

Half an hour later, they had climbed up in their new tree hut. They liked the cosy setting they had created last spring. It almost felt like they were back in 1992. The impact of the Pact of that summer had been far greater than anyone of them could ever have imagined. And there was much more to come.

Boss continued: “Let’s look at the big picture again: we have now gathered the crystals, and started Crystallica. The first thing on our agenda is that we need to find a permanent location to hide Crystallica. The second thing is to start planning our big projects: a university, a research centre, and a new town. Anything else?”

“What about the Pact Addendum and our respective lovers still stuck in other dimensions?” asked Verity.

“That is a major thing I feel we’ve not perfectly understood yet,” said Webbo. “How do we bridge dimensions? Despite Leo’s *dimensionomics* course, and his lucky draw from Vegas, I’m not sure I am that much wiser. Leo, how did Wendy end up in your reality?”

“She just did...”

“Very helpful advice,” said Boss.

“The first thing we probably should ask ourselves,” said Verity, “is which one of our Dream World admirers we truly want to join us in our current dimension.” In her own case, she knew she didn’t want to bother about Tirvey.

“Yes,” joked Webbo. “We have a lot of *choicex* to make.”

“It’s not all about sex, Webbo,” said Modella.

Webbo just smiled at Modella and said: “Oh yes, it is, but yes OK, there’s much more to it, although we’ll always pick the choice that includes sex.”

“Let’s focus now,” said Boss. “Which Dream World lovers do we truly want?”

“Maybe you should start,” said Verity. “You have some serious *choicex* to make, Boss, especially if we include Heidi and Reversa.”

“You are right about that.”

“And?”

“There might even be more on my list than just Heidi, Tamara, Angela, Reversa, Assista and Carrera,” said Boss thinking about Pia, a love he hadn’t divulged to the other Grooters yet. Only to Reversa.

“You’re hopeless,” said Modella.

“Wait and see,” said Boss, hopeful that Reversa may do some miracles on her way back in time.

Then Verity addressed Leo: “Now that you’ve met Wendy, how do you feel about Leandra and Vatua?”

“I still like them both.”

“And what about you, Webbo?” asked Richie. “How do you feel about Marry, Sarika and Chantal?”

“I like them all, do we have to choose one?”

“No, but ideally we need to choose the right one(s).”

“Let’s think out-of-the-box here,” said Leo. “What if before we start to try and figure which admirers we like most, maybe we should first get clear on what projects we want to pursue?”

“Genius, Leo!” said Boss. “Because once we know what kind of project we want to spend our next years or even decades working on, then it will be easier to figure out which lover may be the right fit for that environment.”

“Yes,” continued Leo. “So, if we take Wendy, for example, I think she’s more the artist and nature type, and she would probably get bored in a research centre with me. Which means I’m not yet sure she’s the right long-term fit for me. Too bad, because her blow-jobs are heavenly.”

“I’m sure other women can give good blow-jobs too,” said Modella.

“I know.”

“You never know,” said Verity. “Maybe Wendy gets bored of being an artist and wants to join you and support your research. Her superpowers could be very useful, because last time I checked, our communication capacities with animals and nature were still very limited. Remember the *Information Decoding and Transmittal Department* on Arrendee? That kind of research would fit Wendy very well.”

“You’re right,” said Richie. “Never say never.”

“Which means that we just need to focus on our projects, and that should naturally attract and keep partners who are aligned with those projects?” wondered Webbo.

“That’s my hypothesis,” confirmed Leo.

“Good,” continued Boss, “so before we worry about saving any princes or princesses stuck in other dimensions, let’s see if we can decide which projects we want to focus on.”

“That’s the way forward,” said Richie.

“Verity, Leo and Modella have some fairly clear big projects in the pipeline. What about the rest of us?” asked Boss.

Richie started: “I’d like to be where Modella is, although I’d also like to contribute to Verity’s and Leo’s projects.”

“That leads us to the question of location: do you think there is a way that we could locate the university, the research centre, and the town in the same place next to each other?”

“We’ll need quite a lot of space, but it should be feasible,” said Verity. “What about you, Webbo?”

“Same as Richie, I think I’d like to help on all three of these projects. At the moment, I don’t know yet what exactly I’d be doing apart from setting up the IT network and building the websites.”

“I’m sure there will be many other interesting projects you can work on, especially in the research centre,” said Richie.

“I’m convinced of that too,” said the tech wiz.

“Your turn Boss,” said Modella.

“As you may have figured, I have a knack for starting and organising projects, so I’d like to assist all of you with those skills. Same as Richie and Webbo, I don’t think I have a preference for any one of the projects at the moment. And as already stated, we may be able to pool them together, at least the university and the research centre.”

“These projects feel like they’ll be an architectural challenge,” said Webbo. “So, I think Sarika would be motivated. She’s high on my list.” Then he shouted up to the sky: “Sarika, can you hear me, in whatever dimension you are?”

♪ *Nowhere Girl (Radio Edit) – B-Movie*

“I’m sure Modella wouldn’t mind some architectural support,” said Richie.

“Would be amazing to work together with someone like Sarika,” confirmed the Grooters architect.

“You see how this makes our *choicex* easier,” said Leo. “As for me, I’m convinced Vatua would like the research challenge I’ve set myself, as well as Verity’s education part.”

Richie jumped in: “And what about your lovers, Boss?”

“Angela would definitely be interested in Leo’s research centre, I think. And given the size of all these projects, I could certainly need a competent assistant.”

“Assista?” said Verity.

“Yes, and Carrera could help us with recruiting and job satisfaction. As for Heidi and Tamara, they’re truly wild cards...”

“Sounds like you still need a bit more clarity,” said Modella.

“Isn’t *Crystallica* supposed to give us more clarity?” asked Verity. “Because all the letters of the word *clarity* are included in the word *Crystallica*.”

“What a coincidence!” exclaimed Webbo.

“I no longer believe in coincidences,” said Leo.

“OK,” said Boss. “So how do we practically bring all our admirers into our reality?”

“I’d say we start to put our projects in motion,” said Verity. “Then the momentum energy should do the rest. Don’t ask me how it works, though.”

“What else do we need to plan and take into consideration?” asked Boss.

“What about we look at everything from our Pact’s perspective?” asked Richie. “In most of our Dream Worlds, the problems we address with our Pact have been solved.”

“Yes,” said Leo. “And as Goldilocks mentioned, now we just need to fit the pieces of the puzzle together. It will probably require some trial and error, but I’d say we should aim for organising the university, research centre, and especially Modella’s town in such a way that they address all of our Pact’s issues.”

“So,” said Modella, “do you think we are able to build a town with no poverty, no addictions, no health problems, no job dissatisfaction, no lack of love, and no sex problems?”

“A year ago, I would have said it’s impossible, but thanks to our Dream World travels, I now feel that it is within our reach,” said the Grooters inventor.

The others nodded.

“By the way, I want my university to also be devoid of all these problems,” said the librarian.

Then Webbo said: “Do we have all the answers we need? Can we just start building? And if not, what are we missing?”

“Very good question, Webbo,” said Richie. “Anyone ideas?”

Verity attempted an answer: “If we assume that the Pact issues can be solved by having all people’s needs met, then one remaining question would be to get clear on exactly what all those needs are.”

“Good point, Verity,” said Leo. “Let’s make sure we investigate human needs further. Any other ideas?”

This time Modella intervened: “Something I’ve come across often as an architect and which is a problem that most people are aware of: how do we make sure we get along with our neighbours?”

“It feels like you’ve hit a sensitive nail, there,” said Boss. “Indeed, if we want to build a harmonious society, we need to make sure that neighbours get along with each other.”

“Yes, but how?” wondered Webbo.

“The best idea I can come up with for the moment,” said Leo, “is that we start to analyse various communities, towns, neighbourhoods or streets where people get along well, and compare them to places where people don’t talk to their neighbours, and then see if we can identify any patterns.”

“I know that good urban planning and architecture can contribute to positive relations between neighbours,” said Modella, thinking about Christopher Alexander’s research and work.

“Great,” said Boss. “Then we need to understand what architectural factors are most important for this, and if there are other patterns we may identify as well.”

“Next to getting along with neighbours,” said Richie, “I believe we should think about solutions to prevent relationship dramas in households.”

“I fully agree that’s very important,” said Verity. “Do you have any ideas on how we could

tackle that?”

“Unfortunately not,” admitted Richie.

“Aren’t relationship dramas tightly linked to our capacity to handle our emotions?” asked Modella.

“Yes,” said Leo. “I think you’re right about that. However, I think we also need to look for compatibility between household members.”

“Like compatibility between neighbours?”

“Yes, I guess they are very much related.”

“Let take a break,” said Leo.

The discussion about matching lovers to projects had made Verity realise that it was related to the third, forward-moving energy, that Aaron and Aurora had explained to her. After the break, she told the others:

“I think we should choose our partners based on the three-energies model that I was taught in Québec.”

“Which means?” asked Webbo.

“First, we need to make sure that we are attracted to our partners. And not only physically.”

“That makes me think of something a friend told me a few years back,” said Leo, “*‘You know you’ve found the right woman when you both feel like hugging her... and fucking her.’*”

“Richie, can you confirm that?” asked Boss. “And what about you Modella?”

Both nodded, and Modella said: “It feels like that’s how it should be.”

“Great,” continued Verity. “So ideally this horizontal attractive energy should be threefold: first sexual attraction, in the groin area, then emotional attraction, in the heart area, as well as intellectual attraction in the head area.”

“Thanks, Verity,” said Leo. “Then I can slightly adapt my friend’s quote: *‘You know you’ve found the right woman when you feel like hugging her, fucking her... and talking to her.’*”

“Thanks for that common sense addition, Leo,” said Modella. “And the quote works both ways.”

“And what was the next energy, again?” asked Boss.

Verity went on: “Then there is the uplifting energy, which we get in various ways depending on our unique *Love Languages*. Some people feel uplifted by compliments, others by spending quality time with their partners. And some get a boost from receiving presents, while others rejoice when their partners help them in ways that make them feel uplifted. Finally, some people are very sensitive to physical touch.”

Webbo nodded to the last one, remembering his discussions with Sarika in Splendour.

“So, support is a big keyword for this second, uplifting energy?” asked Richie.

“Yes, and we notice that the word support contains the word *up*. It’s all about uplifting energy,” added Verity.

“Maybe that’s another insight the Aboriginal people in your dream wanted you to gain,” said Leo. “You remember, the dream that led us to finding the Crystal of Curiosity in Sweden. They invited you to look up *up*.”

“Yes,” confirmed Verity. “We all want to feel uplifted in our relationships. In all our relationships, not only the romantic ones.”

“What about the last component, the forward-moving energy if I remember correctly?” asked Leo.

“That’s where our lovers-to-projects matching comes in,” replied Verity. “This energy is indeed forward-moving, meaning that the partners involved need to move in the same direction, aim for the same goals.”

“And,” added Boss, who was used to set up business teams, “it is important that people working on the same project have complementary skills.”

“That makes total sense,” said Modella. “And in general, men and women tend to complement each other quite well.”

“So, that’s one of the reasons we are attracted to each other?” wondered Webbo.

“I guess so,” said Verity. “And what I now suggest is that each one of us once again goes through our respective lovers, crushes and other dream partners to see how they might fit into the projects we have in mind.”

“Great idea,” said Boss. “Then from tomorrow, I suggest we all start to brainstorm Verity’s university idea more in detail.”

“This was a great session, everyone,” said Boss. “Here is our preliminary agenda.” Boss wrote on the flipchart.

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|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Find a permanent location for Crystallica</i>2. <i>Discuss big projects:</i><ol style="list-style-type: none">2.1. <i>Verity’s university</i>2.2. <i>Leo’s research centre</i>2.3. <i>Modella’s new town</i>3. <i>Find out what people truly need</i>4. <i>Find ways to have neighbours get along with each other</i>5. <i>Find ways to help people handle their emotions</i> |
|---|

Part 39 Student

St. Gallen, Switzerland, 17 August 2003

Reversa was admiring the intricate woodwork of the Abbey Library in St. Gallen. She wondered why such amazing architecture was no longer built. Had the knowledge got completely lost in the last two World Wars? Why doesn't the public demand that similar beautiful artworks be created again?

At least libraries like this one had kept some important knowledge for those wishing to learn a few ancient secrets of architecture.

It had been the warmest summer on record so far, and the heat period was not over yet. Reversa knew all this because that's where she came from and she had studied the weather statistics. The Spanish woman was glad that she was used to hot summers.

After her cultural hour at the library, Reversa walked up to the famous three small lakes called *Drei Weieren*, on a hill just south of the city centre of St. Gallen.

There she sat down next to the *Mannenweiher*, one of the three lakes. She watched people bathing and swimming in the Sunday summer heat.

She felt she could need a cooling swim herself, but today she was on a mission. She knew exactly who she was looking for. And then she saw her, getting out of the water, after having swum many laps in the section of the lake made like an Olympic swimming pool.

The girl took off her swimming goggles: an athletic blonde wearing a one-piece blue swimming suit that matched her crystal blue eyes.

"OK," thought Reversa. "Now I understand Boss' interest in this goddess."

She walked up to her.

"Are you Pia?"

"Yes."

"I'm a friend of one of your admirers. My name is Reversa."

"Nice to meet you. Do I know this admirer?"

"You do."

Pia thought that maybe this woman was a friend of his parents or something. A very elegant woman, probably in her mid-forties. Little did she know that Reversa by now had clocked three quarters of a century.

"I understood you've been a fairly high-level athlete?" Reversa asked Pia.

"Yes, but I quit competition."

"Why?"

"Because the competitive mindset was unhealthy and felt wrong. So, I decided to prioritise my femininity over excess muscles and useless trophies."

“Wise decision, I think,” said Reversa. “Tell me, Pia, you are a stunningly beautiful girl, studying at a leading business school with 80% of guys. You must have a fair amount of choice for partners?”

“I guess I’ll have to admit that.”

“So how do you know who is the right one for you? The guy that truly loves you, and who is not just interested in the sex part and displaying you to his friends?”

“I wish I had an easy answer to that.”

“I have observed many couples over the years. And far too often, women choose men that are ideally rich... and docile.”

“Rich I understand because they can then help take care of the family. But why would we choose docile men?”

“That part is mostly unconscious. If you can ‘wrap them around your finger’, the expectation is that men will do whatever you want, especially not going elsewhere. That is based on another human need, stability. However, the process is based on abuse of power. Female sexual power. We have the ultimate say of whomever we let into our cave.”

“You think so?”

“Yes. But all relationships based on abuse of power are unhealthy and ultimately lead to divorce or unhappiness.”

“So, what shall I do?”

“What you, and many other women out there should consider, is taking a decision based on love.”

“But I think I love my boyfriend...”

“Most people don’t understand love. But where I come from that enigma has finally been solved. OK, almost solved.”

“And, what is the secret?”

“The secret is to listen. But not just let your pussy listen blindly to the loudest guy in the room, which is quite unlikely to be the right match for you. Love doesn’t boast.”

“What more?”

“Your decision has to be a balanced one: you need to listen to your heart, as well as your pussy and intellect. And to take an informed intellectual decision, you need to listen to what potential partners have to say.”

“Sounds easy in theory. However, in practice...”

“Unfortunately, I don’t have a perfectly baked answer for you. But I do have a message for you.”

“From this admirer?”

“Yes. Are you ready to listen?”

“Yes. Who is he?”

“Can you keep a promise?”

“I’ll do my best.”

“Promise.”

“OK, I promise.”

“Good. You need to promise me that you don’t contact him for a while.”

“Sure, I can wait a few months. I have a boyfriend at the moment anyway.”

“You’ll need to wait 15 years.”

“What?”

“Yes, 15 years.”

Pia looked perplexed. “But wait, if I know him, and he is actually my true love, why can’t I just call him tomorrow, next month, or next year?”

“Because you are not ready for each other yet.”

“I am ready.”

“But he’s not. Which is probably why you didn’t pick him as your boyfriend.”

“Truth stings,” thought Pia, but she knew the woman was right. Pia wasn’t sure about any secret admirers, but she already knew that her current boyfriend was not the right long-term fit for her.

They sat in silence for a while, then Reversa said:

“Get dressed. Let’s walk back to town and have dinner at *Zum Goldenen Schäfli*.”

“Sounds wonderful!”

Pia put on a light-yellow short summer dress, and a pair of white sneakers with matching yellow shoelaces.

“She has a sense of style too,” thought Reversa, admiring this young athletic beauty. “I like that.”

On their way back to the city centre, Pia asked this mysterious woman:

“Wait, so you believe that my admirer will need another 15 years until he’s ready for a relationship?”

“I know it for sure.”

“And how can you know that?”

“Let’s say that I have access to some unique information.”

Pia pondered this for a while, then realised:

“But in 15 years’ time... I may be the one who’s no longer ready for a good relationship. Who knows, I’ll be 40 and probably look old and he’ll no longer be interested in me.”

“There is indeed a possibility that the tables may have turned by then.”

“So, am I doomed? Will I ever experience true love?”

“If you still look as gorgeous in 2018 as you do today, I can guarantee you that he’ll still be interested.”

“But I’ll inevitably get older.”

“You’ll get more mature, wiser, but you can still look young and attractive. Having lived for 75 years on this planet, I can confirm that it’s possible.”

“What? You’re 75? I would have given you about 45. What’s your secret?”

“If I told you my secret, do you think it would be easier to wait 15 years for your true love?”

“Absolutely.”

They entered the cosy restaurant in an old building with low ceilings and uneven floors. They ordered *rösti* with a glass of white wine.

“Looks like I can still drink wine and stay young?”

“Everything in moderation.”

“I suppose so.”

“*Salud!*”

“*Salud!*” replied the young student. “OK, now tell me what every woman on this planet would like to know.”

“First, there is the obvious: stay fit, continue to sculpt your body like you’re already doing; eat healthy food and in moderation.”

“And the less obvious?”

“A young body needs a young mind – so be curious, have fun, go on adventures, read a lot, get to know new people, learn new skills, play with dogs and children. And with your lovers. But never promise them anything you cannot hold.”

“Hadn’t thought about all that, but it kind of makes sense. What else?”

“Be kind, respectful and honest. I have the feeling you already are all of that with others. The difficult part is to be honest with ourselves about what we truly want in life.”

“That makes sense too.”

The *rösti* arrived. Pia had chosen one with eggs on top, and Reversa had cheese on hers.

“What more?” asked Pia.

“I think it’s helpful to work on a worthwhile big goal – an endeavour that helps other people and that helps the world. That will actually help you too.”

“Sure, but how do I find my path in life?”

“You simply need to ask your subconscious for guidance.”

“And practically, how do I do that?”

“You affirm three times per day for a few minutes, that your subconscious reveals to you your true place in life. Do this until you get a clear answer.”

“That sounds easy.”

“There are a few subtleties to how one asks for what one needs in life. I can warmly recommend that you read the book *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*.”

“I can ask to stay young as well?”

“Absolutely. Be creative. For example, you could decree that your body ages two or three times slower than the average person. Or you could affirm something like the cells of your whole body stay young until advanced age. Or that you always look younger than your biological age.”

“Wow, thank you so much for all this advice, Reversa.”

“You’re welcome.”

“So, who is he?”

“Boss Pibolodari.”

Despite all her decades of life experience, Reversa couldn’t translate Pia’s face expression by the mention of Boss’ name. At least it was not an expression of disgust. Probably more some combination of interest, sadness, love, excitement that she masterfully concealed.

“And you can’t reach out to him before the end of August, 2018.”

Pia now seemed a little sad, but then she said: “It’s a very believable story. But to truly convince me, tell me more about yourself. How do you know Boss?”

Reversa smiled.

“I see that you have the same critical thinking mind as Boss. That’s great. Do you want the version I would tell authorities, or do you want the truth?”

“The full truth.”

“Are you sure you can take it?”

“Yes.”

“I’m from the future.”

“Can you prove it?”

The time traveller showed Pia her smartphone with a music app that contained millions of songs. She played up a few songs that Pia knew. And then she played several songs that don’t exist yet in 2003.

“OK, that’s cool. And there is no antenna or buttons?”

“Not in the classical sense.”

“I think you convinced me.”

Reversa had concluded that if Pia were to one day be together with Boss, she better be open-minded, otherwise their relationship would never work. So, like with Boss 15 years earlier, Reversa decided to tell Pia the whole truth about her journey: that she was born in 2018, and was part of a scientific experiment in 2048 that altered her DNA so that time would reverse

for her. At midnight every day she would ‘jump’ back 48 hours, live 24 hours, then jump back for another 48 hours, literally living life backwards.

“That’s incredible!” exclaimed Pia.

“No, it’s science.”

“I guess good science is very similar to magic.”

“Indeed.”

“So, tell me more about the future.”

“I have taken an oath not to tell people more than necessary, first because the future is never set in stone, and second because I’m on a journey to try and change a few key things in the past, so that they don’t turn nasty in the future.”

“That sounds reasonable.”

“I’m 45 years into my journey, it has been a very interesting ride so far, but such a life clearly has many drawbacks as well.”

“I am trying to wrap my head around how it would be to live like that, waking up yesterday all the time. Basically, tonight when we go to sleep, I will wake up tomorrow, August 18th, and you will wake up August 16th.”

“Yes, I’m simply heading in the opposite direction. And if you were to cross me in the street on August 16th, or before, you wouldn’t recognise me, because from your timeline we wouldn’t have met yet.”

“That’s weird. It must make bonding and relationships very difficult.”

“I must follow the *carpe diem* mindset. My anchor is my colleague Renato who is on the same journey as I am. He has missions in other countries and cities, but we regularly meet up and live together for a while, because we are the only ones who truly understand each other. With the exception of a handful of other reversal volunteers who live on other continents, with whom we keep in touch from time to time.”

“OK, glad you have someone at least.”

“Then I have all the amazing people like you and Boss that I meet for a day, who enrich my life, and I hope I am able to enrich theirs as well.”

“You certainly have enriched my life today.”

“The day is not over yet...” said the Spanish beauty, looking Pia deep into the eyes. “Have you ever slept with a woman? You are so stunningly beautiful. I don’t think it’s only men who are attracted to you.”

Pia blushed. “Thanks. No, I haven’t actually.”

“Maybe I can teach you a thing or two...”

Reversa reached across the table to stroke Pia’s hand. The gorgeous student didn’t retract hers.

She could see where this might lead, so she said: “But I’m supposed to call my boyfriend tonight.”

“Just send him a text saying that you got a surprise visit from your aunt.”

“Good idea,” replied Pia. That was to a big extent true, she told herself and took out her mobile phone.

Then she told Reversa:

“I just thought about a place where we could go to escape this summer heat.”

“Now, I’m curious,” said the adventurous time traveller.

They walked up to another part of town, next to a small river with trees on the edge. Half-nature, half-city. At one point they entered a door into the cliff of the hill.

“A bar in a cave!” exclaimed Reversa. “Such a cool idea!”

“Yes,” confirmed Pia. “Probably the coolest place in town. Perfect with this weather.”

The cave, which may have been an old mine, was maybe eighty meters deep, cut into the rock, no concrete. And sand on the floor.

Reversa and Pia had a drink at the bar, located at the rear end of the cave, next to which there was also a small dance floor.

The lights were lowered, and the ambiance was steamy, probably due to the moisture in the cave. Another drink woke up Pia’s libido, a correlation that did not apply to Reversa, who was horny most of the time. With or without drinks.

They danced for a while, getting closer and closer together. Finally, Reversa took the initiative to kiss Pia.

“Has the temperature risen in here since you entered?” she complimented the hot student.

“Maybe it’s the warm winds from Spain heating up the place?”

Reversa noticed Pia’s increasingly uninhibited mood, a good sign for the remainder of the evening.

They danced for another hour, then went to Pia’s little studio. Slowly, very slowly, they undressed each other, and Reversa took the lead, giving Pia a lot of pleasure, while at the same time getting her own pleasure from this young girl’s amazing body.

♪ *Comienzame a Vivir – Jeanette*

After several orgasms for both of them, lying next to each other in the bed, Pia said: “Wow, that was mind-blowing, I feel that you have woken up my entire being, brain, body and heart. Thank you so much.”

“Your beauty was a major turn-on for me too, thanks.”

“So, you are literally spreading love along your journey?”

“I think one could say that. I see it as part of my mission. Today was a special treat for me. Often, I sleep with men whom I know will beat their wives in the future.”

“Really?”

“Yes, my aim is to give them a maximum of pleasure, then before leaving them, I tell them that’s how making love is supposed to feel like. And if it doesn’t, it means that they are with the wrong partner, and need to look for a better match. And if they need to feel violent with a woman, they need to leave immediately. There are better fits for them. Violence is a lose-lose situation.”

“What you are doing is wonderful and so altruistic,” said Pia. “I suppose you do it so that the next generations on earth can live a better life?”

“I have to admit that my decision in 2048 was not a light one. But I don’t regret it. Now, midnight is slowly approaching, sorry I need to leave.”

They hugged for a long time.

Then Reversa gave Pia a sealed letter. “These are Boss’ contact details in 2018. If you open the letter before August 28th, 2018, it will self-destruct.”

Finally, she said: “Whatever man you choose, make sure that you set up your relationship so that you don’t need to lie to each other, like you lied to your current boyfriend tonight.”

“But how do you then handle serendipitous encounters like this one?”

“You need to fully trust each other and discuss if you may want to consider some form of open relationship. Good night.”

“Good night, and thanks for this wonderful evening.”

“*De nada.*”

Back in her bed, Pia couldn’t sleep. Her brain was rushing in all directions from the exceptional ephemeral encounter. Two specific things had stuck to her memory from what Reversa had said: ‘*work on a worthwhile big goal*’, and ‘*abuse of power*’.

Then she reached a conclusion: that she would investigate all forms of abuse of power, including her own, and see if she could do anything to prevent those situations. That insight gave her peace of mind and she fell asleep, happy.

Part 40 Love U

Geneva, Switzerland, 18 August 2018

The Grooters had gathered in the living room for yet another session of brainstorming, and today's agenda was to listen to more details about Verity's university project, give her feedback and help her come up with additional ideas.

"What do you plan to call your university, Verity?" launched Boss.

"*Love University.*"

"Seriously?" said Webbo.

"Yes, although it may sound unserious, what we'll teach will inspire students, and Love University also wants to stand out as a more relaxed learning environment, not as bureaucratic as most other universities."

"From my perspective," said Richie, "regular universities are not very serious in the sense that they completely disregard relationships education."

Webbo joked: "*So where do you study? - At Love U. - Love U too!*"

"That could become quite catchy, actually," said Boss. "And catchy is always good for marketing purposes."

Webbo checked his laptop, then said: "Looks like there are already at least half a dozen 'Love Universities' out there. You're probably too late with that name."

"I saw that," responded Verity. "But in my eyes, none of them are a serious full-scale university. I don't even think any of them has actual buildings. Unfortunately, *university* is such a misused word, because there are so many people trying to cash in on the lucrative education market."

"Have you thought about any options?" asked Richie.

"Yes, well, the first option is to sue them for false advertising, these are not real universities with serious degrees and research being done. On top of that, their knowledge about love is likely to be limited."

"That could eventually work," said Richie. "I'll call my lawyer team and hear what they have to say about it. The other thing to think about is that keeping that name could work in some places but not in others."

"Any other name options?" asked Modella.

"What about *Grooters University*?" said Webbo half-jokingly.

"I like that," said Leo.

"Me too," said Boss.

“And any idea of where you would locate the university?” asked Richie.

“That’s going to be a tricky one,” answered Verity. “The first thing we need to keep in mind is that we need plenty of space, and it should be located next to nature, ideally maybe a national park that will not be developed in the future.”

“And the second thing?” asked Leo.

“The other tricky thing is going to be to find a location where the local government is cooperative and does not set bureaucratic sticks in our wheels.”

“We’ll have to make very clear agreements with the local government so that they won’t become a nuisance. Again, I’ll ask my lawyers what they think,” said Richie.

“Thanks,” said Verity.

“Great,” said Boss, “now, do you want your university to be only an educational institution or a research institution as well?”

“Maybe we could somehow combine Leo’s research centre and Verity’s university?” said Modella.

“Maybe,” said Leo. “But in that case it needs to be done very differently from how most current universities operate.”

“What do you mean?” asked Verity.

“I don’t want my researchers to be forced to teach if they don’t want to. And I don’t think you want to force your teachers to do research if they’re not into that either.”

“I agree.”

“Also, the research grounds and buildings need to be quiet environments so that the researchers can focus on their work, without being disturbed by kids running around.”

The Grooters architect intervened: “I’ll think about how we could architecturally separate the research and the teaching parts of the university, should we decide to have both in the same location.”

“Thanks, Modella,” said Verity. “And Leo, that was a good point you mentioned because I don’t want my university to just be a playground for 19 to 22 years-old. Instead, I want a far bigger age spectrum. The world will slowly move away from a place where you study something, and then do the exact same profession for the rest of your life. Humans need to constantly renew themselves, learn new things, and I want my university to be welcoming to any age group.”

“That’s very forward-thinking, Verity,” said Richie. “I like that.”

“Me too,” confirmed Boss.

“What else would make your university unique, Verity?” asked Webbo.

“Another very important thing is that I want to blend most professions, and by that I mean not segregating so-called intellectual from manual professions. A lawyer is not more important than a carpenter who is not more important than a nurse or a CEO.”

“When can I sign up?” asked Webbo.

“Soon, I hope. In the same line, I also want to blend artistic and non-artistic studies. Architects are not better than artisans who are not better than plumbers or fresco painters.”

“Another great insight,” said Modella, who did her best to employ genuine artisans for her architectural projects. She asked Verity:

“And architecturally, how do you envision this university? You mentioned a big library.”

“Yes, the library should be centrally located on the campus, to give easy access to everyone. The library itself should serve as a memory palace, so that students can easily find what they are looking for and remember the knowledge they learn.”

“A memory palace?” asked Leo. “Like the ones they used on Mars in your Marstone Dream World?”

“Yes, very similar. In the case of this campus library, I want it to have several rooms, all representing a chapter of human knowledge. The easiest may be to structure it using the Dewey Decimal System, which still remains the most logical library indexing system in the world, almost 150 years after its invention. That way, the students won’t be lost when they visit other libraries in the world, except those using illogical book classification systems.”

“Very inspiring,” said Richie.

“As for the bookshelves, I want them to be in beautiful carved wood. We could have stonework in the entrance, maybe marble, then a lot of wood, for upper floor planking, as well as for the bookshelves and study tables. And there should be plenty of comfortable armchairs next to windows, for ideal reading comfort.”

“This sounds like a rather expensive project,” said Boss.

“My idea is to involve the students in the building project. That would keep costs down.”

“I’m sure we’ll find a way to finance that,” said Richie. “What about the other buildings?”

“The teaching buildings should be a mix of regular classrooms with movable furniture, so that one can learn in circles, or all facing the whiteboard/blackboard. It will depend on the topic being taught. And I want small meeting rooms with a table and flipcharts where students can do focused group work. Finally, we’ll need open areas with tables for more relaxed group work, and informal meeting and chatting.”

“Sound very university-like,” said Leo.

“FYI, it’s going to be a university,” said Webbo to Leo.

Verity continued: “Then I want a food hub with a few cafés, restaurant, takeaways, bar or pub, which will serve as social centre and that should enable serendipitous encounters, dates, and knowledge exchange between students and staff.”

“Wonderful,” said Modella, “and what about sporting grounds?”

“If we are next to nature, people can go hiking, jogging and mountain biking there. Then I want a big swimming pool, indoor or outdoor depending on the climate where the university

will be located. And there should be a gym with a great spa that includes sauna and hammam.”

“What about group sports?”

“As we saw in Moovia, I prefer non-competitive sports, so there will be no sports teams competing against other schools. However, we can still have tennis courts, squash halls or football fields for those who like those sports for physical training, not with the intention of being better than others. And there will be an athletic field for those who want to compete against themselves, pushing their limits.”

“I like your concept,” said Richie. “And I am convinced that such a school would attract the right kind of students who are in line with your philosophy. Anything else?”

“Thanks, Richie,” said Verity. “Yes, one more thing: I call it Love University for a reason, because I also want to teach students about love.”

“Like the stuff you’ve learnt from Aaron and Aurora, and Panayiotis?”

“Yes, as well as everything we’ve all learnt from our respective Dream World travels. Which means that when someone graduates from Love University, not only will they be trained in their specific profession, they will also have social and romantic skills that should help them prevent heartaches and relationship dramas later in their life. And that’s probably the main feature that will differentiate Love University from other teaching institutions.”

“I absolutely love your idea!” said Modella. “And will put all my architectural knowledge at your service so that we can make this wonderful project come to life.”

“And I’ll make sure we’ll be able to fund it,” said Richie.

“I promise to share everything I learnt at Splendour University with you,” said Webbo.

“And I’ll give you all my insights from Purotu,” said Leo.

“Thanks to all of you,” said Verity, hugging them.

“By the way,” said Modella, “have you thought of any music that would best represent Love University? The reason I ask is because good architecture is frozen music. So, your favourite music will inspire the actual architectural design of the university.”

“Wow!” said Verity. “Yes, I do have two pieces of music in mind, which for me represent rays of love beaming out in the world. As well as rays of dawn for the dawn of a new era for humanity. This music also gives me a feeling of hope.”

Verity played the tunes on her phone.

♪ *Rays of Love – Mehdi*

♪ В лучах рассвета – Павел Ружицкий

“Beautiful music,” said Modella. “I’ll keep that in mind.”

“Now,” suggested Boss, “shall we see if Leo’s research centre project could fit into Love University?”

“OK,” said Leo. “In my case, as described in Arrendee, I want a social centre where researchers can meet in a relaxed environment to have their ideas collide into new creative insights.”

“Can a university campus have two main buildings?” asked Webbo.

“That’s a very good question,” replied the Grooters architect. “I’d say no, because that will mentally confuse people. But the research centre and the university can still be physically located next to each other.”

“It’s fine,” said Leo. “The library is probably the most important part of most research work, so I’m happy to share Verity’s main building, the big library. So, whereas the social centre in Arrendee included a library, here it will not. And in this case, the social centre will be the second most important building, like the food centre on the teaching side.”

“You think that could work?” asked Verity, addressing Modella.

“Yes, we just need a clear demarcation between both sides, as well as maybe a slightly different style of architecture. But that’s all OK, because Leo’s researchers want a quiet environment for thinking, which needs to be physically separated from the university campus anyway.”

“OK,” said Verity, “and more specifically, how would we design the campus?”

“I have an idea,” said Modella. “What if we place the big library in the centre of the whole campus, in an elongated park, and then the teaching part would be on one side of the park, and the research centre on the other side. And either side would have their own central hubs, the food centre for the university, and the social centre for the research part.”

“So, the park would serve as kind of a noise buffer?” asked Leo.

“Yes, and also to facilitate orientation. Most university campuses are very mentally confusing, which prevents people from thinking clearly. The big library will serve as a symbol for what study and research have in common: knowledge. And there could be a café in the park next to the library to enable students, teachers and researchers to mingle.”

All the Grooters remained silent for a while, trying to imagine what such a double campus with a big library in the middle could look and feel like.

Suddenly, Boss said: “It feels like we’re missing something here.”

“What?” asked Verity.

“I can’t exactly put my finger on it for the moment. But if we want to launch a Love University, we better be totally sure that we understand what love is.”

“I thought we’d covered that yesterday when Verity explained the energies?” said Richie.

“Yes, but it still feels like we’re missing something.”

“Well,” said Verity, “according to Aurora and Aaron, *‘love is letting the other one have what the other one wants’*.”

“OK, but let’s think clearly here, for a minute,” said Leo. “What if everyone wants a big car and a huge mansion?”

“I’m not sure the Earth resources would suffice,” said Modella. “And I don’t want to know how the traffic jams would be like if everyone had their own car. Which is why I promote walkable neighbourhoods.”

“Didn’t Gandhi say something like *the world can accommodate for everyone’s needs but not everyone’s wants*?” asked Webbo.

“So,” said Richie. “Maybe we need to reword that North American definition?”

“What do you suggest?” asked Verity.

“How about: *‘love is letting the other one have what the other one needs’*?”

“That makes me think of Maslow’s pyramid of needs,” said Verity. “Although I’m not fully convinced of his pyramid theory. But it’s a good start, I guess.”

“Needs and wants are quite related, aren’t they?” asked Webbo.

“I’d say that we want everything we need, but we don’t need everything we want,” said Richie.

“Examples?” wondered Boss.

“Most people who want a castle, a private yacht or to date a celebrity, I’d say they probably don’t need that.”

“But celebrities need love too, don’t they?” said Modella.

“You’re right, which doesn’t make the difference between wants and needs as clear-cut as I had thought,” said Leo.

“I agree,” said Richie. “And the same ‘thing’ could be a need for one person, and only an unnecessary want for another person.”

“What shall we do?” asked Verity. “Because I feel we need an answer to this before we can proceed with planning the university. The perfect university I have in mind has to cover most if not all of people’s needs, be it staff or students.”

“Splendour and Purotu seemed to cover most needs, didn’t they?” said Webbo.

“Sexual needs, for sure,” said Verity. “But we need a clearer understanding of human needs to make sure we don’t miss all the subtle needs people also have, so that we can design the university accordingly.”

“You’re right, Verity,” said Boss. “We need to better understand human needs.”

Part 41 Daisen

Geneva, Switzerland, 27 August 2018

By now the Grooters were more confident on how to find the answers they were seeking. So, they all focused on the question: “How can we get clarity on the true needs of humans?” and repeated that question several times a day until they got an answer.

Which they did about ten days later. For some reason, Verity had been surfing around Japanese websites, and had been watching a few Japanese movies, and something had jumped out of the screen two or three times.

大山

“*Daisen. Big mountain,*” Verity told herself. “I wonder what that’s about.”

She looked it up, and indeed, there was actually a mountain called Daisen, on the north coast of Honshu, on the other side from Okayama. She decided to discuss it with the other Grooters.

“It feels like a hunch worth investigating,” said Boss.

“Yes, but I don’t know anything more,” admitted Verity.

They all looked up Daisen on the Internet, then Webbo said: “It looks like a magnificent place, maybe we should go and check it out?”

“Yes,” said Richie. “Some temples have been around for over a thousand years, maybe they contain pieces of knowledge that could help us?”

“Do you want me to teleport over there and scout the place?” asked Leo.

“Yes, please do that, just to get a better feel for it, I mean we can see quite a lot online already,” said Boss.

“Sure, just give me an hour or two.”

That being said, Leo went up to his room, changed to his often-used backpacker teleporting outfit, and found a wormhole to Japan. Two hours later, he was back.

“What’s your verdict, Leo?” asked Modella.

“The place is absolutely magical. I don’t know what exactly we would be looking for, but I kind of feel that we must check out that place more in detail.”

“Great,” said Richie. “I’ll call my pilots. We should be able to fly out tomorrow morning.”

“Thanks, Richie,” said the other Grooters.

The morning after, they boarded *Lady Globalia* at Geneva Cointrin for a non-stop flight to Yonago Kitaro airport.

As they were flying over the Siberian vastness, their itinerary reminded Richie of a documentary he had watched of the Graf Zeppelin round-the-world flight in August 1929, when it had flown non-stop between Friedrichshafen in Southern Germany and Tokyo. 89 years ago, already. “The history of flight,” he thought, “what an amazing adventure. And there was more to come.”

“Are you daydreaming, Richie,” asked Modella.

“I guess you can say that I am,” he responded honestly and told her about the Graf Zeppelin journey.

Daisen, Japan, 29 August 2018

As *Lady Globalia* approached Yonago, they could clearly see Mount Daisen, culminating over the whole coastal region at 1709m above sea level, only about 15km from the sea of Japan and Yonago city centre.

They took a big taxi to the Daisen resort village, at the foot of the mountain of the same name. As it was almost the end of the summer holidays in Japan, there were several accommodation options, but Verity had chosen the aptly named Daisen Utopia hotel.

Indeed, weren't all the Grooters' Dream Worlds some form of utopia? Verity wanted to believe in utopia, whatever all negative naysayers were thinking.

Once they had all checked into the hotel, Webbo asked: “And now what?”

“Now sushi,” said Modella.

“OK, let's start with some tasty Japanese food, then we can brainstorm our next step at the same time,” said Boss.

For convenience's sake, they ate at the hotel, then decided to hike up the mountain to rid themselves from their jet lag.

It was one of the nicest hikes they had ever done, taking them through paved paths and *torii*, past old temples, and through lush forests, until they gained altitude and from the summit, they could see the ocean and the whole region around them.

“What a wonderful sight,” said Modella, looking out on the Sea of Japan. “Definitely worth the climb.”

“Yes,” said Webbo. “Even if we don't find any clues here, it would still have been worth the trip.”

“I agree,” said Boss. “But let's remain positive.”

Then they walked back down to the village. And as they again came past one of the many temples, Verity noticed the handbag of a tourist guide... with a circle and a star on it!

Now she was very confused. She thought they had finished their Dream World travels with the Professor's machine. How was this possible?

She walked up to the young woman and said:

“*Konnichiwa*, I noticed the circle with the star on your handbag.”

“Yes,” responded the woman. “I bought it in a design shop in Kyoto, you like it?”

“OK,” thought Verity. “This must just be a coincidence, that woman does not seem to know anything.” But then she reminded herself that when coincidences seem almost too good to be true, they usually mean something. So, she asked her:

“I am here with a group of friends from overseas, can we hire you as guide tomorrow? We'd like to learn more about the temples and the history of Daisen.”

“You're lucky, I'm available tomorrow, had another group cancel earlier today.”

“*Arigato*,” said Verity.

“By the way, my name is Azusa.” She gave Verity her business card.

“Nice to meet you, Azusa. I'm Verity. We are staying at the Daisen Utopia hotel.”

“Great, shall I come there at 9AM tomorrow?”

“That sounds perfect, *arigato*.”

“See you tomorrow.”

The Grooters walked back to their hotel and had an early night, all very tired from their jet lag and the hike.

The morning after, Azusa showed up on time at the Daisen Utopia. Her English was excellent, which Verity was glad about so she didn't need to translate everything to the other Grooters.

“So, what do you want me to show you?”

Verity, who had studied the map of Daisen in detail, said:

“Maybe we can walk towards the *Ogamiyama Shrine Okunomiya*? That looks like an intriguing place.”

“Yes, it's beautiful. I'll tell you more along the way.”

“*Arigato*,” said the Grooters.

As they walked up the cobble-stoned paths toward the upper temple complex of Daisen, Verity asked Azusa:

“Have you heard of any secret knowledge that may be kept here in Daisen? Maybe something linked to human needs?”

“I read somewhere about some important document that was kept here by the monks. I don’t know more about that, but I suggest we ask one of the monks in the shrine.”

“Sounds like a great idea.”

When they arrived at the shrine, Modella said:

“This is such a magical place, I love it, thanks for taking us here, Verity.”

“You’re welcome.”

As they entered the shrine, the Grooters saw Azusa walking up to one of the monks, chatting for a while. The monk’s face expression was something between worried and enthusiastic. Who were these strangers who knew about their best-kept secret?

Azusa came back to the Grooters and said:

“The monk answered that he may be able to help you. He would like to invite you for a tea to get to know you.”

“Sure,” said Verity.

“I’ll leave you with them, and will wait for you outside.”

“*Arigato.*”

The monk showed the Grooters to a room at the back of the temple. He told Verity he will get some tea and call two elder monks to join them as well.

Fifteen minutes later, the Grooters were sitting having tea with three monks at the *Ogamiyama Shrine Okunomiya*. They looked very interested, and neither Verity nor the other Grooters could tell what their seeming interest was all about.

Then the oldest monk asked them:

“Are you the great ones?”

Verity translated for the others, but none of them was sure what the monk meant by that. He repeated his question:

“Are you the great ones?”

Now, after Verity searched another round in her incredible cerebral database, she made a connection and told the other Grooters.

“Groot means great or big in Dutch. Maybe there is a link to Mount Daisen, the ‘big mountain’, and *Ogamiyama* means the ‘mountain of the great god’.

“Maybe we are?” Modella told the others.

As the Grooters did not respond to their question, the other monk showed them the shrine’s symbol: a hexagon with a flower inside.

Boss told the others: “Looks like they have made the link that there are six of us. But what does that symbol mean?”

Verity decided to be honest with the monks, and said:

“We are not sure if we are the great ones, but we do believe that we have a great mission.”

She told them about their Pact, and the hunt for the crystals.

The monks nodded in approval, intently listening to what Verity told them. Then the older monk said:

“Thank you for sharing your story. We think you are the great ones.”

“What do you mean by that?” asked Verity.

“A myth has been encoded for centuries in our shrine symbol: it says that one day, The Great Ones will come, and the whole world will flourish.”

And he pointed at the six corners of the hexagon, and at the flower inside.

“And what do you think we need to do now?” asked Verity.

“You will need the *List of Universal Human Needs* that we have kept in our shrine for over 800 years.”

“And once we have that list, what do we do with it?”

“You need to build a prototype town that is organised in such a way that all the Universal Human Needs of all the residents are met. Then other towns will know how to get organised, and, most importantly, we will be able to settle on other planets without repeating the same errors as on Earth.”

“That sounds like a major challenge.”

“Yes, but you are The Great Ones. We are confident you can do it.”

He stood up, and went to another room, and came back a few minutes later with a rolled document.

With both hands, he handed it over to Verity, who bowed in thanks.

Verity opened the one-page document and saw the title:

人間の普遍的なニーズのリスト

And below the title, was a list of over 80 different needs. Many were obvious, like the need for love, shelter or food. But many others were more subtle needs.

The other Grooters, who had not understood Verity’s and the monk’s conversation, asked her: “What is all this about?”

“It’s the list of needs that we came here for.”

“Really?”

“You’re amazing, Verity,” said Modella, and the others nodded.

Verity turned to the monk again: “*Arigato*, can we take a photo of the list, then you can keep the original here where it belongs?”

“Good idea,” said the monk.

Verity told the Grooters to all take a photo of the list.

“Make sure you get the whole list, it’s a very important document,” said the younger monk.

“How can we thank you?” asked Verity.

“By building a model town to serve as a blueprint that will enable humanity to flourish,” answered the older monk, then added: “There is a very simple rule to understand about this document.”

“What is it?” enquired Verity.

“That whenever there is any kind of problem in a society, be it mental or physical disease, addictions and drugs, relationship dramas, crime, racism, jealousy or any other unwanted things, then it is because one or often several of the needs on this *List* have not been met.”

“Is it as simple as that?”

“Yes, it’s like when a machine is not working, there are a limited number of reasons why the machine doesn’t work, so you just have to go through a protocol and check the possible places where something may have gone wrong. And this *List of Universal Human Needs* is your protocol to debug any dysfunctional society.”

“*Arigato*,” said Verity. “We will make sure we inform you when it has been built, it may take a few years.”

“Remember that every item on the list is there for a reason. Some overlap a little, and all are the kinds of needs all humans share, irrespective of culture. Then there may be additional other culture-specific needs.”

“We’ll keep that in mind,” said the Asian Grooters.

“And one more thing,” said the younger monk. “Although we all need all the items on the list, some people have stronger needs in some areas. For example, one person may need more physical movement, another may need a bigger house. And one may need more companionship, one more independence. As for sexual needs, don’t compare yourself with your neighbour.”

“*Arigato* again,” said Verity, laughing at the monk’s last sentence, while at the same time thinking how sad the whole gossip business was.

“Good luck, great big Grooters!” said all the monks at the same time, and they all bowed.

♪ *Big in Japan – Alphaville*

As they exited the shrine, Verity went to hug Azusa and thanked her for bringing them to the shrine. She gave her a big tip, and said they may call her again if they decided to stay longer in Daisen.

When the Grooters got back to their hotel, Verity translated the whole list to her friends.

“This reminds me of something,” said Boss.

“What?” wondered Modella.

“Steamaru’s card game, although it’s a slightly different perspective.”

“And there are only twelve cards, whereas this new list has eighty items.”

“What were those twelve cards again?” asked Webbo.

“*Land, house, food, clothes, relationships, love, health, life goal, arts, money, knowledge, time,*” replied Boss. “But Tamara clearly stated that it was a game that simplified reality. For example, I think I have an *entrepreneur card* that could benefit others.”

“You definitely have,” confirmed the others.

“So, this *List of Universal Human Needs* goes further into detail?” asked Modella.

“Yes, especially for relationships and life meaning,” said Verity.

Indeed, confirmed the others, looking at the translated list.

“And this big list focuses on universal needs, not needs that are due to ways a specific culture is organised. For example, money is not used in all societies, it’s only a chosen social construct, not a universal need,” said Richie.

“The problem is that this social construct had not been unanimously chosen by everyone, so most people have to endure it, despite knowing deep inside of themselves that there must be better ways to organise a society,” said Leo.

“Yes, which leads to society having to create other unnatural ‘needs’ like police, lawyers, doctors, cars, marriages, insurances, and plenty of other things that would probably never have been necessary in a society where everyone have their universal needs met,” continued Richie.

“So, you think all these things are just there to compensate for a poorly organised society?” asked Webbo.

“I’m almost sure about that,” said Richie.

“I noted an interesting thing on this list,” said Leo.

“What is it?” asked Verity.

“*Shared reality* is one of the eighty *Universal Human Needs*. That reminds me of my definition for a dimension that I shared with you in my little *dimensionomics* lecture: a

dimension is a place in space and time where living beings can communicate with each other.”

“And by the way, *communication* is also on the list,” said Modella.

“I’d say we want to aim for quality communication,” said Webbo. “In a mutually intelligible language, both spoken language, as well as body language.”

“Every profession has their own lingo, too,” added Leo.

“Yes,” confirmed Boss. “And one challenge for entrepreneurs is to gather people with complementary skills, meaning different professions, and have them learn to talk to each other so that they understand each other and can work together harmoniously.”

“And how do you achieve that?” asked Verity.

“You have to have clear goals that everyone understands and agrees upon. Once you got that, it’s fairly smooth sailing.”

Then Verity added: “The monks actually said this list of *Universal Human Needs* should be used as some kind of debugging protocol to solve problems in any society. And they wanted us to build a model town, built on the awareness of this list.”

“A model town?” said Modella. “That’s exactly what I have in mind. So, I think this list can make sure that I don’t make any design mistakes.”

“Let us spend a few more days here to hike and discover this wonderful region,” said Boss. “Maybe we’ll find additional inspiration. I’d say we deserve a small vacation, don’t you think? Then we’ll fly back to Geneva and start modelling Modella’s model town. How does that sound?”

“Sounds like a great idea,” said Verity. “This is such a magnificent place. I’ll call Azusa, I’m sure she has more secret places she can show us.”

The other Grooters nodded enthusiastically.

Part 42 Modeltown

Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 6 September 2018

On their way to Yonago airport in Japan, Modella came up with an idea and asked the other Grooters:

“Do we absolutely have to be in Geneva for the next brainstorming session? What about we try some new environment for new ideas?”

“Why not?” said Boss, confirming the fact that new settings could potentially trigger new creative ideas.

“Do you have a place in mind?” asked Richie.

“Yes. Samarkand. Wonderful inspiring architecture. And it’s on the way back to Europe, will ease our jet lag.”

“What a great idea!” said Verity. “Uzbekistan is high on my travel destinations list. Perfect opportunity.”

The others nodded.

“All good,” said Richie. “I’ll let my pilots know. Shouldn’t be a problem, may just delay our departure for an hour or two. And we’ll have to contact Leo so that he opts for a different wormhole.”

Later that day, *Lady Globalia* touched ground in sunny Samarkand.

“One of only two double landlocked countries on the planet,” said the living encyclopaedia.

“Which one is the other one?” asked Webbo.

“Liechtenstein, between Switzerland and Austria.”

The Grooters found a good hotel within walking distance from Registan Square. All of them, and not only architecture aficionado Modella, loved to roam the city.

No wonder the Grooters felt good in Samarkand, because it was a major stop on the famous Silk Road. It has historically been a *crossroad and melting pot of the world’s cultures* according to UNESCO, who has listed the city as a World Heritage.

Once again, Verity’s language skills were invaluable, as Russian was widely spoken and understood in Samarkand.

After two days of sightseeing, they booked a conference room in their hotel, and Modella started to share her ideas about her big town project.

“Before I start to explain how I plan to go about building a whole new town from scratch, it may be worth having a quick look at how towns came about in the past. Let’s take a typical Mid-Western town in the United States or anywhere in regional Australia.”

The others listened in attentively.

“Well, a small group of colons found a spot that they liked, they shot or displaced the Indians or Aborigines so they wouldn’t be a nuisance, and then one of the first things they built was the church, saloon or pub depending on where they were, and on which end of the religious spectrum they found themselves. The towns with potential were professionally surveyed and often gridded like for example Adelaide in Australia, or many other towns that have now grown to become major or minor cities.”

“Doesn’t sound optimal to build a town on bad conscience,” said Verity, mentioning how the Indigenous people were treated.

“You’re right,” confirmed Modella, and that bad karma leads to dysfunctional brains which leads to dysfunctional towns. A good town needs a solid ethical foundation.”

“But what about villages and cities in older places, like Europe?”

“There the process was different because it was before ‘gridded’ thinking, and often the topography didn’t allow for big square designs. So those towns grew much more organically, less planned. However, even there, many towns were built on the ruins of invaded places, giving them bad karma.”

“It’s the sad story of humanity,” said Leo.

“Yes,” continued Modella. “However, if many of those European villages and towns look nice, it’s because they were designed with intent, especially for architectural harmony.”

“Interesting,” said Richie.

“And one thing most of these old towns have in common is that they use local building materials because back then they did not have the technology to ship stuff for longer distances. Nowadays, many soulless buildings look the same and are built from similar materials irrespective of their location. The result is a disaster, whether the people involved understand it or not.”

“Why do you say it’s a disaster?” asked Verity.

“Because a very important human need is not being met: *authenticity*. Check the list from Daisen.”

The other Grooters had a look at the *List of Universal Human Needs* that they had found in Japan. And indeed, *authenticity* was one of the eighty needs.

Modella continued: “And one major way to respect architectural authenticity is to use local building materials.”

“That makes sense,” said Leo.

“That also means that I cannot decide on the architectural style of a place before I know the location. I cannot even decide what the main goal of the town should be, maybe it will be linked to some local resources.”

“So, you think we should go and hunt for real estate first?” asked Richie.

“No, there are actually a few other problems we can start to solve before that. Problems that will not depend on the location.”

“Like what, for example?” asked Webbo.

“One big question that we’ve already raised is: how do we make sure that neighbours will get along with each other? Good architecture and town planning can definitely contribute to positive human relationships, but in real life we still have too many frictions between neighbours and people living in the same town.”

“That is going to be a huge nut to crack,” said Boss. “Anyone any clues?”

No answers.

“Another big difficulty, if we want a harmonious society,” said Webbo, “is going to be how to deal with jealousy. Because whether we like it or not, *freedom* and *spontaneity* are both on the list of Universal Human Needs.”

“Don’t some of these needs on the list clash with each other? For example, *stability* seems to go straight against the abovementioned needs,” asked Verity.

“They are not necessarily clashing,” said Leo. “It’s all a question of how a community is organised and how its social rules are set up. If I’ve understood it correctly, jealousy blows up when there is a missing need.”

“Please explain,” said Richie.

“Yes, so for example when one partner in a relationship needs spontaneity, and for example has a one-night stand, then that behaviour may have an impact on the other person’s needs of *trust*, *stability* or *support*, depending on the situation.”

“*Trust* is about not hiding anything from each other, isn’t it?” asked Boss.

“Exactly,” said Verity, who had read a few books on open relationships. “Which is why *communication* is so important in any relationship. When you hide things, the important human need called *trust* goes away. And remember, we want all of our needs met.”

“And how do you solve that?” asked Webbo.

“Mature couples realise that *independence* and *spontaneity* are equally important needs, so they discuss ways for them to maintain *trust* whatever spontaneous situations may arise. Unfortunately, most people never discuss things like these, and only rely on the stuff that they’ve been brainwashed to believe. But divorce statistics don’t lie, they show us that some needs have not been met, so people split, expecting to get their needs better met in next relationship.”

“Actually, statistics do lie,” said Webbo. “Because there are probably far too many couples who remain together just because of the children.”

“Statistical mediocrity is not going to help us fulfill our Pact,” said Leo.

“You’re right,” said Richie.

“How do you plan to call your town, Modella?” asked Boss.

“*Modeltown.*”

“Referring to your name?” asked Verity.

“Yes, but more importantly, I want this town to serve as a model for towns to be built on other planets. I want it to be an amazing place to live, inspiring and harmonious.”

“Maybe you can add a few top models to the picture as well,” said Leo.

“In a harmonious and healthy town, most people are likely to be attractive, as we’ve seen in our Dream Worlds. So, yes, Leo, you’ll certainly get a few model-looking women.”

“Now you’re talking,” said Boss. “And what size do you expect your town to be?”

“That will depend on the location. I will want a certain critical mass, so at least 800 residents, but it could stretch up to 5,000 depending on circumstances.”

“The more models, the merrier,” joked Webbo.

“Let’s focus,” said Boss. “And how do you plan to go about creating a whole new town from scratch?”

“Good question. The first step will be to gather a small team to set the direction of the project: what kind of town do we want, what will make that town unique, where should we locate it, etc.”

“Cool,” said Richie, “I like the intellectual challenge of such a project.”

Boss scratched his head, trying to wrap his neurons around the complexity of such an endeavour. But he knew that it was such a level of complexity that truly motivated him. He reminded himself that *challenge* was also on the list of *Universal Human Needs*.

“OK,” continued Modella. “Now one of the things that most towns don’t get right is to set a clear direction for the town.”

“Direction? For a town? But a town doesn’t move,” said Webbo.

“Oh yes,” said the architect. “But it only moves forward in time, and not in spacetime like a vehicle. Maybe I’ll start with the analogy of a moving airplane to help you better grasp the concept of direction for a town.”

“We are listening,” said Leo.

“So, if we board *Lady Globalia* in Geneva, and we fly more or less straight north, we will end up in Bergen in Norway, unless we want to take pictures of polar bears further north on the

melting ice banks of the North Pole. And if we fly south, we end up in Lagos in Nigeria, unless we go all the way down to say hello to the penguins.”

“You’re funny,” said Verity.

“I try to be a little entertaining for this mini-lecture. Then, if we fly east, we’ll end up in Южно-Сахалинск, Russia. And west, in Portland, Oregon, USA.”

“Got you,” said Boss.

“Now, listen carefully. What happens if the pilot and the co-pilot, and the passengers don’t agree on the destination?”

“It’s going to be a mess,” said Richie.

“Yes, and quite likely, the plane is not going to take off at all until everyone has agreed on the destination. And those who want to go somewhere else will need to catch another plane. It’s as simple as that.”

“What do you mean as simple?” asked Webbo.

“I mean that the reason why most towns, cities and countries are a mess is because the residents haven’t all agreed on a clear direction. That’s where democracy’s fallacy becomes apparent: just imagine a plane where 49% of the passengers don’t want to go to the place the majority has voted for.”

“You’re a genius, Modella!” said Leo.

“Thanks, I think Crystallica has given me a cerebral boost. Goldilocks told us it would increase our energy.”

“I still find it easier to visualise a direction for an airplane than for a town,” said Verity.

“We all find that easier, and that’s because a town is a very complex entity with many ‘moving’ parts and elements that influence each other: plants, animals, humans, buildings, roads, vehicles, sewers, water pipes, electricity lines, etc. All these elements have to work together smoothly, and it needs some serious brain capacity to be able to juggle them all successfully and have them interact harmoniously together.”

“So, what can we do?” asked Leo.

“In urban planning there is a thing called *city visioning* where a group of committed citizens get together to brainstorm the direction the town wants to take.”

“And how exactly do you go about doing that city visioning?” asked Boss.

“The first step is to take stock of the town’s current resources: land, buildings, production capacities, vehicles... and human skills. Then we need to see if we can start some kind of business, for example a country town specialising in growing hemp. Or a city suburb could specialise in research for example, or in artisanry like furniture making or pottery.”

“That sounds great,” said Richie.

“Now, to reach full harmony, 100% of the residents need to agree on the direction. 95% is not enough, because the people disagreeing will disrupt the harmony.”

“That sounds almost impossible,” said Webbo.

“The bigger the town, the more difficult it’s going to be to achieve. Finally, one important thing is to build a main building, or create a main place in the town that captures the direction of the community.”

“Hasn’t historically the church been the main building in a village?” asked Verity.

“Very good observation. Yes, indeed. Or the castle. Castles are almost always forced upon the population, which leads to no chance of social harmony. As for churches, they may come from general public approval, but the direction given by the religions is fuzzy at best.”

“This is great,” said Boss. “So, if I’ve understood correctly, we can’t do much more until we have found an appropriate location.”

“The only thing we could do is to agree on the values we are looking for, irrespective of location,” said Modella.

“Beauty!” said Leo.

“Knowledge!” said Verity.

“Nature!” said Richie.

“Pins!” said Webbo, thinking about the film Chantal showed him in his last Dream World.

“All this sounds very much like... the crystals of Crystallica,” said Boss. “But I think these values would apply to most communities, so what would set Modeltown apart?”

“The way I understand it,” said Modella, “is that Modeltown is a social experiment, like Richie’s Pitcairn Dream World. So, it’s almost a form of research centre.”

“Aren’t most human settlements kind of social experiments?” said Richie.

“No, in the sense that most of them don’t consciously approach it that way. They don’t have the aim of becoming a harmonious society that will not need police, doctors, lawyers, panel beaters or control freaks at the top. Put differently, they are firefighters trying to fix problems, instead of avoiding the problems in the first place.”

“So, what are our values, next to the ones we are crystal clear about? Don’t we all seem to value research?” asked Verity.

“I think you’re right, Verity,” said Leo. “And that’s what our Pact really is about: our common interest in research and pushing human knowledge forward is a major thing that unites us Grooters. I’d say that is what will set our communities apart from all other communities out there.”

“So,” continued Modella, “whereas other communities may specifically value autarchy, fashion, architecture, sports, animals, business, artisanry, music, or any other human interests, I’d say our main value is research. With the ultimate aim to organise communities in such a way that they are frictionless, which will allow us to go to space.”

“We’ll help you get to Xylon, Verity,” said Leo.

“In that case,” observed Webbo, “Love University might be a school aiming at teaching people who want to become researchers?”

“Maybe not necessarily researchers as such for all of them, but for students who have an interest in research and want to support that cause with whatever they are specialised in.”

“What do you mean?” asked Richie.

“Any community needs a breadth of complementary skills. Not everyone can be a researcher, or artisan, or architect. A community also needs people who build homes, grow food, and all the other things any society needs.”

“OK, now I start to get it.”

“Yes, but any farmer, electrician, carpenter, fashion designer who wants to study at Love U or move to Modeltown, needs to be aligned with its ultimate goal, which is the creation of a harmonious society. And the way we plan to achieve that, through multidisciplinary research.”

“It’s like everyone going to work for SpaceX needs to be OK with its aim to make humanity multiplanetary. And the way they plan to achieve that, by building space technology. Irrespective of whether they are employed as a cook, an engineer, human resources, or janitor.”

“Now,” said Verity. “If we truly want harmonious relationships in a community like Modeltown, then there is another thing that I’d like to discuss.”

“Sure,” said Boss, “what is it?”

“I think I’ve noticed it more since Richie and Modella got together.”

“Envy? Jealousy?” wondered Webbo.

“No. I’m so happy for them that they have found each other and honestly think they are a match made in heaven.”

“So, what is it?” asked Modella.

“It’s a very subtle thing that I have observed about most couples. It’s like they get into their couple’s bubble, and others can’t reach them anymore. I had many friends from earlier years, and once they coupled up, I lost them.”

“Lost them?”

“Yes, I can’t talk to them any longer. It’s not as bad with you guys, but it’s still there,” said Verity addressing Modella and Richie.

“I’m not sure I understand,” said Richie.

“It’s something I didn’t feel with Aaron and Aurora.”

“You want couples to have sex with you?”

“In specific situations, why not. But it’s not really about that. It’s a subtler thing.”

“Have you checked the *List of Universal Human Needs* to see if you could identify something that may be missing?” asked Leo.

“Yes, and I think that what I miss, and what many single people miss, is *inclusion*. And yes, *sexual expression* as well, although they can cover parts of that latter need themselves.”

Boss intervened: “And what do you think couples need to do to allow for this inclusion?”

“I think it’s a side-effect of the main problem in most societies today: individualism. People only caring about themselves. The vast majority of couples are just two-person individualism. And the average family is four-person individualism. They only think about themselves when they make decisions.”

Then Richie asked: “When you say that Aaron and Aurora did not give you that feeling of being excluded from their couple, what do you think they did right?”

“I think it’s a mix of the right sort of empathy for single people, combined with the knowledge of the *Five Love Languages* and the *Physics of Love*.”

Modella addressed Verity: “Concretely, what do you think Richie and I can do to help you feel that feeling of inclusion you felt with Aaron and Aurora?”

“That’s the thing, because it’s so subtle, I’m not totally sure what you need to do. Or I need to do. I am just sharing what I feel.”

“Let’s see if we can think this through,” said Leo. “If we think logically, there must be some kind of bad energy around their couple that makes you feel like that. Is that right, Verity?”

“I guess so, and as I said, with most other couples it is far worse than with Modella and Richie. But there is still something.”

“I think we need to try and figure out why a couple emits bad energies,” said Boss.

“Could it be their bad conscience for not caring about single people?” asked Webbo.

“Or,” proposed Leo, “could it be that they don’t feel secure in their own relationship so that they need to ‘force’ the couple bond instead of having the bond occur naturally?”

“I like that explanation, Leo,” said Verity. “I guess hypersensitive people like myself pick up that insecurity/fear, however small, and it kind of pushes me away, I can’t fully access those people any longer.”

“So, you think I and Richie need to work on some aspects of our relationship?” asked Modella. “Do you think it could be linked to jealousy?”

“That’s very probable, and normal,” said Webbo, remembering how Sarika told him she had struggled for six months to get rid of her jealousy.

“OK, everyone,” said Boss, “I think that we’ve now done some good ground work for our big projects. Do we all agree that we want Verity’s university to be located just next to Leo’s research centre and that both campuses will share a beautiful library?”

“Yes,” said the others in unison.

“And what about the location of Modella’s Modeltown?”

“It could eventually be close to those campuses. Or not. Maybe we should first consider the main location requirements for both?”

“Good idea,” said Boss. “So, Verity, you’ve already mentioned a few requirements.”

“Yes, that the university be located next to nature, ideally a national park that will never be developed.”

“And as for your research centre, Leo, you need a quiet environment so that your researchers can think in peace.”

“Correct. I also think it would be great to have the research centre in a temperate climate, which is better for clear thinking.”

“What about you, Verity? Is a temperate climate OK?”

“Yes, as long as it doesn’t get too cold in winter.”

“Your turn, Modella,” said Boss.

“I’d say my main criteria is that I have a lot of space. First to build Modeltown, then to eventually develop other villages and small towns in the same region, with farmlands around them and the aim that these towns complement each other.”

“Can’t you just locate Modeltown next to other existing towns?” asked Webbo.

“Not really, because if the aim is to train building settlements like we will at some point do on other planets, we don’t expect there to be other towns around. Also, that would allow us to test different approaches, especially if we struggle getting the first Modeltown right.”

“Wait,” said Richie. “Now you want to build not just one town from scratch, but several? We’re going from very expensive to extremely expensive.”

“Yes, it may need the support of some cute-looking billionaires,” replied the architect with a disarming smile and gave Richie a kiss.

“Anything else?” asked Boss.

“Well, the thing is that the towns I plan shall all be walkable, so I need far less space than most towns currently use in car-dependent countries. It will also make the developments far cheaper. Roads are very costly.”

Richie sighed in slight relief. It was not every day that people stretched his billionaire purse like that. But he liked ambitious projects. And he liked Modella and his other Grooters friends.

“Now that I think about it,” said Modella, “I might as well start the first Modeltown next to Love University. Which means the main library could be the main building of the town as well. So, we aim at attracting people who value research, books, reading, even if they work as a baker in town, or any other profession.”

“The way I understand it in this case, is that your first Modeltown would then be some kind of ‘service town’ for the university and its research centre.”

“Yes,” confirmed Modella, “but I prefer to call it support town. The town’s purpose will be to support the university and research centre. And by the way, most staff will live in the town as well, and so may some of the students who are not living on campus.”

Verity went over to hug Modella. “So cool, we’ll be in the same place!”

“We might need a slightly bigger library then,” said Richie.

“A library can’t be too big,” said Verity with a smile.

“OK,” said Boss, “where does that leave us when it comes to the location of Love University/Modeltown?”

“There are not many places left in temperate climates where one could build a new university, and several villages or towns,” said Webbo.

“You forget the southern hemisphere,” said Modella, “there is still plenty of space in South Africa, Argentina, and Australia.”

Then Verity added: “Wherever it is going to be, we want the support of the local Indigenous people as well as the colonists.”

“Yes, I’m sure Goldilocks would appreciate that as well,” said Leo.

“Given how unconventional our projects are, I’d say most places are unlikely to welcome us with open arms.”

“We just need one place,” said Modella, “or maybe two.”

“What I suggest,” said Boss, “is that we first start to think through our projects in more detail, make some nice and comprehensible presentations, then first reach out to local Indigenous communities in these countries. Once we have them on board, we will reach out to the official governments.”

“And how do you plan to convince them?”

“With logic and common sense, clearly stating everything they have to gain.”

“Sounds feasible.”

“Finally,” said Boss addressing Modella, “if we’ve now decided to merge all three big projects in one location, what impact would that have on the overall design, knowing that the original design of the university/research centre was to have the main library in a park separating both entities.”

“Very good question. I think we may want to slightly adapt the design so that the main building, the library, be placed in the centre, still of a park, but leading to the three entities. So, imagine the library at the intersection of the three lines in the letter ‘Y’.”

“That sounds like a good solution,” said Verity.

“I agree,” said Leo. “And think the university and research centre should still be next to nature/the national park, where it is quieter.”

“That’s perfectly fine,” said Modella. “The people in the ‘support town’ don’t need absolute silence, they’ll be busy working or socialising. And if they want quietness they just go to the library or the park.”

“Anything else you can already tell us about the design you have in mind, Modella?” asked Boss.

“Perhaps only that I don’t want a grid structure of the town, or even the university.”

“What do you want instead?” asked Webbo.

“A breathing design.”

“Breathing?” wondered Leo.

“Yes,” continued Modella. “Like our lungs, or a tree. So, a design with many *cul-de-sacs* for cars. Pedestrians and bicycles should still be able to come through at the end of most streets.”

“That sounds like a nice solution,” said Richie.

“And I want plenty of trees everywhere,” she added.

“Me too,” said Verity.

After four days in the conference room, the Grooters reckoned they had pushed the brainstorm of Modella’s Modeltown as far as they could for the moment, so they decided to take an additional day of sightseeing before heading back to Geneva.

This time the other Grooters gave their translator a break, so Verity roamed Samarkand by herself, while Modella studied the Islamic architecture more in-depth, and Webbo went to meet an online-gaming friend, the kind that one normally never meets IRL, in real life. And Richie went rowing, nostalgic from his Boston student years. Boss had bought a book about Samarkand’s history, and sat down in a café to read it. That gave Leo time to teleport to wherever Wendy was that day.

Verity had gained a lot of self-confidence during this year with the Grooters. Not only thanks to her Dream World travels, but also to her double real-life trilogies. Librarians love trilogies. So, her strategy was now to take the initiative to talk to strangers. Good-looking ones.

Because her previous life strategy of passively waiting for the right man to find and court her had not worked.

And that's how she ended up sitting on a park bench next to a handsome guy, that she guessed was Russian.

“Привет.”

“Привет.”

“Samarkand is wonderful, isn't it? Are you also visiting?”

“Да.”

“And where do you come from?”

“Do you mean where I came from to get here? Or where I was born and grew up?”

“Tell me both.”

“A few days ago, I came from 3300km north-west of here. But I come from 3200km north-east of here.”

“Let me guess... Moscow and Irkutsk.”

“Not bad. St. Petersburg and Irkutsk. What about you?”

“It's complicated.”

“Tell me.”

“Let's say that I am based in Switzerland for the moment. And I just came from Japan with my teammates. We like to blend business and pleasure, so we stopped in Samarkand on the way back to Europe.”

“One of my heroes comes from Switzerland.”

“And who would that be?”

“Othmar Amman.”

“Never heard of.”

“Then you are probably not an engineer.”

“Good guess. Although I have a few notions of physics, but I'm more interested in unconventional physics.”

“Amman designed bridges. Among others the George Washington and Verrazano bridges in New York. He stressed the importance that a bridge had to be beautiful.”

The man said that slowly, looking at his beautiful bench neighbour. Then he continued:

“And he consulted on the Golden Gate bridge as well.”

“I have some close friend who are very well acquainted with the Golden Gate bridge,” said Verity.

“Tell me more.”

“It’s classified information for the moment. But if we get to know each other better, I may someday divulge more. What do you do in St. Petersburg?”

“I teach engineering at Saint Petersburg State University. What about you?”

“I’m just a librarian.”

“I have the feeling you’re not ‘just a librarian’. I mean, your Russian is almost perfect. You look Asian and live in Europe. I have the feeling you have more to tell me.”

Verity smiled enigmatically. This was fun.

“Well, I’ve just started to plan a rather big project that involves a library, and some other things.” Then she changed subject:

“Apart from bridges, do you have any other specific engineering interests?”

“Yes, I’ve been involved in several spaceship projects, most of them in Kazakhstan, just across the border 700km north of Samarkand.”

“I dream of going to Mars one day.”

“Maybe I can help you in that direction...”

“I have to go now, but let’s keep in touch. Here is my number. My name is Verity.”

“And here is mine. I’m Igor. It was a pleasure to meet you.”

“The same. And I hope you’ll choose Geneva for your next vacation. It’s a bit closer to St. Petersburg than Samarkand.”

“I look forward to learn more about your project and your ‘unconventional’ physics,” said Igor.

As Verity slowly walked back to the hotel, she wondered if what she had just felt was the elusive 5th element.

♪ *Le 5ème élément – Beatrice Egli*

The other Grooters could feel that Verity was onto something.

“You have things to tell us,” said Modella.

“Maybe soon...”

Part 43 Algo

Geneva, Switzerland, 15 September 2018

The Grooters were now back in Geneva after their Japanese and Uzbek adventures, and had gathered in the living room with Crystallica, for yet another brainstorming session.

“OK,” said Boss. “We have discussed Love University and Modeltown more in depth, and done a rough sketch-out of the Love U campus. We have discussed the initial requirements and possible countries for locating them. And we have found a detailed list of people’s needs. Now, how do we make sure that neighbours get along with each other?”

“I’d say people need the same values,” said Verity.

“One thing I’ve noticed in my golf club on Nantucket,” said Richie, “is that although all members are golf enthusiasts, by no means does everyone get along well with everyone else.”

“Yes,” said Boss. “I can confirm that from other organisations or associations I’ve come across or been member of.”

“What about the people in your businesses, Boss?” asked Modella. “Do they all get along well with each other?”

“Yes, fairly well, but that’s certainly not the case in all businesses. I have the obvious advantage of being able to read people’s minds, which is an invaluable help for recruiting harmonious teams. And for making sure that all ‘hidden’ issues are quickly addressed.”

Leo intervened: “If similar values are a good start, a common goal is probably more important, what do you reckon?”

“That makes me think of the three energies,” said Verity. “What if we try and apply them to neighbours matching? Like we tried to match our Dream World lovers to our projects?”

“You’re a genius, Verity,” said Leo. “*Love Thy Neighbour*: maybe it’s time to look at that saying scientifically?”

Verity continued: “If we simply look at what dream neighbours could look like through the lens of the Physics of Love, then we see that we first have to be attracted to the neighbours, physically, emotionally, and intellectually. That’s the horizontal energy. Then we need to feel supported by our neighbours. That’s the uplifting energy. And finally, we need to have a common goal, the forward-moving energy.”

“That’s the ideal end result,” said Richie. “Which I totally agree with. But how do we get there? How do we find neighbours we are attracted to, who support us, and who share our goals?”

The other Grooters remained silent, pinpointing the elusive difference between theory and practice.

Then Webbo said:

“Well, if we aim for a community of let’s say 1,000 people, then we have to pick them among the 8 billion humans on this planet. It’s probably much easier to find one needle in 1,000 haystacks.”

“There are always ways to beat the statistics,” said Boss.

“Yes, but how?” wondered Verity.

Webbo looked at the pulsating Crystallica, and for some reason the Crystal of Love seemed to jump out. Maybe the Crystal of Love contained some secret on how to love our neighbours. He asked Verity:

“What stone is the Crystal of Love made of? Didn’t Smaranda tell you that in your Dream World in Geneva 2061?”

“Yes, it’s supposedly the biggest ruby ever found. I think it was found in Burma.”

“Ruby! Of course!” shouted Webbo.

“So what?” wondered Boss.

“Ruby is a programming language. One of my favourites, one of the most intuitive ones.”

“And?” wondered Modella, not sure why Webbo got so enthusiastic.

“We need to program a matchmaking algorithm to help people find the right neighbours. That’s how we’ll beat statistics.”

“Do you know what to feed into the algorithm?” asked Richie.

“No.”

Suddenly, Leo remembered one of his previous ideas: “We need to identify patterns of places where people get along with their neighbours, and compare them to patterns of places where people don’t get along or talk to their neighbours.”

“That makes sense,” said Verity. “But it’s going to be tricky to identify those patterns.”

Boss suggested: “Maybe we need to do a few days of individual research, then get back together to go through our results and see if we can come up with some patterns?”

Three days later

“I’m very eager to hear what everyone has come up with,” said Boss.

“The first thing I wanted to say,” said Modella, “is that if the town planning is poor, people will not talk to their neighbours, so that must be corrected first.”

“Can you give us an example?” asked Verity.

“Yes. If we for example put residential homes on a busy street with a lot of loud vehicle traffic, then studies have shown that people are far less likely to talk to their neighbours.”

“Which is why you promote quiet walkable communities?” said Richie.

“Yes.”

“Great,” said Leo, pushing the discussion further. “Now, let’s take a quiet street in a walkable neighbourhood. Why don’t all neighbours get along perfectly well with each other there either?”

“Because they haven’t set up the community intentionally, making sure everyone’s values and goals match,” said Modella.

“Getting clear on values and goals is a prerequisite before we can even start to search for the 1,000 in 8 billion,” said Boss. “In the same way one has first to get clear on business values and goals before one can successfully start to recruit like-minded employees.”

“There seems to be so many analogies between running a business and setting up a community,” observed Verity.

“Yes, I agree,” said Boss, while Richie nodded. “So, what patterns have we identified in neighbourhoods where people get along?”

Silence.

“What? Three days of investigations... and nothing?”

“Nothing beyond what we already know,” said Verity. “Which is that we need good town planning, similar values, and a common goal.”

“People who support their neighbours seem to get along better,” said Modella.

“Yes,” said Leo. “But isn’t it because they get along well that they support each other?”

“Not sure what comes first...”

“There must be something else,” said Boss. “Something we should be able to feed into an algorithm. We must think out of the box.” And, once again, he pointed at his watch with the square cogwheel.

Leo intervened: “Very good point, Boss. I’ve noticed from past research projects that it’s important to get absolutely clear on and delve on the question we are seeking an answer to. In our case, we want to understand what makes neighbours get along with each other. Yes, even love each other.”

“But it’s so hard to find data on neighbours, for privacy reasons,” said Webbo.

“Then we need to find data somewhere else, and apply it to our neighbour situation,” said Richie.

“You said *love your neighbour?*” asked Verity.

“Yes.”

“Couples are neighbours in bed, aren’t they?”

“That’s one way to put it,” said Modella, then turned to Richie: “Hi, neighbour!” And they all laughed.

“I’m serious,” continued Verity. “Because we can easily find data on those kinds of neighbours getting along... or not.”

“Where?” asked Leo.

“Wikipedia.”

“Wikipedia?”

“Yes, for most celebrities written about on Wikipedia, we know who has divorced, and which relationships still go strong after years and decades.”

“And you think we can somehow find patterns there?” wondered Webbo.

“It’s just an initial hunch, but yes,” said the Grooters librarian.

“What if we take the afternoon to analyse what’s on Wikipedia, and the first one who thinks they can identify a pattern shouts out,” suggested Boss.

“Great,” said Verity, “and whomever comes up with that pattern gets a kiss from me!”

“Now, you’re talking,” said Webbo.

They spent the rest of the day roaming celebrities on Wikipedia.

Towards the end of the afternoon, the whole house heard a loud “Eureka!”. It was Leo.

They all gathered back in the living room.

“Sounds like you’ve found something, Leo,” said Boss.

“Yes. Once you see it, it’s so obvious. We truly are blind. It’s hidden in plain sight.”

“Come on, Leo,” said Modella, “tell us.”

“The pattern is in people’s names. And birthdates. But it’s going to be a major challenge to feed that into an algorithm.”

Leo showed them the patterns he had identified among over a dozen of celebrities.

“You see, the pattern is there for the people who stay together. And the pattern is missing for people who end up in divorce.”

“Which means you can predict if a couple is going to split?”

“Yes, with a fairly high certainty.”

“That’s dynamite,” said Richie.

“I guess so. I prefer to call it science,” said Leo.

“Which means we should also be able to predict when neighbours will love each other, and when not.”

“Positive, once we have built the algorithm,” said Webbo.

“You’re a genius, Leo!” said Verity, and walked up to him to give him the promised kiss.

“And for the less lucky ones, we have the wine cellar,” said Boss. “I’ll go and grab what we need for the *apéro*.”

“Thanks, Boss!” said the other Grooters.

The next morning, they continued their discussions.

“So, what are the next steps?” wondered Modella, anxious to build the first town in history, as far as she knew, where all people would actually get along. Maybe there was a glimpse of hope at settling successfully on other planets.

“Now we all need to continue to identify patterns on Wikipedia, and then feed that data to Webbo, who should be able to build the algorithm.”

“Would the algorithm have a name?” asked Verity.

“If I’ve understood this correctly, it’s the ultimate algorithm, so I would simply call it *Algo*,” said Leo, probably influenced by typical Australian lingo.

“Sounds good to me,” said Webbo while the others nodded.

Leo continued: “I’ll work closely together with Webbo, because it feels like I have the biggest intuition for identifying and understanding the patterns.”

“That makes sense,” said Modella. “Although I get the patterns we’ve identified, I struggle with finding my own.”

“So do I,” said Verity. “But I fully support you guys.”

Geneva, Switzerland, 17 October 2018

Leo and Webbo worked around the clock to build *Algo*. Then, about a month later, Webbo told the others:

“The first demo of *Algo* is ready.” He showed them a very simple website with two lines of text fields, with a button below.

Person 1: Full name – birthdate

Person 2: Full name – birthdate

Check compatibility

“Is that all?” asked Modella.

“There is a lot under the hood. Try it for yourself,” said Webbo. “Just look up any celebrity on Wikipedia.”

Modella entered two celebrities in the text fields, and pushed the compatibility check button.

And simply got the answer: *Compatibility: 78%*.

Then she tested another couple: *Compatibility: 34%*.

The first couple was still married. The second not. She tried more examples. And all results above 50%, the couples were still together, and for low percentages, they had split.

“This is magic!” she exclaimed. “Does it work for non-celebrities too?”

“Yes, as long as you know their full names and birthdates,” said Webbo.

“Can I try as well?” asked Verity. “I have a few friends of which I know their full names and birthdates.”

Verity entered their data, and yes... the ones with low percentages had split, those with high percentages were still together.

Then Richie put in his and Modella’s names and birthdates. High compatibility. But not as high as he had expected.

“This is amazing,” said Boss. “But now, how do we use this for a whole town?”

“Good question. Well, we can start to make sure that direct neighbours have high compatibility. Then people on the same street, then in the whole town.”

Leo added: “We’ll need to finetune *Algo* so that it can identify patterns for a multitude of people.”

Modella, reflecting on the percentages thrown at them by the computer, asked:

“I understand that the higher the compatibility percentage, the better?”

“I’d say so,” said Leo.

“Are you sure?”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that the data from Wikipedia is mostly about mononormative relationships. What about open relationships? Is it best to have one regular relationship with 90% compatibility, or two or three relationships with 70% compatibility?”

“I hadn’t thought about that,” admitted Leo.

“Sounds like you just gave us something to chew on for the next iteration of *Algo*,” said Webbo.

“Yes, I feel it goes back to the *Diamond Theory*, our fifty-eight facets,” said Leo, thinking about what Vatua had told him in his Purotu Dream World. “And how some people will match some of these facets, filling certain needs, while others will complement that partner.”

“Sensational work,” said Richie addressing Webbo and Leo. “However, if our goal is to find people that are supposed to live together in the same community, then I feel that something is still missing.”

“You are probably right about that, Richie,” admitted Webbo. “But what?”

“Let’s sleep on it.”

The day after, Boss relaunched the discussions: “OK, so what are we missing? How can we now extend the capacities of *Algo* so that it can help us find matches for our Dream Worlds, or dream communities, whether they be a university, a research centre, or a town?”

“Again,” said Leo, “let’s try and get clearer on exactly what we’re looking for.”

“Here is how I would formulate it,” said Modella. “If there are two places A and B, where my name, values and goals match equally well with my neighbours, which one should I move to?”

“Now we are getting somewhere,” said Leo. “Phrased like that, the answer becomes obvious. I am the only one seeing it?”

The others remained silent. So, Leo continued:

“Given everything else being equal, I guess the only remaining thing that differentiates places A and B are their names.”

“Of course!” shouted the others, feeling sorry for their own blindness.

Again, they all looked at patterns on Wikipedia and thought through their own lives and acquaintances. And the more they dug, the more it became apparent that the supposedly random choices of where people settle could often be traced back to their names.

“I noticed another thing,” said Richie. “It seems like people’s name can match with either the country’s name, the state’s name, the city’s name, the neighbourhood’s name, or even with the street name.”

“Wow,” said Verity. “That’s an incredible insight.”

Then Boss took over again: “Webbo, do you think you can build in place names into your algorithm as well?”

“It will take some work, but yes, I can.”

Geneva, Switzerland, 17 November 2018

Another few weeks of coding, then Webbo called the others.

“Algo 2.0 is ready.”

“How have you gone about solving the riddle this time?” asked Richie.

“I literally fed a whole world map database into Algo, then ran a similar match between people and places, as I did between people and people in Algo 1.0.”

“Sound fairly straightforward,” said Modella.

“It was not, it actually stretched my neurons quite a bit. But I think I made it.”

“You’re a genius, Webbo!” said Verity.

They all played around with Algo 2.0 for a few hours, getting more and more convinced that an actual algorithm could help solve the millennial riddle of how to get along with one's neighbours.

“And by the way,” said Webbo, “this algorithm could be very useful for immigration departments as well. The thing is that without a non-emotional algorithm, immigration decisions will always fail.”

“What do you mean by that?” asked Verity.

“Well, if the immigration departments let in too many foreigners, then they end up with social issues like in Sweden, France or Germany. Whereas if they are too strict, they will rightly be labelled racists like Australia or Switzerland.”

“So, whatever stance they take, they lose?” asked Richie.

“Until the day they start using Algo 2.0 or some similar science-based algorithm,” concluded Webbo.

Then Modella asked Webbo and Leo: “Practically, how do I apply Algo 2.0 to creating Modeltown?”

“Good question,” answered Leo. “And the plain and simple answer is that you can't do anything until you have decided on a location, and chosen street names as well, at least the first few streets.”

“Great,” said Boss. “Then it seems like the only remaining question is to find a location for Modeltown.”

“And for Love University,” added Verity.

“OK everyone,” said Boss. “This needs to be celebrated.”

“Yes,” said Verity, “and we have two birthday children tonight!”

“Officially, tomorrow,” said Boss. “But because it's Saturday, and my friend invited us all, we are going to celebrate tonight.”

“You may kiss us at midnight,” Webbo told Verity.

Part 44 Compersion

Geneva, Switzerland, 1 October 2018

Modella had just come back from a weekend in Italy, spending some quality time with her admirer, Rocco. Unlike the other Grooters who did not know the lovers from their Dream Worlds, Modella actually already knew Rocco. They had been together for two years when she had worked as a model in Milan in her early twenties.

However, he couldn't join her in the United States where she went to study architecture. So, they had decided to go separate ways. But now, triggered by Modella's Osteria dream, their paths had crossed again.

Despite being together with Richie, Modella had called Rocco to find out where he was in life. She had been very open with him and Richie, not hiding anything from anyone. Both of them were OK with Modella's heart's desires.

So, Modella was now going to Italy about once a month.

However, despite loving both Richie and Rocco, Modella still struggled with jealousy when Richie fucked Christella in his office.

Modella was emotionally mature enough not to make a drama in front of Richie. Instead, she asked Verity for advice: "I am aware that my jealousy is irrational, because I very much enjoy fucking Rocco too, but I can't help it. What should I do?"

"Let me read some resources on jealousy and open relationships, then I may get a few insights that could eventually help. I'm very interested in that topic too, as it seems to blow up so many potentially amazing relationships."

Two days later, Verity said that she had now gone through hundreds of websites and read several dozen books on the topic.

"So," asked Modella, "did you find any insights that you think could help me?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"Great, thanks, I am listening."

"There are three insights I believe could be useful to you – and to me as well, I'm not an emotional statue either.

First, you are already polyamorous. Polyamory simply means loving several people intimately. Most people are polyamorous. But for some strange reason, only sequential polyamory is socially accepted, not simultaneous polyamory.

Second, if you can love several of your children, you can love several adults, all in their own unique way.

Third, it's important to understand why you feel jealousy: it is a deep-rooted survival instinct. Fears tend to fit into two categories: either they can be rational, and are there to save your life, for example the fear of heights, to prevent you from falling and killing yourself. Then there are irrational fears, that may be linked to past traumas, even in past lives, for example fear of public places, or fear of elevators.

Now, where would you say jealousy fits in? Is it a rational or irrational fear?"

"I'm not completely sure," said Modella.

"It's probably a mix. In one sense it's irrational because your life is not in danger when Richie has a good time with Christella. On the other hand, your fear may have an aspect of rationality in the sense that if Richie were to leave you for more interesting pastures, then you are stuck having to raise your children on your own, which to a certain extent threatens your survival, at least comfortable survival."

"That explains why I feel the way I feel. Now, can we do something about it?"

"Yes, there are always solutions to problems in life. Remember the *List of Universal Human Needs* we found in Daisen?"

"Of course."

"And remember that the monks said that whenever there was a problem in society, and they even mentioned jealousy, it means that one or several of our needs are not being met."

"Yes, but which one? There are eighty of them."

"Probably several of them, but the main needs related to your own and your future children's 'survival', are the need for *safety*, *stability* and *support*. All these words start with an 's', like sex."

"And how do we solve that dilemma?"

"The problem lies in the inherent organisation of our society, because monogamy is about putting all your eggs in one basket: your husband's. So, we live in constant fear that something may happen to those eggs in that one basket."

"I think I start to see where this is going. So, the solution is community?"

"Exactly. A community is like a 'needs-meeting machine'. The better organised a community is, the more needs it meets."

"So, that's going to be my challenge when designing Modeltown: to make sure that no one puts all their eggs in just one basket."

"Yes, because that creates stress, and stress creates fear and diseases. On the other hand, a well-planned community is strong and resilient. In the same way as one stick easily breaks, two break less easily, whereas if you put hundreds of people that *stick* together, your community becomes unbreakable. Think of the tiny Astérix village. That's power."

"Great analogy."

"And you can also ponder the African proverb: *It takes a village to raise a child.*"

“What if I feel that I’m not enough for Richie?”

“You, not enough? In your case, that’s a completely irrational fear. You’re a stunning 10/10 and on top of that you are an accomplished architect and have your sensitivity and superpower communicating with the beyond. Trust me, you’re beyond perfect.”

“Thanks, Verity.”

“That being said, for many other women, that same fear may be rational.”

“So, what can they do?”

“I’d say all the classic things: exercise more, eat healthily, make efforts to dress well, educate themselves, work on their femininity. In theory, all that’s easy. The trickiest thing may be to find a passion in life, or a cause. That’s very attractive to men, in the same way as women love passionate men. Based on what I’ve read, I think a lot of people can benefit from consulting a life or career coach.”

“But how do I actually get rid of the jealousy? I think I’ve understood the rationale on an intellectual level, but I just can’t help getting jealous. You think I may need a coach as well?”

“From what I’ve read, not all authors seem to be unanimous about a good way to tackle jealousy. Which makes it very hard for me to advise with full certainty. However, I came across someone who might be able to help you. It’s a woman based in Luxembourg. The testimonials on her website are very positive, and she is specialised in helping multilingual clients sort out their possessiveness issues.”

Modella had a look on the website and called the lady named Defusa Jal-Oussi. She explained her situation.

“I think I should be able to help you,” answered Defusa. “But we will need a few days together. Can you come to Luxembourg tomorrow?”

“Yes, I can.”

“Good, then bring your gym outfit as well.”

She told Richie about her plans.

“Do you want me to come with you?”

“No, I’m fine, I’ll take a regular flight to Luxembourg. This is my responsibility. I want to become the best partner imaginable because I love you. And that includes doing this internal work.”

“You’re amazing, Modella,” said Richie, kissing and hugging her.

Luxembourg, 4 October 2018

Defusa had a cosy apartment in the old town of Luxembourg, overlooking the parks and river below.

The Bohemian-chic lady was maybe in her forties, but still very attractive. She wore a lot of jewellery, making her very feminine. Her clothing style and interior design matched perfectly, with a lot of intense colours, many yellows, oranges and reds, mixed with wooden furniture, and a few warm cream tones to balance everything.

Defusa's mother tongue was Luxemburgish, but she was also fluent in German, French and English. And Portuguese.

Looking at her, Modella thought: "She is certainly not the boring housewife type. No chance that lady has only had one love in her life. Good, maybe she can teach me things."

They both sat down on the big comfortable couch with plenty of cushions. Then Defusa said: "Tell me about your current relationships, and what aspects you think lead to your jealousy. By the way, I highly respect your courage to seek help with this."

Modella first told Defusa about Richie. And his attractiveness as a billionaire. And she told him about Richie and Christella, who saw each other daily at work. And she mentioned her relationship with Rocco.

Then she also told her about her discussion with Verity, and about Verity's insight that jealousy may be triggered by unmet needs.

"Thanks for sharing all this. Yes, jealousy is very much linked to unmet or perceived unmet needs. So, I've understood you speak a few languages, like myself?"

"Yes," confirmed Modella. "Spanish from my father, Swedish from my mother, French because I lived in Geneva, English because I lived in the United States, and Italian because I worked in Italy for three years."

"*Très bien*," said her polyglot match. "Because languages are where we will start."

"What do you mean?"

"Have you heard of the *Diamond Theory*?"

"I'm not sure."

"The theory likens humans to polished diamonds, which have fifty-eight facets. And every language we speak is one facet of us, that contributes to making us unique."

"Oh, yes, I've actually heard of it," said Modella, thinking back to Leo's Dream World travel in Polynesia.

"And each of these facets is linked to one or several needs."

"We recently discovered a list of *Universal Human Needs*," said the blonde Grooters, vividly remembering her recent journey to Japan with her friends.

“Can we agree, at least on an intellectual level to start with, that it is statistically very unlikely to find a partner who can meet all your needs of all your diamond facets? For example, your main partner Richie doesn’t speak Italian.”

“Nor Swedish or Spanish, by the way,” added Modella.

“Good. But you have other facets in common: your sensitivity, your ambition, caring for humanity. Maybe some specific common goals. Am I right?”

“Yes.”

“And Rocco meets other needs you have, not only the Italian language, I suppose?”

“Yes, my love for good food, culture, and my need for spontaneity. Italy is also very inspiring for an architect like me.”

“So, both Richie and Rocco enrichen your life in complementary ways.”

“I fully agree.”

“Which means your life would be less without one of them.”

“Yes. Do you think I may need even more men in my life?”

“That’s a possibility. But first you need to learn to handle two lovers. After that, just let things flow and see what the Universe comes up with.”

“Thank you so much for your insights, Defusa,” said Modella.

“You’re welcome. We have much more to cover, but you’ll need some time to digest everything. It’s good you’ve come alone, so that you can spend some time thinking through our discussions. We’ll meet tomorrow morning again. Come in your training outfit.”

“Great, see you tomorrow.”

The day after, Modella knocked at Defusa’s door, and the Bohemian psychologist had transformed into a personal trainer.

“Hi Modella, let’s go down to the basement.”

They took the stairs down below ground, and Defusa opened a thick door, and they entered a room that had black walls of some kind of synthetic material.

“This used to be a recording studio. But I’ve found new uses for it. It’s perfectly sound-proof.”

It looked like a small gym, and the main feature was a big punching bag.

“I call it the *Defuse Chamber*. We need to defuse your potentially explosive emotions.”

“You think I need this?”

“Trust me. Here, put on these boxing gloves.”

Modella did as she was told, then Defusa continued:

“Now, I want you to go searching for the images that trigger your jealousy. And punch them into the bag.”

Nothing happened. Defusa smiled, obviously used to her clients trying to suppress their emotions.

“OK, let me help you a little here: “Imagine Richie in his office, looking over a few documents with Christella. They get closer. Start to kiss. But it doesn’t end there. They are both very attracted to each other, Christella starts to suck Richie’s dick. Then Richie licks Christella’s pussy very enthusiastically, before she begs him to penetrate her. Which he does, taking her on his desk.”

Defusa, used to monitor her clients’ emotions, could now feel things starting move inside Modella. Jealousy. Anger. Frustration.

“Good,” she told her. “Where do you feel these emotions in your body? In your gut? In your head? In your chest? Now, punch out these emotions that you feel are bubbling up.”

That got Modella moving. She started to punch the bag. Defusa held the bag so that Modella could punch harder.

“Great,” said Defusa. “Go on, and scream as much as you like. This room is sound-proof. Come on, punch!”

Modella continued to release her emotions through her boxing gloves. And she started to scream.

“Well done,” encouraged Defusa, “more, more, keep it coming out.”

Which Modella did, for at least another ten minutes. Then she stopped, sweating profusely.

“Does it feel better?” asked her coach.

“Oh yes! That felt good. Am I done now?”

“Oh no! But we’ll take a short break to let you recuperate. Here, drink some water.”

“Thanks.”

A few minutes later, Defusa told Modella: “Ready for round 2?”

“I guess I am.”

“Good. Let’s find some more images in your brain that trigger your jealousy.”

“You think there are more? Couldn’t get much more explicit than the scene you described earlier.”

Defusa just smiled. Then she continued:

“This time, I want you to imagine Richie, not only screwing Christella daily in the office, but also having an affair with Escorta, a recently retired young professional luxury escort... who truly knows how to please men. Sometimes, the three of them have sex together. Richie hasn’t told you anything about Escorta, about her tight ass, perfect breasts and shining eyes.”

As before, Defusa saw the emotions coming up inside Modella, who didn’t need to be asked to punch the bag this time. And she punched. And punched.

“Good, come on, Modella, let it out!” said her exceptional trainer.

And she did, even more furiously than during the first round. When her anger had subsided, Defusa told her to take another break.

“What? There’s even more to come?”

Defusa smiled. And ten minutes later, she said: “Round 3 will be the last one today. Ready?”

“Yes.”

“OK. Tune back into the last few images with Richie, Christella and Escorta. Now, I want you to imagine the worst possible outcome of that situation: Richie decides to ditch you, marry and move in with Christella, and take Escorta as a regular lover. On top of that, he will go and fuck plenty of other women in sex clubs, and Modella is only a fuzzy distant memory. And also, you’ll never be able to find any other man like Richie.”

The punching started again. Modella punched the bag as if all the evils of the world were contained in that sand bag. Actually, Modella downloaded some evils into that bag. Which was the whole point of the exercise.

That third round almost knocked Modella out, she was tired, but relieved.

“How does it feel now?” asked Defusa.

“Unexpectedly good. I think I got rid of some stuff there. But I’m tired.”

“You’re doing absolutely great. Now, I suggest you take the afternoon to pamper yourself in a spa. Then I’ll see you again tomorrow morning in my apartment. No gym outfit tomorrow.”

Modella did as she was told, and wished she was told more often to go to a spa. Boy, did that feel good. Maybe it felt exceptionally good because of the morning boxing challenge.

The day after, back in Defusa’s apartment, Modella hugged her, thanking her for the punching session.

“I feel so much better today,” she said. “Still a little soar in the upper body, but the spa smoothed most of it.”

“That’s great to hear,” said Defusa. “Let’s sit down on the sofa and debrief yesterday’s event and maybe you have more things to share with me as well.”

Modella, now feeling more trust towards Defusa, decided to share with her the Grooters’ story, their superpowers, and their Pact. She was glad she did that because it helped Defusa get a better grasp for the support Modella may need to reach her goals.

After a while, Defusa stood up and asked Modella to sit down on the chair that was on the other side of the coffee table.

“Today, I’m going to take you on another journey in your imagination. Yesterday, we covered the worst-case scenarios. Time to cover the best-case ones. For that, you need to relax. Close your eyes.”

Modella did as she was told. Then Defusa walked up behind her and started to massage her neck and shoulders.

“Wow, that feels good,” said Modella.

Continuing the massage, Defusa said: “I want you to imagine a city that you love. A city that you love so much that you tell everyone about it, want to show people around that city, or just recommend places there so that they can go and discover that amazing city for themselves.”

“Sure, Barcelona for example.”

“You don’t need to tell me, just imagine that amazing city and how good you feel about recommending it to others.”

Defusa gave Modella some time to roam her imagination.

“Great. Now I want you to think of one of your favourite restaurants. A place where you could go every night without becoming bored of it, trying the full menu, all the wines, etc.”

“Yes, I have a restaurant in mind.”

“Perfect. Now, how do you feel about keeping that secret restaurant only to yourself, not telling anyone about it? Not wanting anyone else to enjoy that amazing food?”

“That doesn’t feel right. Instead, I would scream the message from the roof: ‘You have to try that restaurant, it’s absolutely amazing!’”

“There you go,” said Defusa. “And now, finally, I want you to imagine being so much in love with a man, admiring him to such a degree... that you want to shout it from the roof and want other women to try how good it feels to be with him.”

“Now you’re truly challenging me.”

“I’m aware of that. The thing is to reach a point where you love and admire your partner so much that you want to share him with the whole world. Or at least with a few other lucky women.”

Modella spent a few minutes imagining that scenario. Then she said: “That actually feels really good.”

“Then I think you’re on the right path. Can you feel something like that for Richie?”

“Yes, I believe I can.”

Defusa, still massaging Modella, finished by saying: “Good. Now, how do you feel about Christella enjoying some physical time with Richie in the office?”

“This is strange,” said the blonde architect. “Now I feel happy for them. For both of them. I think I can say that I feel truly happy for them.”

“How wonderful,” said Defusa. “What you just felt is called *compersion*. It’s the opposite of jealousy.”

“It feels good.”

“Now, let’s take this one step further. I want you to imagine all the benefits you get from allowing all this to happen. It gives you freedom. Freedom to seek out complementary partners. Imagine yourself with Rocco, while at the same time imagining Richie feeling *compersion* for you, being happy for you sharing pleasure with your Italian lover, who gives you things that Richie cannot provide you with, making you more complete.”

“Wow...,” said Modella.

“Finally, imagine also how you being with Rocco takes some pressure off Richie, because he will not feel forced to address all your fifty-eight diamond facets or meet all of your eighty universal human needs. Which he can’t anyway. And the same for you. How much Portuguese and Finnish do you speak, anyway?”

“A few words...”

“You see, the thing with multilingual people is that they can emotionally connect to many words and expressions in each of the languages they speak. Jokes, poetry, songs, comics, books. And they can culturally relate to the countries where these languages are spoken. For example, drinking *mate* or baking *kanelbullar* in your case. Or your love for Italian food and culture. It’s perfectly normal that you wish to connect with other men who deeply understand and appreciate those specific facets of your unique identity.”

“You’re so right, Defusa, I can feel how accepting this actually takes pressure off me, too. Not feeling forced to be the perfect wife.”

“Ironically, this truly makes you the perfect wife.”

“We’re not married yet.”

“Well, if you’ve cured your jealousy, don’t be surprised if he proposes to you. Because women who have addressed their jealousy issues are as rare as pink diamonds.”

Modella wondered if that was why the Crystal of Beauty was made of pink diamond. Then she realised:

“Wait, did you just cure me of my jealousy?”

“It may bubble up again under certain circumstances. But when it does, you now know what to do. Put on your boxing gloves. Also, remember that your jealousy is linked to your unmet needs. So, you may need to think about how you can organise your life in such a way that your needs always remain met. Perhaps by creating or joining a loving community that supports you when Richie is not around. Or simply having a few other lovers at hand when you need them.”

“You’re amazing, Defusa,” said Modella and hugged her Luxemburgish coach. “I feel freed.”

“You’re welcome, it’s my job,” responded the Bohemian lady. “The key to remember is that this only works if you truly love and admire your partners. So, you need to make wise partner choices. Because you are not going to recommend restaurants that you only like half-heartedly.”

“I’ll keep that in mind, and never settle for less than the most amazing partners.”

As Modella was about to leave, Defusa said:

“You are truly beautiful, Modella.”

“Thanks, I used to work as a model.”

“Most commercial models are only beautiful on the surface. Your beauty goes deeper. You radiate. I’ve met many attractive women, but there’s something special about you.”

“You think so?”

Defusa reflected for a while, then said: “I think I know the reason after what you’ve told me about the Grooters and your Pact.”

“And what would that be?”

“What differentiates you from most other women is that you don’t just egoistically care about yourself, or just your partner and children. You care about whole of humanity.”

“I guess all of us Grooters do.”

“And that’s what makes you exceptionally beautiful. Try and teach that to others.”

“I will discuss that with Verity, who plans to create a university. By the way, are there other things you think I can do to defuse any potential jealousy?”

“Yes. Sex. But the sex needs to be loving and honest. And uninhibited. Like punching a sand bag, it’s another way of expelling your dark emotions.”

“And what happens once all these dark emotions are gone?”

“Then you can live a more grounded life, with more inner peace.”

Modella thanked Defusa, and then left for the airport.

In the plane, Modella thought about her last question and felt a little unsatisfied with Defusa’s reply. She needed a better understanding of why these emotions appear in the first place, and what we shall do once they are gone. She needed to consult her living encyclopaedia again.

Back in Geneva, Richie told Modella:

“I don’t know what that lady did to you, but you are radiating.”

“Thanks,” said Modella and told Richie about Defusa’s creative coaching approach in Luxembourg.

“It’s as if I now am free to feel...”

♪ *Free to Feel – Oliver Anders*

“Richie, I feel a need to dance!”

♪ *Dance with Me – Atmosphaera*

So, first Richie danced with Modella, then the other Grooters joined them. The combination of her boxed-out jealousy and the proximity of Crystallica suddenly gave Modella an incredible burst of energy.

Once they had settled down after that spontaneous dance jig, Verity told Modella: “You look like a thousand suns.”

“Thanks to you, that Luxembourg trip was exactly what I needed. You look quite radiant as well, by the way.”

“Just came back from St. Petersburg,” Verity answered with a smile.

Indeed, after their initial encounter in Samarkand, Verity and Igor had been texting and calling regularly, so they decided to meet again. And Verity flew a few days to the former Russian capital. One thing led to another, and they’ve now decided to walk the path to the future together.

Verity wasn’t sure if Igor liked her because of her plans to settle on Mars, or because she showed him the video of Leo slacklining the Golden Gate Bridge, or because he liked her encyclopaedic brain or well-cared for body. Probably a mix of all. And Verity liked Igor’s biceps, engineering thinking, passion for teaching, space enthusiasm, and... his middle name was Rasputin. He was also a kind of *Russian dolls* mystery that she liked to discover slowly. Maybe that was the Russian version of Purotu’s *Diamond Theory*?

In the end, she thought, what probably made the difference was that Igor was open-minded. He didn’t shut down when she explained the *Physics of Love* to him, and how they might apply to spacecraft.

Next weekend, it was his turn to visit her in Geneva, and Verity was so eager to present him to the other Grooters and show him Crystallica, as well as some more excerpts of their Dream World travels.

Geneva, Switzerland, 12 October 2018

“Nice outfit, Boss,” said Webbo, “are you going out?”

“Yes, it’s the yearly Steampunk convention. I’ll share some photos with you tomorrow.”

“Cool, have fun!” said Verity.

“Thanks, I will.”

The event was aptly located in a big building, a former hydro-electric power station on the Rhône river in central Geneva. The beautiful building, built, you guessed it, in the Victorian era, was heritage-listed and has been used for various social events since the late 1990s.

The Steampunk Convention was part fair, part party. There were booths with people selling steampunk clothes, artwork, accessories, and all kinds of useless but cool inventions.

Access was only authorised to people dressed in steampunk attire. So, Boss blended in well, and stole glances at all the steamy steampunk girls, until he almost got a neck pain, and decided to go for a drink.

The place was full, and one had to struggle for the steamy drinks. In the queue to the bar, Boss thought he recognised a scent, a perfume...

“Wait,” he told himself, “where do I know this perfume from?” Then it *dusked* on him: *Blindekuh*.

He tapped on the red-haired steampunk girl’s shoulder whom he thought the scent came from:

“Heidi?”

“Boss, what a pleasure. How did you recognise me?”

“Your lovely perfume.”

“Busted, I guess.”

“Busted indeed.”

Heidi was dressed in a typical, but always enticing steampunk fashion with pilot boots, fishnet stockings, a short leather skirt and a corset. Under the corset, she wore a transparent white lace blouse, generously open. And what made her extremely sexy was a small brown leather choker around her neck, complemented by a necklace with a pocket watch that almost reached down to her breasts. Finally, all that was topped with a brown hat with pilot goggles.

“A feast for the eyes,” thought Boss. When he came back to his senses, he told Heidi:

“I guess you owe me a drink. And some explanations...”

“Maybe I do.”

It was her turn to order, and she did order for Boss too.

She handed him a strange-looking drink, which fit well with the ambiance of the evening.

They found a fairly quiet corner where they could talk without shouting in each other’s ears.

“I guess one can only hide for so long, even with a name like yours,” said Boss.

“Well, since I was a little girl, I’ve always liked to play hide and seek.”

In a more serious tone, Boss asked Heidi: “So, do you have any new challenges brewing for us?”

“Nope, since you guys activated the Crystallica, you are... *intouchables*.”

“That’s good news,” said Boss.

“But you still have some work to do to reach your goals and fully fulfill your Pact.”

Boss was perfectly aware of that, but his and the Grooters' confidence that they would succeed grew every day stronger. He switched the conversation a little:

“So, you are unemployed now?”

“Not yet, but the Grooters are definitely threatening the oldest profession in the world. If people start to actually love each other, that profession will no longer be required.”

“I am sure you have other talents.”

“Yes, but I've honed these talents for a while,” said the red-haired temptress while caressing Boss on the arm.

“I am sure those talents can still come to good use.”

“Yes, and I think I also have talents for bluffing.”

“You mean there was no powerful bad guy behind you setting those challenges for us?”

“No, that came all from my creative brain. And the ‘kidnapping’ of the professor was something I discussed with him, and he played his part to perfection.”

“So, you didn't lock him up?”

“No, he stayed with his friend Guardia all the time. And I think they fell in love.”

“What did you tell him to convince him to ‘disappear’?”

“I just told him that I felt that you guys needed to get out of your comfort zones and make ‘impossible’ things happen.”

“How come we weren't able to locate him?”

“My perfume, I guess. No, more seriously, I think it's for the same reason you cannot read my mind nor that of your Grooters friends: you can't read the minds of people who have nothing to hide.”

“You? Nothing to hide?”

“By saying nothing to hide, I mean people with good and clear conscience. Whether you've understood the purpose of my challenges or not, they were actually there to help you. And I think I've succeeded quite well.”

Boss thought back at the Golden Gate slacklining and the Victoria Falls barrel adventures. And yes, those challenges had forced the Grooters out of their comfort zone and pushed them to find creative solutions to do the ‘impossible’.

“I guess you're right, and if you are, you may be more of a genius than I would have thought.”

“Like attracts like,” said Heidi. “You didn't think you were the only geniuses around, did you?”

“I'm happy we are not. It's quite a lonely world.”

“Yes, you got far more support than you can imagine.”

“From whom?”

“From intuitive good-intentioned people like myself, but also from many Indigenous people, as well as from some already departed souls still active in our realm.”

“You mean people like Fuconcius?” said Boss, mentioning Modella’s ghost encounter in China.

“You see, there is much more going on behind the scenes than what you think. And certainly than what the main public thinks. For example, they have no clue about the Grooters’ quest.”

“I guess all this hiding is necessary?”

The hot steampunk girl, now getting closer and closer to Boss, continued: “Yes, but tonight, Heidi is not going to hide... her feelings.”

Boss wasn’t easily impressed, but Heidi had that rare combination of mystery, beauty and intellect that he found quite hard to resist.

“So, if you’re not going to hide, what is Heidi’s real name?”

“Tamara. Tamara Vogel.”

He leaned over to kiss her. She didn’t resist, and welcomed his lips with her unique flavour of softness that only made him long for more.

“Maybe we should get some fresh air?” he said. “It’s getting too hot in here.”

“My apartment is a few streets away, maybe I can convince you to come up for a very steamy experience?”

“I’ll walk you to your door, then we’ll see,” he said teasingly.

At the door, Boss said:

“After a lot of deliberation with you know whom down there, we have unanimously voted for accepting your generous offer of bodily debates tonight.”

“An 1886 man wouldn’t have expressed that better,” said Heidi and led him into her apartment.

They did not waste much time after they had closed the door behind them, and continued their kissing session from the steampunk party.

Then Tamara whispered to him in the ear: “Heidi will make your wildest fantasies come true...”

Part 45 Missions

Merida, Mexico, 5 December 1980

Renato and Reversa had had similar conversations many times over the last fifty years. But this one was the culmination of their mission. If they were successful, they may be able to prevent the catastrophic pandemic of the 2020s.

“So, you thought you could hide here in Mexico?”

“I am not hiding, I’m just a writer,” answered the man with an American accent.

“That’s the main problem,” said Reversa.

“Who are you? What do you want?”

“Let’s say we are timeline correctors. And we simply want that you stop writing the book that mentions a pandemic,” said Renato.

“Why?”

“Because you are contributing to the creation of the pandemic.”

“Which pandemic?”

“The one you are causing.”

“I’m just writing stories that people like to read.”

“From our perspective you are a murderer of genocidal proportions,” said Reversa.

“How can you say that?”

“Because we’ve had to live through the damage you and some of your colleagues created.”

“How do you know that writings turn into reality?”

“Ever heard of the book *Futility*?”

“No.”

“But you’ve heard of the Titanic tragedy?”

“Of course.”

“*Futility*, later renamed *The Wreck of the Titan*,” was a book published in 1898, telling a very similar story to what happened 14 years later with the Titanic.”

“And?”

“If idiots like that author, and like yourself, stop writing about calamities like these, then maybe calamities like these would stop.”

“But I’m just a writer.”

“Yes, and we also know it’s not your fault. But you need to stop writing this book, and ideally stop writing altogether until you decide to write healthy stuff.”

“Not my fault?”

“We know that you were abused by your alcoholic father as a child. That part is not your fault. What is your fault, though, is your decision to spread perverse horror stories in the world.”

“People like to read what I’m writing.”

“We know. But they like to read positive stories too. I can assure you that people will not read horror stories if you don’t write horror stories. What about writing stories of things that you would actually want to happen in real life?”

“I had never thought of that.”

“The easiest thing for us would simply be to kill you,” said Renato, pointing his gun at the author.

“No, no, please don’t do that,” begged the man.

“So, you don’t seem to want stories where people murder each other? If you were in integrity, you would be OK with things happening to you as they happen to the characters in your books. Like being murdered.”

“No, please.”

“So, will you ditch your manuscript?” asked Reversa.

No answer.

“Looks like you will need some help with that,” said Renato, took his manuscript, threw it in sink and put it on fire.

“Now, some burnt paper doesn’t prevent you from writing more of your damaging stuff,” said Reversa. “The only way for us to be sure you don’t write more is to kill you. Unless you have a better suggestion, of course.”

“How shall I earn my life?”

“You can still write, but if you write anything that you would not like to happen to yourself in real life, then we’ll come back for you,” said Renato.

“But people don’t like to read positive stories.”

“Listen, you have an amazing level of creativity. You can use that to build healthy stories. Think in term of quests, mysteries, love stories, personal challenges, there is so much you can write about without killing, abusing or torturing people.”

“Or animals,” added Reversa.

“Have you understood?” asked Renato.

“Yes,” said the man sheepishly.

“You don’t sound very convincing,” said Reversa.

“What do you want me to do?”

“Start by repeating everything we just said to make sure you’ve clearly understood it,” said Renato.

The man did as he was told.

“So, have you understood that if you publish any book in the future with things in it that you don’t want to happen to yourself in real life, then we’ll come back and kill you.”

“I have understood.”

“You still don’t sound convincing,” said Reversa.

“What else can I do?” pleaded the man.

“We’ll give you two hours to think about a plot of a new story for a new book. A story without murders. Stories with murders are just because writers are mentally lazy to come up with positive creative stories.”

“OK, I think I can do that.”

“We know you can, creativity is your strength,” said Reversa.

The man sat down at his desk and started to write down a few ideas. Renato and Reversa were watching him.

“Here is a glass of water and some chocolate,” said Reversa, giving it to the man who seemed to appreciate the gesture, despite his situation.

“Thanks.”

Two hours later, he said: “I think I have a potentially good story.”

“Let us hear,” said Renato.

“It’s the story of a young genius engineer, who understood things that most people didn’t. Although he didn’t have a material proof yet, he was absolutely convinced that he could build spacecrafts that don’t use dangerous explosive fuels to lift off.”

“And?”

“So, he goes on a quest to gather a team that can help him finance and build such a spacecraft with a revolutionary technology. He has to travel to many countries to find those exceptional people, geniuses like himself, to make that spacecraft a reality.”

“Continue...”

“The turning point comes when he meets a rich heiress who has no special aim in life, they fall in love, and she realises the importance of having a meaningful purpose in life, so she decides to finance the initial start-up costs for his risky, but worthwhile venture.”

Reversa noticed how his eyes lit up when he told them his new storyline.

“That’s more convincing,” she said. “See how your creativity can be put to constructive use? Now, start writing that book, and keep writing similar things so that we don’t need to come back.”

They left.

Reversa and Renato walked out of that place, knowing deep within that they had succeeded. Given their chronological direction, they would never be able to see the fruit of their efforts. But right now, that didn't matter.

They walked a few blocks to the *Parque de Santa Lucia*, where they sat down on the romantically designed white park seats, facing each other.

Reversa took out her earbuds, gave one to Renato and turned on the music. She didn't care about the fact that the song she was playing on her device wouldn't be released for another 19 years. She held Renato's hand.

♪ *I Saved the World Today – Eurythmics*

Even though she only looked like she would be in her sixties, Reversa's body had now clocked over 97 years on Earth. And Renato was 101. What a ride it had been. But she was now psychologically tired. Her mission was over. What was she to do now?

“Oh,” she told herself. “There is one more thing I want to do.”

Geneva, Switzerland, 18 November 1980

“And what is his name?” asked the nurse.

“Boss George,” answered the young woman at the birth clinic.

“Lovely, thanks.”

The nurse left, and both parents were so happy for their number two.

“See, this is your little brother, Bert,” they told the 4-year-old boy standing next to the bed.

Suddenly, someone knocked on the door.

“*Entrez,*” said the father.

“*Bonjour,*” said an elegant lady with a slight Spanish accent. “I just wanted to congratulate you to your birth, I am sure this boy will turn out to become an exceptional person.”

She gave them a bouquet of red roses, that the father accepted because the mother was just breastfeeding her baby.

Then the lady left, as enigmatically as she'd arrived.

“That was strange,” said the mother. “How unusual to offer red roses for a child birth. And who was that lady, how can she know us?”

Reversa walked out of the *HUG* clinic, thinking back on that wonderful day she had spent with Boss in 2018. It had been her most memorable birthday. And she had had many birthdays.

Just a week after their successful last mission, Renato had passed away, simple heart failure, he didn't wake up in the morning. She was so thankful that he had been on her side during all these years, their shared loneliness made the mission bearable.

She felt positive grief. Renato had led an exceptional life, and like her, hopefully done something good for the world. Too sad she couldn't go to his funeral. But he would understand.

Renato's passing forced Reversa to think if there were still more things she could do, reversing on into the nineteen seventies. More things that would make human life in the future better.

She felt her time had not come yet, and told herself:

“One ultimate mission.”

Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, 27 March 1977

“Could I please speak to the chief air controller, *por favor? Gracias, es muy importante,*” said the elderly lady.

Reversa had aged a lot in the last few years, but she felt compelled to do this final mission.

“*Buenos días, señora,*” said a worn-out looking man, his job had been very stressful in the last few days since a lot of air traffic had got diverted to Tenerife because of terrorist threats on Gran Canaria.

“*Buenos días.* I am a seer, and I need to warn you of a terrible accident that will take place here this afternoon.”

“*Señora,* we don't have time for any hocus-pocus here, we're terribly busy at the moment. Goodbye.”

And he shut the door.

She then went to the airlines' personnel at the airport, and told them the same, but got the same cold answer: “We're very busy, please let us do our work.”

After 71 years of her reversal life, trying to avert calamities, accidents, relationship dramas and other human problems, Reversa had come across a clear pattern among the people she met who were directly or indirectly responsible for such tragedies: they were all arrogant.

She had had a lot of time to reflect on the concept of arrogance, and had come to the conclusion that it's very much related to the fact of not listening to others. So, she was not the least surprised that the main responsible parties for the biggest aviation accident in history... did not listen.

But she had to prevent this tragedy.

However, there was nothing more she could do today. So, an hour before the accident, Reversa jumped into a taxi and left the airport to the safety of a neighbouring village uphill, La Esperanza. With a heavy heart, she heard the huge bang from the accident and was glad that she didn't see the smoke because of the fog, nature's culprit in the accident.

The morning after, on March 26th, she woke up feeling lighter, hopeful due to the fact that the accident hadn't happened yet. She got an idea, and decided to take the next flight to Amsterdam, where KLM was headquartered, as one of their planes was involved in the accident. Unfortunately, all flights were fully booked, but the day after – or rather, the day before, in Reversa's case – she found a seat to The Netherlands.

Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 25 March 1977

Reversa went straight to KLM's main office and asked to speak with the head of aviation security. She wanted to explain to him the whole unfortunate concurrence of events that would lead to the accident two days hence. And she would explain to him the psychological and financial impact for their airline.

She was greeted by a very kind clerk who told her that he would go and get his boss.

The boss in question was far less friendly, clearly arrogant, and dismissed her before she had time to properly explain herself. "Go and do your fortune-telling somewhere else, old lady," he shouted and slammed the door to get back into his office.

"I'm terribly sorry," said the young clerk. "He has been quite stressed lately."

"That is never an excuse to be rude," said Reversa.

"I agree with you," he said in an empathetic way.

Reversa felt a good energy around this man. She got an idea and asked him: "What's your name?"

"Christiaan de Groot."

"Nice to meet you Christiaan. I am Reversa Eltiempo," said the old timeline corrector and put a hand on his forearm. "Do you have time to take a drink after work, there is something important I need to tell you."

"Sure," said the enthusiastic young man. "I finish in about an hour, and live in central Amsterdam, shall we meet at the *Café de Schreierstoren* close to the *Centraal* railway station at 5.30pm?"

"That sounds good," said Reversa. "See you there".

They found a quiet spot in the café, ordered a drink, then Reversa asked Christiaan:

"Do you like working for KLM?"

“I love to travel, I love our ability to fly around the globe within a day or two, something we couldn’t until not that long ago.”

“I understand. It’s an amazing sense of freedom, isn’t it?”

“So, what are your career goals?”

“I’m not exactly sure, I just know I want to work in the airline industry, although I can’t become a pilot because of my myopia.”

“There are other ways to make yourself useful in the airline industry.”

“Yes, I know, and now that I’ve got a foot inside the door, I think opportunities may come up. I mean more interesting than simple clerk work.”

“I may have an opportunity for you,” said Reversa.

“You do?” said Christiaan whose eyes lit up and ears opened wide.

Reversa took a serious tone, then said: “Have you ever heard of the concept of *catastrophe-first pattern*?”

“No, I don’t think so.”

“It’s a very unfortunate trait of human beings, most of whom seem to need a catastrophe before they start to listen and do the right thing.”

“Are you referring to my boss earlier today?”

“Yes, and many others like him. Far too many others.”

“So, what shall we do?”

“What the airline industry needs are people like you, people who listen.”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that at the moment, the airline industry works in reactive mode instead of proactive mode when it comes to safety and security.”

“Please explain more.”

“By reactive mode I mean that they are passive and wait until a catastrophe happens before they take any measures to prevent future accidents. That’s the sorry story of the airline industry, and many other industries at the moment.”

“I agree with you, it would be much better to be proactive,” said Christiaan.

“Good, because right now you have a unique opportunity to be proactive. In two days, there will be a major aviation accident that will involve your airline. And KLM will be at fault, at least partly, so it will be very costly and you might lose your job.”

“I can always find another job, but the accident, will there be many deaths?”

“Yes, 583 to be precise.”

“Wait, the biggest airplanes don’t even carry that many people?”

“Who said only one plane would be involved?”

Christiaan looked worried.

“Do you think we can prevent the accident?”

“I think we can, but I’m not sure exactly how at the moment, because your bosses don’t listen.”

“I listen.”

“Thanks,” said Reversa. Then she explained to him in detail the coming accident in Tenerife.

“I see, so clearly very unusual combination of circumstances with the Gran Canaria shutdown, the fog, miscommunication with the control tower, and two pilots who did unauthorised manoeuvres.”

“Yes,” confirmed Reversa. “Any ideas of what we could do?”

“Well,” said the clever clerk, “my girlfriend, who also works for our airline, may be able to have the right people listen,”

“Why do you think so?”

“Because she’s extremely beautiful, and knows how to entice men.”

That reminded Reversa of her younger self. The strategy of dissolving arrogance in love. Had worked wonders for herself many times.

“So, here is my plan: I’ll ask her to approach a few key staff tomorrow, and tell her that she shall promise to have sex with them if they prevent the accident. At the same time, I will make dozens of phone calls to pass the message around until we break through this non-listening wall.”

“That sounds good, and I will call the people in Spain because I speak Spanish,” said Reversa.

“Yes, once a critical number of people hear the message, they may start to take it seriously.”

“Let us hope so,” said Reversa. “*Hartelijk dank* for your help.”

“I think I should thank you, too,” said the humble clerk.

Reversa was now fully convinced of Christiaan’s goodness, so she took out two big envelopes from her handbag and put them on the table. Then she said:

“Christiaan, if you’re interested to make a career in air transport safety, I have something for you that might help you along the way.”

“Yes, I think that’s a field I may be very interested in pursuing. It certainly will keep me close to the airplanes. What are these envelopes?”

“The first envelope to the left contains details about the major airline accidents in the coming 50 years. You’ll probably not be able to prevent all of them, technology needs to catch up first to prevent some of these accidents. However, the bulk of them are due to preventable human errors.”

She handed him the first envelope. Christiaan opened it and started to read. He became pale, then after a few minutes he said:

“This is horrible, what can we do?”

“The first thing you can do is see if you can find any patterns, apart from arrogant people who do not listen. For example, if we take the Tenerife accident, we see that it occurs on 27.03.77 (three sevens and a three), involving two Boeing 747 (four sevens and two fours). Seven sevens in total. Don’t come and tell me these numbers don’t mean anything. Those are the kinds of things you’ll need to investigate.”

“It can’t be a coincidence.”

“Unlucky number seven, apparently. Also, cross-check these accident dates with other calamities like earthquakes, or other things. And like with the numbers, could there be something linked to the name?”

“The name?”

“Yes, *Tenerife* and *tenebras* start with the same four letters, and share five.”

“Well, what you’ve described is certainly a tenebrous event. I’ll make sure to look at these occurrences in detail. It may require a lot of research work.”

“Yes, and better computing power, which will only come in the next two-three decades.”

“Are there other things I can do, maybe more in the short to medium term, to prevent upcoming accidents?”

“That’s where the second envelope comes in.” Reversa handed him the other envelope, and said: “In this one, there are details about all possible measures that can be taken to prevent airline accidents, gathered from decades of lessons learnt.”

“And how do you know all this?” he asked Reversa.

“Does it matter?”

“It would confirm your credibility.”

Reversa reflected for a moment, then, as with Boss and Pia decades earlier, she decided to spill the beans and explained her whole story to Christiaan.

“You have convinced me,” he said. Then he realised: “Which means you will never find out if we were successful in preventing the Tenerife accident, or any other accident?”

“Yes, although I think I’ll be able to feel it in my heart,” she said.

Christiaan went over to hug Reversa. Then he realised:

“So, I’ll never see you again?”

“No, but believe me that despite the loneliness of my chronological direction, meeting people like you, even if just for a few hours, has enriched my life. You have a big mission ahead of you. See if you can find a good team to work with, including a supportive life partner.”

“My girlfriend is absolutely amazing. I’m convinced she will support me.”

“I’m glad to hear that. Now I suggest you go home straight away and tell her all this. We all have an important day tomorrow.”

“I will,” said Christiaan, hugged Reversa a last time, then left the old café.

Reversa spent another three days making phone calls and writing letters to various people she thought could have an influence on avoiding the Tenerife accident.

Once she thought that she had done all she could, she went to a coffee shop and ordered a big fat joint. A very well-deserved joint. With a beer and good music.

♪ *Amsterdam – Jacques Brel*

Part 46 Play

New York City, USA, 1 November 2018

Pia had a few drinks with two of her best girlfriends in the Meatpacking District, when one of them asked:

“So, what happened to that last guy?”

“You’ll need to ask him. We had some fun time together, but I didn’t like his business ethics.”

“Poor girl... will you ever find Mr. Right? Wait, didn’t you have an old university admirer, I think you mentioned him last time you were drunk?”

Pia had almost forgotten. End of August 2018. Two months overdue.

“Yes, you’re right, there was someone.”

Then Pia just stood up, and left the bar, leaving her friends perplexed. “Sorry, I just remembered something, will catch up with you soon.”

Pia walked back to her Chelsea apartment, took out an old envelope and sat down on the couch.

She had lived in New York City in the last few years, climbing the financial corporate ladders. However, that life, although lucrative, had been boring and disappointing. So, two years ago, she finally got around to read the book Reversa had recommended to her. That book changed her whole life. Remembering her Spanish one-night stand also reminded her that she wanted to investigate the abuse of power, something she had postponed for far too long.

What she found was very revealing, so she decided to start her own online business, teaching people about alternatives to various forms of abuse of power.

That topic had resonated with a sufficient number of clients so that she had been able to ditch her financial career.

However, true love hadn’t found her address yet. She had had quite a few lovers over the years, but none with whom she had felt enough affinity to commit to the altar. Despite many of them having filled up biceps, resumes and bank accounts.

Whatever she tried to convince herself, Boss had always been at the back of her mind. What if Reversa’s story was true? Well, fifteen years had now passed and it was time to open the letter. Just a few lines.

“Dear Pia,

It was a pleasure meeting you. Here are Boss’ contact details in 2018:”

Signed:

“Love transcends time. Reversa.”

For some reason, Pia felt butterflies in her stomach. She took that as a positive sign, and immediately wrote a text message to Boss, despite knowing that it was in the middle of the night in Switzerland, if that was where he still was.

Geneva, Switzerland, 2 November 2018

Boss turned on his phone after having woken up and done his morning routine, heading down to the kitchen for breakfast.

One new message: “Hi Boss, how is life? Pia” His heart jumped of joy. Was this Reversa’s magic? Maybe Pia could tell him more.

A North American mobile number. He wasn’t too surprised that Pia had moved across the Atlantic.

He replied immediately, despite knowing she’d probably be asleep. “Hi Pia, nice to hear from you. Would be great to catch up over the phone. In which time zone are you? When is a good time to call you? Boss”

Once Pia had woken up in her time zone, she answered Boss and he called her an hour later.

♪ *Pick Up the Phone – F.R. David*

They chatted for a long time, as if time hadn’t passed. She confirmed indeed that Reversa had told her about him. And she seemed very intrigued by The Grooters and their quest.

“If it feels right for you, why don’t you come over to Geneva for a while? To meet my Grooters friends and we certainly need more brain and heart power to finally fulfill our Pact. And this house could certainly need an additional woman around.”

“I’d love to. I can come in the next few days. Will just need an hour or two per day to take care of my online business.”

“Easy. I look forward to see you again.”

“Me too,” answered Pia.

“Oh,” said Boss before he hung up. “I forgot to mention something.”

“What?” asked Pia.

“I don’t want to hide anything from you. Since about a month, I have a FWB relationship with a mostly interesting woman. But we have decided to keep at that.”

“I wouldn’t be against a threesome if I like her.”

Boss sighed in relief. New York had definitely opened her mind.

Geneva, Switzerland, 7 November 2018

Boss picked up Pia at the airport. She was tired from the overnight transatlantic flight, but still managed to hold a conversation as they drove back to the Pibolodari house. They were both shy and excited at the same time. However, like on the phone, it felt right.

Despite being the same age as Modella and Verity, Pia somehow felt a little younger than them. At least in Boss' eyes. He couldn't have imagined her more beautiful. The former athlete was still in perfect shape and although she was definitely more mature, she still had that innocent girlish look that he once fell in love with.

Whatever advice Reversa had given her, it had worked.

And Boss couldn't read Pia's mind, which was good news.

Boss presented Pia to the other Grooters, who all felt very positive about her presence. And he showed her Crystallica.

"This is truly incredible," said Pia. "I can feel the energy. Where did you find all these crystals?"

"It's a long story," said Boss. "Hope you will stay for a while to let me tell you everything."

"I will. This is fascinating."

The Grooters and Pia sat down in the living room and Verity broke the ice: "Boss told us that you have been investigating solutions to help people stop abusing their power. We would be very interested in hearing more."

"Sure," said the blue-eyed blonde beauty. "It was actually my conversation with Reversa in 2003 that inspired me to do this, although I only got mature enough to start it two years ago."

"What situations of power abuse have you identified?"

"Far too many..." replied Pia. "But the main ones are known to most of us: women abuse their sexual power with men. Men abuse their physical and/or financial power with women. Landlords abuse their power over tenants. Bureaucrats abuse their power over citizens. Many specialists have the tendency to abuse their professional knowledge with their clients. Parents abuse their power with their children. Many adults abuse their power over old weak people. Teachers abuse their power with schoolchildren and even university students. Employers abuse their power with employees. And, in general, people with money abuse their power with people who don't have money."

"Wow, that's a scary list," said Modella.

"Yes, and there's more. For example, social workers abusing their power over people with disabilities. Or parents abusing their power over children with disabilities. That's one of the most insidious abuses of power, in my opinion. The ugliest devils have sheep's clothes. The problem is that so many abuses of power are very subtle, and most people don't question many of these abusive relationships."

"Thank you for summarising the state of humankind," said Leo. "This is unfortunately how most of the human game is played at the moment."

Webbo, an enthusiastic video gamer, thought that there must be better ways to play this game we call life.

“I wish it wasn’t like this,” said Pia, “which is why I started my online business to address these situations.”

“Didn’t Gandhi say something like ‘*Power is so easily abused*’?” said Webbo.

“Yes, he did indeed. However, he did not propose any good solutions.”

“And do you have any solutions?” asked Richie.

“Maybe, although no magical pill.”

“Tell us,” encouraged Modella.

“The first thing is that we need to understand why people abuse their power. Often it has to do with our survival instinct, and in many cases the people abusing their power are not even aware that they are abusive.”

“Like when women abuse their sexual power for example?” asked Verity.

“Yes, our survival instinct leads us to be biased towards partners that have money and can provide for our children. This is our core biological programming. While this is understandable, it has nothing to do with love, which requires a decision aligned with our intellect, heart and gut at the same time.”

“That reminds me of the three-energies theory of the Physics of Love,” said Verity and explained the horizontal, uplifting and forward-moving energies to Pia.

“Wow!” said the new blonde on the block. “That’s an amazing insight, and it further explains why some relationships fail while others thrive.”

“What more can you tell us?” asked Webbo. “How do you convince women to stop abusing their power?”

“My best strategy so far has been to clearly lay out two options on the table for them. The first is to continue to abuse their power. And what results that choice leads to. The second is to become aware of this abuse, stop doing it, and aim for healthier relationships. They are free to choose.”

“Can you give us a concrete example?” asked Leo.

“One major problem in the dating world is that attractive women have far too many options and don’t know how to choose the right partner. And at the same time, men have far too few options, so they end up settling for whatever they get. Which is unhealthy.”

Webbo intervened: “You mean like on dating apps where beautiful girls get hundreds of hits, while many men get zero? Literally, zero women interested in them. What’s going wrong here?”

“I think that one of the problems is that this abundance of choice makes women lazy and they expect love to come served on a silver platter. No initiative, only emotional reactions to

whatever man makes their pussy tingle most. I have been a culprit of this myself for a long time,” Pia admitted.

“So, what can be done?”

“Ideally, we’d need to rethink whole of society.”

“I’d say we’ve been working on that for a while,” said Boss.

“Yes, especially since we turned on Crystallica in August,” said Leo, and then explained to Pia the Grooters’ plans to build a university with a research centre, as well as a whole new town.

“My hypothesis with Modeltown,” said Modella, “is that by simply doing a good town design, both urban and social design, we can avoid many cases of abuse of power.”

“One of the most important things we’ve found,” said Verity, “is that the universal human needs of every person should be met if we want a harmonious society.”

And she showed Pia the list from Japan with the 80 *Universal Human Needs*.

Then Richie said: “We have covered the abuse of sexual power by women. What about the other kinds of abuse of power?”

“I hope you are not in a hurry, there is so much to tell,” said Pia. “So, yes, at the same time we have situations where men abuse their physical and/or financial power and far too many women don’t dare to leave abusive relationships, even if things get very bad.”

“That’s something that is quite easy to solve with good community design,” said Modella. “If everyone knows everyone, and don’t live secluded in their own houses, domestic violence should become extremely rare.”

“I hadn’t thought about community re-design,” said Pia. “But it makes total sense. Another thing that could improve this is education, as well as equal pay for both genders.”

“We are also working on another thing that could help people make better partner choices,” said Webbo, and explained their Algo project to Pia.

“Wow! That would truly be a game-changer,” replied the blonde online entrepreneur.

“Game-change is on its way,” said Leo.

“And have you thought about ways to avoid parents abusing their power over their children?” asked Richie.

“That is a tricky one. Because on the one hand, most parents genuinely want the best for their children, while on the other hand they push solutions onto their children that they think is best for them. Control freaks, in other words.”

“Some objective non-family advisors could probably help?”

“Yes, but it can’t be advisors that are paid by the parents. Nor by the government, which tends to have its own agenda and people’s happiness rarely seems to be on that agenda.”

“Some kind of mentor maybe?”

“That’s the best. However, the mentor needs to have a certain amount of awareness, and the capacity to listen.”

“And what can we do to prevent landlords to abuse the power over their tenants?”

“For that, there are already quite a few laws in place in most countries. But still, greed seems far too often to be the main motivator of landlords, very few of them truly care about the well-being of their tenants. If they did, they would build more beautiful buildings. And insulate them properly.”

“Another lost cause?” asked Webbo.

“There is always hope,” said Pia. “And my approach to greedy speculators is to explain to them the price they have to pay for their greed. However, that price cannot be counted in dollars and cents, which makes it very hard for blind greedy people to understand.”

“What price are you talking about?”

“Greedy people are highly likely to suffer from some form of poor relationships, or poor health, or accidents. They have to live a lie. Traffic jam is for them too. I’d prefer to be a normal person in a healthy loving community than a billionaire in our current system.”

“I agree with you,” said Richie. “Although we may need some money to change the whole system.”

“Yes, you’re right,” said Pia. “It’s a tricky situation, it feels like we’re in a transition phase.”

Boss admired how wise Pia had become. His heart got a feeling of warmth. “Thanks, Reversa,” he told himself.

Geneva, Switzerland, 17 November 2018

One of Boss’ childhood friends in Geneva had organised a big party for Boss’s and Webbo’s birthday. Boss was one year older than Webbo, so they were celebrating their 37th and 38th birthdays respectively.

Webbo and Leo also had to celebrate the algorithm they had been working on for two months, and just finished and presented to the other Grooters. If their vision was correct, that could become a very useful tool for humankind.

There were probably almost a hundred people at the party, and the Grooters felt good to mingle with ‘normal’ people for once.

Then, at some point, Webbo noticed an Indian girl at the other side of the main room of the apartment where the party took place. There was something strange about her, he needed to know more, so he approached her.

“Hi, I’m Webbo.”

“Oh, so you’re the birthday boy?”

“My friend Boss also has his birthday today. But he’s one year older.”

“What a coincidence. My name is Sarika.”

Webbo stood petrified for a moment, then regained his composure.

“I like that name. Have you been to Jodhpur?”

“My mother’s family is from Jodhpur. But I grew up in Udaipur where my father’s family is from. How did you know?”

“Just a hunch. And what do you do?”

“I’m a town planner and work as an advisor for the United Nations.”

“That sounds exciting, and what do you think is the main thing cities do wrong when it comes to town planning?”

“The grid networks are unhealthy. They prevent people from breathing properly.”

“I had never thought about that. So, what would be a better way of laying out cities and towns?”

“Make a layout that more resembles our lungs or tree branches or tree roots. So, we need far more *cul-de-sac* streets. And what about you? You look smart.”

“I’m just a coder.”

“And what do you code?”

“That’s a long story, what about I tell you more over a coffee next week?”

“Sure, I’d love to. By the way, I have Tuesday afternoon free. Maybe we could meet for lunch at the Musée Ariana?”

“I’ll be there. Shall we say noon?”

“Yes,” answered the Indian beauty enthusiastically. “And here is my number just in case.”

Webbo went back to party with the others, but in his mind, it was already Tuesday. This was incredible. Sarika was real.

Geneva, Switzerland, 20 November 2018

They met at the glass and ceramic museum, and Webbo thought Sarika’s radiance was a very welcome contrast to the grey November weather.

To the contrary of most town planners, who seem to mostly focus on pipes and roads and buildings, Sarika was genuinely interested in the actual users of towns and cities: the human beings.

“So,” said the charming sub-continental beauty, “I try to design towns keeping some important understandings of human psychology in mind.”

“Like what, for example?” asked Webbo.

“Like the *Identity and Life Cycle* theory. The mid-20th century psychologist Erikson described a sequence of stages a human must go through in life. And like in a video game, a person cannot properly access the next stage until he or she has addressed a certain development task, until he or she has solved a kind of life conflict.”

“OK.” Webbo was listening intently. He liked the video game analogy.

“The main difference with a video game is that in real life, time moves on whether we have accomplished these tasks or not. And that can lead to problems.”

“So, what happens if a person does not solve these developmental problems at each stage?”

“Then they will suffer from some form of neuroticism.”

“And how many stages are there?”

“Erikson identified eight stages, but more recently Sharma came up with a list of ten stages.”

“I have heard of Erikson, but not Sharma.”

“Now you do. In person.”

“What? I thought you were a town planner.”

“I am. But at one point I discovered an urban planning and architecture book called *A Pattern Language* which made me realise how important psychology was for creating a good built environment. That incited me to study a psychology degree. With a minor in architecture, which is always tightly linked to town planning.”

“I’m impressed.”

“Your turn. What about you? A coder, you said?”

“Yes, I’m just an IT nerd.”

“Indians can be very good at IT.”

“I’ve been told I am. By the way, I’m working on an algorithm to help people get along with their neighbours.”

“What? That’s the holy grail of town planning. No one seems to have solved that riddle yet.”

“I suppose I got a mental boost from Crystallica.”

“Crystallica?”

“I’ve been tinkering with a few friends lately and we’ve collected a few energy stones. It will be easier if I show them to you. But first, I want to hear more about those ten stages.”

“The reason I developed another set of stages is that I found the ones from Erikson slightly confusing, although I fully subscribe to his hypothesis that we all have life stages we need to pass through.”

“And which ones are they?”

“Many of them are obvious, but I’ve rebranded them: I call them *Play Stages* and I’ve put them into three main categories: *discovery*, *party*, and *legacy*.”

“OK.”

“The first stage, *Discovery Play*, is the one where a baby discovers the world, discovers things, touches and bites on everything, discovers their body, learns to walk and talk. So, from birth to about three years old.”

“The second?”

“*Childhood Play*, which is about playing more with other children, not only with toys; and even playing with imaginary friends, building teams, exploring creativity. Age: about 3 to 12. Now, if a person is not able to fully play at this age, it will have negative impact on his or her development.”

“I was lucky to have met the Grooters when I was that age, and feel I got to fully play out that stage of my life.”

“That’s wonderful to hear,” said Sarika. “Who are the Grooters?”

“I’ll present them to you very soon. What’s the third stage?”

“It’s a more subtle phase, I call it *Early Love Play*, which is about discovering our early love for hobbies, crafts, or sports. As well as starting to discover our first romantic feelings. Maybe getting our first kiss, or even early lovemaking for premature teenagers. Ages 13 to 16. So those first three stages were the *Discovery Stages*.”

“Very interesting. *Party Stages* next, you said?”

“Yes. Stage number four is *Party Play*, which is the well-known phase adolescents go through between the ages of 16 and sometimes up to 30 years old. It’s all about trying things: alcohol, smoking, drugs, sex, and enjoying parties, travels, music, learning social competence.”

“I feel I covered that stage fairly well when I studied in Boston. Stage five?”

“*Learn to Play*. In this stage young adults learn a trade. They can study or learn on-the-job. They learn soft skills at work and start to gain professional competence. Also, many move out from the family home and learn to take care of their own household.”

“Done that too,” said Webbo.

“Then, stage seven is *Parents Play*, the goal of which is procreation, starting a family. This is the first stage of the *Legacy Stages*. So, parents play with their children, and grow more mature by taking care of other human beings.”

“This one is still on my list,” admitted Webbo.

“Me too,” said Sarika.

“And what happens after the *Parents Play*?”

“Very good question. A lot of parents, especially mothers, have a hard time of emotionally letting go of their children once they leave home. At that point they need to set themselves new goals, by starting or continuing a life work.”

“Would that be stage eight?”

“Yes, I call it *Life Work’s Play*, which is about our professional legacy. The length of this stage can vary a lot between individuals, some starting as early as 15, while others only finish at 90. For some, this stage can be short, maybe only between 30 and 50, while for others it can stretch for over fifty years.”

“I feel I’m in the middle of this stage at the moment, having a very creative phase. What’s next?”

“Once a person feels they have done their Life Work, it’s time for them to pass on their acquired knowledge and experience, while often still being actively involved in the professional world. So, stage nine is *Relay Play*, and it’s all about supporting, teaching, coaching and mentoring the younger generations.”

“I’m not there yet, but it feels like an important stage.”

“Yes, it is. Then, finally, we have the last stage which I call *Wisdom Stage*. This is a more passive role in society, where an old person’s life experience is drawn upon to solve various problems or simply to share their life experience. The best way to understand this stage is to imagine elders in an Indigenous community. And all kinds of people go to them for advice on relationships, career paths, conflict resolution, community organisation, etc. On top of that they can share their wisdom through stories or teach history by telling children how life was when they were young.”

“So, they are not just dumped into elderly homes?” said Webbo. “They still have an important role to play in a healthy society.”

“Yes.”

“All this sounds like a life worth living. Thank you so much for sharing your insights with me. Are all these stages compulsory?”

“That’s a very good question. I’d say it’s not always black or white. For example, *Party Play* doesn’t need to involve drugs, and one can still evolve in a healthy way. More research is needed. As for *Parents Play*, I don’t think having one’s own children is an absolute necessity for a fulfilled life. The key to understand is that if something is ‘nagging’ you mentally, it’s probably that you haven’t fully lived out a certain stage to the fullest.”

“I think I understand. So, when people feel that something is missing? For example, a person who didn’t have good neighbour children to play with when he or she grew up? Or a shy teenager who didn’t dare to go to parties? Or a person feeling inner pressure to have children and start a family?”

“Precisely. Some of these things can easily be fixed later. While others can’t. Or only with great difficulties.”

Webbo went through all those stages again in his head. Then exclaimed:

“Wait, didn’t we miss a stage? Which one is stage six?”

Sarika smiled, knowing this question would be coming.

“Indeed. I’ve left the dessert for the end. Stage six is a stage that I think should come before marriage, children and family. So, before *Parents Play*.”

“And what is that stage?”

“Let me ask you: have you ever wondered about the purpose of our sexual fantasies?”

Now Sarika was walking out on hot ashes. That reminded him of his discussion with Chantal in his third year at Splendour University. Which means his Dream World Sarika would also have covered the fantasies topic in her third year, before Webbo and Chantal.

“Their purpose? No, I haven’t asked myself that. You think there is a specific purpose to them?”

“I believe so,” said Sarika. “Most things in life happen for a reason, whether we understand that reason or not. I call stage six *Fantasies Play*.”

“I like the sound of that. Tell me more.”

“Can we agree on the fact that many of the sexual fantasies we have are constantly nagging us in the sense that we feel compelled to watch Internet porn or read romance novels, until we’ve lived them out to the fullest? In the same way as we feel an urge to go to parties every weekend at university, until we’ve lived out that party stage to the fullest.”

“Yes, I agree,” said Webbo.

“The thing is that fighting these urges takes up a lot of energy. So, I believe we should go along with nature instead. But most people don’t dare to do that when it comes to sexual fantasies.”

“Why?”

“Mostly because of social taboos.”

“Now I think I better understand. And what do you think are the benefits of living out our fantasies?”

“Although it is my own theory that still needs wider confirmation, I think that living out one’s fantasies leads to less cheating, and less sexual frustration later during committed family life.”

“So, after that, I will no longer need sex?”

“You most likely will, but you’ll approach it from a more mature perspective, and you’ll probably not need sex as often, you won’t walk around horny all the time, you’ll have inner peace. If we compare to the partying stage, mature adults no longer need to get drunk every weekend, but they can still enjoy a few glasses of wine now and then.”

“Any other purposes of our sexual fantasies?”

“Yes, if my hypotheses are right, they also force us to reach a certain emotional maturity, meaning that once we marry, we will not nag or beat our partner, we will not explode in jealousy or start various forms of relationship dramas.”

“The neurotic side-effects you mentioned earlier?”

“Exactly. And because many fantasies include more than one partner, this sixth stage, if addressed honestly, forces people to confront their emotions of jealousy, fear of loss, fear of inadequacy, etc.”

Webbo mentioned to Sarika Modella’s recent coaching in Luxembourg.

“That’s great, but Modella should still monitor her fantasies and eventually play out more of them, until she truly feels sexually satiated, and has no more unwanted feelings bubbling up. In any case, her approach is very mature. Just share with her what I’ve told you today.”

“Wow, you’ve really thought this through,” said Webbo.

“Yes, and living out our fantasies is about much more than just sex. Next to learning to handle our emotions, it’s also about getting at peace with our bodies, liking our bodies, and reaching a place where we have no reason to feel insecure any longer. Because we are attractive, and *beauty* is a universal human need we want to offer our partners.”

“OK,” said Webbo, confirming to Sarika that beauty is one of the eighty universal human needs. Then he continued: “Now that you mention all this, I have to admit that I still have some work to do before I can graduate to becoming a parent.”

“Me too.”

“You too? With your charms and your insights, I would have thought that you had already addressed all these things.”

“All this clarity has come to me fairly recently, and I haven’t yet met a partner willing to openly discuss all these things... and making them happen. Most people are afraid of someone like me who has nothing to hide.”

Webbo put his hand on Sarika’s and told her: “I like to make things happen. I’m not afraid. Whomever sent you had the right IDRN. I have something to tell you.”

“IDRN?”

“*Interdimensional Routing Number.*”

Then Webbo told her about his Dream World travels, first to Flirtown, where he shook off his initial shyness and learnt to get more confident with women. Then on to Splendour, meeting and having fun with her, Sarika. And finally, back again at Splendour in the third year, where he discussed his fantasies with Chantal. Webbo now better understood the purpose of that third year’s university assignment.

“So, I guess I honestly can say that you are... my dream girl.”

“I understood there were several dream girls?”

“Indeed. As you just said, most often our fantasies include more than one partner. But like at Splendour, I think it is beneficial to have one main play partner, where both have the aim of successfully mastering the *Fantasies Play* stage.”

“I’d love to play with you, and be your FP partner. I have the feeling that this is going to be a fun ride,” said the open-minded Indian girl, “and I’m very curious about the list you showed Chantal.”

Webbo smiled, not wanting to reveal too much too early. “By the way, I’m convinced there’s more than just me in your fantasies as well.”

“Oh yes, I have quite a vivid imagination.”

Webbo leaned over to kiss Sarika. This time for real. Then he said:

“I look forward to discover what’s in that beautiful imagination of yours.”

Sarika blushed. Then said:

“One more thing regarding the *Fantasies Play* stage: we can’t cheat our way out of it.”

“And by that, you mean?”

“We can’t use paid sexual services to fulfill our fantasies, unless a specific fantasy includes an interaction with a professional sex worker. And all forms of digital or book solutions do not count either. That being said, they can be a good source of inspiration.”

“And what about role-playing? Let’s say I have a fantasy of having sex with a police woman. Can you just come dressed in blue uniform?”

“Role-playing is fake. If you want to have sex with a police woman, you need to find a real one who will grant your wishes.”

“Oh... that makes the game more interesting...”

“I think so too,” said Sarika and gave Webbo another kiss.

“So,” said Webbo, “why do you think all these Play stages exist in the first place?”

“I think they are guidelines to keep us on track throughout life. Because we are not allowed to rest on our laurels.”

“Why do you think that?”

“Because we are made of 60-70% of water.”

“And?”

“What happens to water when it stagnates?”

“It starts to stink.”

“So now we can put a scientific stamp on our bad words to others: *‘You stink because you’re resting on your laurels and are not addressing one of your Play stages.’*”

“Yes, that’s true, but let’s be compassionate instead, this human life did not come with an instruction manual.”

“I agree with you. Kindness wins.”

“Yes. That being said, we cannot let others destroy our lives and happiness just because they are refusing to live out their Play stages. We need to educate them about their importance, for everyone’s happiness.”

“Good point. It feels like a similar approach parents have when they educate their children. Because they love them, they don’t let them do just whatever they want. Children need to tidy their rooms, brush their teeth, shower, do their homework.”

“Oh, I almost forget: there may actually be one more stage, once we’ve graduated from the *Fantasies Play*.”

“Even more?”

“Yes, sexual fantasies are about opening our minds and our legs. Or pants for you men. And this additional bonus stage is about opening our hearts.”

“And what’s that stage called?”

“*Flying Play*. I have only flown in night dreams so far. It is an absolutely amazing feeling. One feels so light. I’d probably go as far as saying that the emotions we feel when flying are worth a thousand sexual fantasies.”

“That sounds like a stage very much worth pursuing. By the way that reminds me of one of Modella’s Dream Worlds, where she was flying above cliffs and forests and towns and fields.”

“Yes, but that’s the advanced class. Just thought I’d mention it.”

Then a museum staff walked up to them and said that the museum would be closing in fifteen minutes.

“What?” asked Webbo, looking at Sarika. “Have we talked for the whole afternoon?”

“Yes,” said Sarika, “and I hope there will be more afternoons. And evenings. And nights. And mornings.”

“There will,” said Webbo, kissing Sarika again. “By the way, you need to come over to our place and explain all this to my Grooters friends as well.”

“I’d love to. What about Saturday?”

“Should work, I’ll check with the others.”

They left the museum and got out in the cold November rain. It was almost dark already.

Part 47 Repact

Geneva, Switzerland, 21 November 2018

Richie had another day walking around central Geneva. He was annoyed because he felt he was the one who hadn't yet found a satisfying solution to his part of the Grooters' Pact: to help people who have financial issues.

Almost every time he had been in town, he had noticed a homeless man, who seemed to be one of the only homeless people in Geneva.

Richie reckoned this man certainly had financial issues, and he had the means to put him in a nice apartment for the rest of his life. So, he gathered courage and walked up to the homeless man to have a chat with him.

"Hi, my name is Richie."

"I'm Georges," replied the homeless man in a suspicious tone.

"It's getting towards winter. I can rent you an apartment if you wish."

"That's not how things work."

"What do you mean?"

"One does not solve problems by sweeping them under the carpet."

"I am not sure I understand."

"The social services have also offered me a roof."

"So why are you still sleeping on the street?"

"I am a mirror."

"What do you mean, you are a mirror?"

"I am a mirror. And most people don't like what they see in the mirror."

"Please explain more."

"I am a mirror. I reflect people's bad conscience. And bad conscience does not go away by hiding the mirror."

"What kind of bad conscience are you referring to? Do you mean that people have bad conscience for letting you sleep outside? But it seems like you are refusing to be housed."

"I am a mirror. I reflect what people are trying to hide. Most people have stuff to hide. I reflect that and people don't like what they see in the mirror. So, they try to get rid of the mirror instead of fixing what they don't like to see."

"What are people trying to hide?"

"Next to all the obvious cheating and unethical business practices, they try to hide their true desires. It could be a desire for another career. Or a crush for their neighbour's husband. A

desire to travel the world. A desire to live in intentional communities. A desire for more meaningful jobs. A desire for more honest relationships. A desire to make love to their handsome boss or sexy colleague. A desire to go to space. A desire not to accumulate more stuff than they need. A desire to spend more time with their children.”

“How do you know that people have all these things to hide?”

“Because I can see straight through people. They are sick. Energy doesn’t flow properly in their bodies, which leads to ugliness and disease. Both physical and mental.”

Richie was surprised by the very unexpected wisdom he was facing. But he was so glad he had this conversation.

“So, what do you suggest? Is there something I can do to make your life better?”

“You have already made my day.”

“How so?”

“Simply by listening.”

Richie put a hundred francs note in the man’s pocket, then left, a tear in his eyes. He drove back home, feeling the need to share his experience with the other Grooters, and brainstorm ideas.

He realised that was exactly why he loved his Grooters friends: because they had nothing to hide. And that was also why he struggled to have deep relationships with most other people.

The Grooters all gathered in the living room and Richie told them about his encounter with the homeless man.

“What do you think?” he then asked them.

They were silent for a moment, then Leo said:

“The way I understand this, especially based on our insights from Japan, is that when people hide their true desires, which would fulfill some of their needs, then they need to compensate that void with hypocritical behaviour or with accumulating more stuff than they need.”

“And when they accumulate more than they need, they take away from people who don’t have enough?” asked Verity.

“Yes, and that’s the human race’s biggest problem: income inequality.”

“Do you feel you have more than you need, Richie?”

“Yes and no.”

“Enlighten us,” said Webbo.

“On the one hand, yes, I have a little more than I need with two cars, two residences and *Lady Globalia*. On the other hand, this setup, enables me to do my best work to improve the state of this world.”

The other Grooters had to admit that *Lady Globalia* had been very useful for their Pact this year.

“As for the big investments in avant-garde projects like *Ei in the Sky*, I sincerely believe that I don’t have too much money for great projects like that. Or the projects we are now working on together to set up a university, a research centre, and build a town. And these projects give quality job and life opportunities to a lot of people as well.”

“You’re amazing, Richie,” said Modella, emotionally biased.

“Yes, you are,” confirmed Verity, less biased.

“OK,” said Boss. “If we now look at Richie’s goal to improve income inequality, what is the best that we can do?”

“Better education, especially emotional education,” said Verity. “So that people won’t feel the need to accumulate more than what they need.”

“More research,” said Leo. “Especially in social engineering, to organise society so that people don’t need to hide stuff.”

“To build a town with no income inequality,” said Modella. “And I am aware that it may need some initial trial and error until we get it right.”

“But once we get it right, I think we’ll be able to settle on other planets,” said Verity, thinking back on her discussions with Xylon in Marstone.

“Good,” said Boss, “then I think all this confirms we are on the right track with our big projects.”

“I’m hungry,” said Modella.

“Yes,” said Boss to the others. “Let’s call it a day and continue our discussions tomorrow.”

“Talking about being on the right track,” said Boss, as they went on the day after, “what about we recap where we stand in relation to our 1992 Pact?”

“Very good idea,” said Verity.

“Including addendum,” said Webbo.

The others nodded.

Boss took down the Pact he had framed on the wall.

“Shall we go through everyone in order?”

No one had any objections.

“Great, then let’s start and listen to Richie. You got some last-minute insights with the homeless man yesterday.”

“Yes.”

“Anything else?”

“Positive. I’d like to start with the card game Tamara presented to Boss in his Steamaru Dream World. The thing is that we all get dealt various cards in life, and one of these cards is the money card. Now, in a perfect world, people would realise this and share cards with each other, without anyone thinking that their card had more value than someone else’s card.”

“We don’t live in a perfect world,” noted Webbo.

“No, but we can still become better aware of the need to exchange cards. When you think of it, it’s absolutely ridiculous: there are people who love to bake bread, or people who love to make clothes. It would make absolutely no sense whatsoever for a baker to eat all his bread, nor for a fashion designer to wear all her clothes. In the same way, there are people who love to make money. And it does not make sense for them to keep all their money, hoarding, hoarding, while others die from hunger and cold.”

“What else?” asked Boss.

“The next thing,” continued Richie, “and here I look very much forward to see what solutions Modella will come up with for Modeltown, is what I saw in my Pitcairn Dream World: the fact that people only used money with outsiders, not within their own community.”

“You think that intentional communities can be a solution to prevent financial problems people have?” asked Verity.

“Absolutely. Community is about helping each other. And well-organised intentional communities will make sure that resources are shared so that everyone gets their needs met.”

“Any other ideas that could help people address their financial worries?” asked Boss.

“Yes, your discussion with Carrera in your Blend Dream World was very inspiring, because I think that one reason so many people struggle financially is that they have not found their true path or career in life.”

“I fully agree with you,” said Modella.

“Once a person has established himself or herself doing something that is aligned with their DNA and life experience, then they will have more inner peace, and will not need to struggle as much to earn a living.”

“Makes total sense,” said Leo. “And this shows how everything is connected. In this case the financial question you’re looking at, and the job satisfaction issue Boss is focused on. Anything else?”

“Well, all this being said, there will always be people struggling financially as long as the system is biased the way it is. For example, why don’t housewives taking care of children deserve any income? Why do they have to be dependent on a partner? And what about professions that require years of work before an income can be made, like for writers or other artists? What about much-needed research that doesn’t get funding?”

Modella jumped in to rescue her admirer: “You invest in great research projects that would not have found money elsewhere, don’t you? Because the best projects are unlikely to fit in bureaucratic environments.”

“Yes, that’s right. But despite my billions, it’s still only a drop in the ocean.”

“At least you are leading by example,” she said and hugged him.

“Anything more to add, Richie?” asked Boss.

“No.”

“So, to summarise, do you feel that we have met our Pact in your area, financial problems?”

“On a theoretical level, I think we have most solutions. On a practical level, I think the next step would be to build a model town, where everyone can live without having to worry about any finances.”

“Thanks, Richie,” said Boss. “Who’s next? Verity! What have you found so that people in the future can experience genuine love, which was lacking for your parents?”

“I’ve come to the conclusion that we need to take a more scientific approach to love, trying to understand the actual energies involved. What I call the *Physics of Love*. And once we understand how love truly works, we can take corrective action fairly easily.”

“Can you repeat your main insights from this year?” asked Modella.

“Yes, when it comes to romantic relationships, the first energies involved are horizontal energies, or attractive energies. It’s important that we be attracted physically, emotionally, and intellectually to our partners. The second part of love is made of uplifting energies, like the ones felt when people ‘speak’ our Love Languages, like making compliments, or helping each other out, or physical touch. The key is to support each other, whatever the other needs.”

“This is so important,” added Webbo.

“Note that these uplifting love languages can also apply to non-romantic relationships.”

“And the third energy?” asked Modella.

“That’s the forward-moving energy, meaning that couples should consider working on a common goal like starting a business or working on an artistic project together, or building a house or travelling the world.”

“I’d say that confirms my theory of blending business and pleasure,” said Boss.

“Yes, it certainly does,” confirmed Verity.

“I thought about one thing,” said Richie. “If Algo is able to identify relationships that are loving, it must somehow fit into your *Physics of Love* model?”

“That’s a very good question,” said Verity. “I’m not totally sure.”

“I think I have an idea,” said Leo. “I believe Algo is linked to the uplifting energy, in the same way as rhymes make poems and music uplifting.”

“That makes perfect sense, now that you mention it,” said Verity. “Thanks, *Léonard Génie!*”

“What more?” asked Boss, addressing Verity.

“When it comes to love, we also have to be aware of all the various forms of love that exist, as Panayiotis explained to us in Paphos: erotic love, playful love, mature companionate love, family love, love for things, universal love, self-love, and hospitality.”

“Anything else?” asked Webbo.

“Yes, I believe that for frictionless love relationships, it’s also important to be aware of our *Universal Human Needs*, which often explain why people behave in certain ways. Every person is unique, and so are their needs, which means that true love is about accepting and adapting to our partner’s unique needs.”

“Beautifully said,” complimented Richie.

“Thanks,” said Verity. “And on top of that, thanks to Sarika, we’ve now become aware of our life cycle needs, or play stages in life, as she calls them. Being aware of these play stages is another thing that contributes to mature love, I think. And, as for our 80 universal needs, I think that some people may need more *Party Play* than others, and some need more *Family Play*, while others need more *Fantasies Play*...”

“More things to add?”

“Love is an inexhaustible topic, but I’d say the last thing I wanted to add is the *Diamond Theory*, stating that we are all like diamonds with fifty-eight facets, and we should seek partners that help us polish each of these facets, so that we can truly shine in this life.”

“Again, so beautifully worded, Verity,” said Modella.

“Finally, common sense tells me that we are unlikely to find one single partner who can polish all our facets. And being open to receiving love from more than one person has the additional advantage that it meets our need for safety, in the sense that we don’t put all our eggs in one basket.”

“That’s the first rule of investment,” confirmed Richie. “To diversify one’s assets.”

“Thank you so much Verity,” said Boss. “What tremendous insights you’ve brought to our Pact. Do you think you’ve found what you were looking for?”

“To a big extent yes. The next step is to let the world know about these insights.”

“Hence your university project,” said Modella.

“Exactly.”

“Your turn, Boss,” said Modella. “What insights have you gained regarding job dissatisfaction?”

“The most eye-opening discussion I had was with Carrera, and I’d say that when someone is lost in life, it’s better they talk to a life or career counsellor than a psychiatrist. However, there are very few truly competent career advisors out there, so that would require more education, which is something that could be part of the topics taught at Verity’s Love University.”

“Thanks, Boss,” said Verity.

“And, as Carrera pointed out, I also think it’s not optimal to completely separate professional and private lives, which kind of leads to hypocrisy. Instead, if romantic partners were more involved in business projects together, that would guarantee they get the forward-moving energy they require.”

“What more?” asked Leo.

Boss continued: “The sad fact is that far too many people take jobs because of the money. And that’s far too often a losing strategy, so I invite people to choose lesser paid jobs that they enjoy doing, for their own as well as their clients’ benefit. Also, people have to stand up for what is right, and not let employers abuse them, and not follow stupid orders, refusing to do so-called *bullshit jobs*.”

“Yes, but then they may have no money to feed their families,” said Verity.

“Which is why we need to rethink the whole system, as we’ll be doing with Modeltown.”

“Anything else?” asked Webbo.

“Yes, I think it would contribute to job satisfaction if all people working for a specific business were aware of their own strong cards, as Tamara showed me. And more importantly, they need to realise that all cards are important, and no cards are more important than others. Respecting other people’s unique contribution is very important. Then, of course, it’s the job of the boss to make sure to only take onboard people who complement each other.”

“One thing about your dream office BBP,” said Modella.

“Yes?”

“I think it’s the perfect place for people who are still in their *Fantasies Play* stage, but it may not be optimal for people in other stages. What do you think?”

“You’re probably right about that,” admitted Boss.

“Thanks, Boss,” said Richie. “Leo, I think you’re next, what can you tell us about drugs and addictions?”

“I think I found a creative way to address my pussy addiction in Purotu, didn’t I?” he said jokingly.

The others laughed.

“Joke aside, I believe that addictions are side-effects of a society where people’s needs are not met.”

“For example, I once met an African guy dealing drugs in Geneva, and he told me that most of his clients were lawyers and bankers. What does that tell us?”

“That their universal need for a meaningful occupation is probably not met,” said Modella.

“Precisely.”

“As an inventor,” continued Leo, “another thing I’ve noticed is that many solutions in our world seem to include some form of side-effect, alcohol hangover being just one of them.”

“What other examples could you give us?”

“Noise and accidents related to cars. Dramas in supposedly loving relationships. Side-effects from medical pills. Money linked to financial worries. Love that hurts. Explosive space technology. The list is endless. So, I think the world not only needs drugs without harmonious side-effects, we also need practical solutions for everyday life... without side-effects.”

“That’s an interesting take on things,” said Richie.

“Yes,” said Leo. “I believe that any solution that includes unwanted side-effects is not a sufficiently well thought-through solution.”

“Which means we have to do some deep thinking before we launch Love University and Modeltown,” said Verity.

“Yes. But we’ve already come across a lot of solutions thanks to our Dream World travels.”

“So,” finished Boss, “do you think that a world without drugs and addictions is possible?”

“Yes, but who said we want such a world?” he replied thinking about his adventures in Adrenaland and Drugstorie. “The real issue is the reason why people take drugs. If it’s to compensate for some other unmet needs, then that’s bad. And then there is the problem of the side-effects of drugs, which is why I’m very motivated to start my research on hangover-less beer.”

“If you manage to invent a beer that doesn’t give you hangover, then I can guarantee you that I’ll be able to find you some investors and clients,” said Richie. “Although I might turn into a trillionaire if I invest in such an invention.”

“Thanks, Leo,” said Boss. “Your turn, Modella, how do we rid the world of health problems?”

“First, I’d like to say that it is not sufficient to just focus on exercise and nutrition, we need to take a more holistic view on health, including job satisfaction and love satisfaction. My understanding of health is that disease is almost impossible if we have all our needs met. Hence the importance of the list we found in Daisen.”

“That’s a revolutionary way of looking at health,” said Webbo.

“Architecture also plays an important role for people’s health,” continued Modella. “Did you know that Vitruvius, already 2000 years ago, knew that if streets and houses were orientated in the wrong direction, it caused disease among residents?”

“Interesting,” said Leo.

“But that knowledge got lost, so we need more research being done in that area. In the meantime, however, there are many things we can do to build in health into the built environment. For example, by having walkable towns, which forces people to walk more.”

“Did you know that the human body is made to be able to walk 15-20km a day?” added the Grooters charming encyclopaedia.

“There you go,” said Modella.

“Anything else?” asked Richie.

“Yes, even the World Health Organisation states that health is not only the absence of disease, so I believe that a completely healthy human being should have inner peace, and part of this inner peace comes from making sure we get all our needs met, including that we successfully address and complete the Play stages that Sarika shared with us.”

“Anything more to add?” asked Leo.

“Finally, when it comes to health, sex is very important as well, both for our physical and mental health, as orgasms help to flush the body and brain. But I don’t want to trip on Webbo’s expertise.”

“Thanks, Modella,” said Boss. “Which leads us to Webbo. Tell us about your insights from your Dream Worlds.”

“I think that one major problem when it comes to sexuality in the world is the fact that it’s so taboo and most people have some form of shame linked to it.”

“Please continue,” said Verity.

“There are two aspects of this shame. The first one is the shame due to social and religious brainwashing telling people that sex is bad.”

“And the second?”

“The second is linked to people’s shame about their bodies: too small breasts or penis, being overweight, frigid or having premature ejaculations.”

“And what are the solutions to all this?” asked Richie.

“Most people need to reprogram their subconscious for a more positive self-image and more positive sexual relationships. This is done with positive affirmations and visualisations. That’s the first step. Then they need to exercise, eat more healthily, and improve their dating skills. Reading books about sexuality and relationships are also important.”

“And what about the social shame?”

“Well, if Sarika’s insights are correct, it means that we can now rely on science to argue that people need more sex, and that they need to live out their sexual fantasies.”

“Good point,” said Leo.

“But we also need to be aware of the fact that, like drugs, sex can be an addiction and we shouldn’t use it to compensate for other unmet needs. Often, such sex is of poor quality. What we are looking for are quality sexual relationships, based on mutual respect and aiming at fulfilling our *sexual expression* need, as well as completing our sexual *Fantasies Play* stage.”

“Great insights, thanks Webbo,” said Richie.

“Finally,” finished Webbo, “we have to admit that we still do not properly understand how sexual energy functions. So, Leo, that’s something more to add to your list of research areas.”

“Will do. And I’ll make sure I do some practical research with Wendy as well,” Leo joked, then looked at Boss: “Someone convinced me of the importance of blending business and pleasure.”

“Thanks, everyone. So where would you say we stand with our Pact?” asked Boss.

“We still have to discuss the addendum,” said Leo.

“You mean ideas that can help single people find their match?” asked Verity.

“Or matchbox,” joked Webbo.

“Simple, just ask Lady Luck and Logic Lad for help,” said Richie.

“Maybe we can come up with some slightly more useful advice?” said Boss.

Then Modella intervened: “Well, you wouldn’t have found Pia if you hadn’t asked Reversa for help.”

“Very good point,” said Richie. “*Ask and you shall receive*, that’s probably the first recommendation we can come up with.”

“Yes,” said Leo. “But the trick is to know how to ask.”

“And?”

“I’d say there are two main ways of asking. The first one is to ask your subconscious for support, through some form of prayer, the best being to repeat affirmations for a few minutes twice or three times per day. And those affirmations should be completed with visualisations, so that our subconscious has a picture-goal to work with.”

“What about the second way to ask?” wondered Verity.

“That one is much simpler. Just ask others. Tell people you know that you are looking for a life partner, in case they may have friends that are single. Works probably best if you ask opposite-sex friends or acquaintances. Boss just asked Reversa, although that was an exceptional situation. But it worked.”

“Wait,” said Webbo. “Before we ask the Universe, our subconscious, God, or our neighbour, we need to know what to ask for.”

“And that’s where it helps to first get clear on our life goals or major next projects, as we discussed a while ago,” said Verity.

“You mean finding a person that aligns with the forward-moving energy of the *Physics of Love*?” asked Modella.

“Yes, so for example, me getting clear that I wanted to start a university... and ultimately move to Mars, led me to attract a wonderful man who happens to be both university teacher... and a spaceship engineer. Isn’t that cool, or what?”

That led Leo to quote a famous song:

“If your heart is in your dream... no request is too extreme... when you wish upon a star...”

“Which star are you referring to?” asked Verity.

“The one in the circle.”

♪ *When You Wish Upon a Star – Cliff Edwards*

“So, the carrot that Carrera offers her clients actually has a scientific backing?” asked Boss.

“Yes,” replied Verity. “It’s a sign that if we get our life goals right, then it drastically enhances our chances to attract the right kind of partner that wants to join us on the adventure.”

“And that wants to play with us,” joked Webbo.

“Yes,” said Leo. “But to enhance our chances that someone wants to play with us, we also need to address the horizontal attractive energy of the *Physics of Love*.”

“Meaning?” wondered Modella.

“Meaning that we need to do whatever we can to become the most attractive person possible, so that a potential partner truly can admire us. That means exercise, good nutrition, educating ourselves, earning money, having passions and creativity.”

“I guess that’s where Logic Lad comes into the game. Models are unlikely to date couch potatoes,” said Webbo.

“Indeed,” confirmed Modella.

“And that’s where Love University comes in, inspired by Purotu,” said Verity, “I want to share all the knowledge that a couch potato needs to grow, unearth himself or herself and become eatable.”

The other Grooters laughed.

“Yes,” said Modella. “However, we can’t just rely on people having steel willpower, like myself. Instead, we need to teach them to work smart, not hard. Although hard works too, but it’s less smart. The goal is important.”

Richie reflected for a while, then said:

“If I get it right, we suggest that single people take a close look at the *Physics of Emotion* to identify things they can do to attract a romantic partner. In that case, is there anything they can do what regards the uplifting energy?”

“Good point, Richie,” said Verity. “Yes, people can read books and educate themselves to better understand how this uplifting energy works, how it is important to customise your love to your specific partner, for example by using the *Five Love Languages*. And yes, learning about ways to please a partner in bed will give you more self-confidence and is also likely to enhance a person’s chances to find a partner.”

“You’re the best, Verity,” said Modella and gave her Grooters sister a hug.

“So,” said Webbo, “we do all this and then magically our partner appears in our life?”

“Yes,” confirmed Verity. “That’s how creation works: by *co-creation*, meaning that first we do our homework, then God, the Universe, our subconscious, or Lady Luck do their job to complete the creation. Don’t ask me how that part works, though. The important thing is that it works.”

“You think it can work for everyone?”

“Yes, the principle is the same as with gardening: we need to plant the seeds and water the growing plant, then Nature takes over the rest. Faith that the process will work is probably one of the most important ingredients.”

“Anything else singles can do?”

“Yes,” continued Verity. “Logic Lad would add that single people will improve their statistics if they find environments that increase the likelihood of them meeting someone. In other words, they need to get out of the house, join hobby groups, go to networking events and parties. And engage conversation with cute potential partners, like I did in Samarkand.”

“Wow,” said Boss. “You’re all amazing. I think we’ve covered most of the main recommendations that can help singles find partners. That was the addendum of the Pact. What happens now? Have we fulfilled our Pact?”

“Has everyone shared all of these insights with their parents?” asked Boss.

“It’s quite sensitive...” said Webbo.

“They don’t listen...,” said Leo.

“It’s too late...,” said Verity.

“They will never change...,” said Modella.

“They split up...,” said Richie.

Silence.

“So, have we failed our Pact?” asked Boss.

“We may have failed the parents’ part, but I’d say we have definitely succeeded with the addendum,” said Verity. “And gained tremendous insights that can help younger generations.”

“As for our parents, can’t we just summarise our findings in a book, which may eventually inspire them to change things at their own pace?” asked Richie.

“Yes, but we also have to be realistic that our biggest chances are with the next generation, as well as with the older people who want to listen,” said Boss.

“Hence the university,” said Verity.

“And more research is needed,” added Leo.

“And social experiments,” said Modella.

“One thing we could try,” said Webbo, “is to argue logically with the open vs. dead theory. People who are not open to new ideas, are somehow dead inside. You think such an argument could wake up people?”

“Unfortunately,” said Boss, “far too many don’t even listen to common sense... something really big has to be in jeopardy for most people to start to listen.”

“Well, in any case it sounds like we need more research about why people don’t listen,” said Leo.

“Final verdict about the Pact?” asked Boss.

“Definitely not a failure,” said Richie. “Just look at all those crystals we’ve discovered.”

“The crystals are just symbols,” said Verity. “The most important is all the knowledge we’ve gained during our quest. In our Dream Worlds, and in real-life interactions.”

“Fully agree,” said Leo and Webbo at the same time.

“Seventy-five per cent success,” said Modella. “A percentage that may increase in a few decades if we are successful with our big projects.”

“Do you think we need a *Repact* for that?” asked Webbo.

“You mean like re-packaging our original Pact?” said Boss.

“Yes, somehow.”

“Leo, any ideas on how we would formulate that? And if it’s something we want?” asked Boss.

“Not entirely sure,” he admitted.

“I have an idea,” said Verity. “What if we make a new Pact which aims at gathering all the knowledge necessary for harmonious human relationships on Earth, so that we can settle on other planets without exporting all our problems as well?”

“That’s a great idea,” said Modella. “Such a Pact would include all our big projects. Because to reach that ambitious goal, we will most likely need avant-garde education, non-bureaucratic research, as well as full-scale social experiments.”

“Yes!” said the other Grooters.

“Maybe we need to ask Igor, Pia, Sarika and Wendy for their opinion as well, if they’re going to be part of the adventure?” asked Boss.

“Yes, that’s very important,” said Leo. “But I think we’ve already hinted on the direction we were going, and that’s one of the reasons they chose us in the first place. So, I expect them to be positive about the *Repact* as well.”

They all were.

REPACT between the Grooters

We, the Grooters, commit ourselves to do whatever it takes to help humanity live in peace on Earth and settle on other planets successfully.

To achieve that, we want to launch three main big projects, all centred around our core value: research.

1. **Love University (LU)** – Verity’s brainchild – to educate the next generations.
2. **LU’s Research Centre** – Leo’s brainchild – to continue ground breaking research.
3. **Modeltown** – Modella’s brainchild – to build towns where people are healthy, happy, and get along with each other.

We want, among many other things, further our understanding of:

- Why so many people don’t listen.
- How people can handle their emotions.
- Sexual energy.

Webbo, Richie and Boss will support all of these projects with their respective skills and resources.

As long as we live, we will search for solutions that can contribute to creating paradise on Earth and on other planets. We will share our findings with each other.

Done in six original copies.

Geneva, Wednesday, November 28th, 2018

THE GROOTERS

Webbo Verity Richie Modella Leo Boss

Geneva, Switzerland, 30 November 2018

Richie and Modella had been invited to the American Club's Annual Gala at the *Hôtel Président*, one of the main big hotels along the lake in central Geneva. The president in question was the American Woodrow Wilson, and the hotel is named after the Palais Wilson located next door that was the first headquarters of the League of Nations in the 1920s and 1930s, precursor to the United Nations. And Woodrow Wilson was one of the initiators of this League, unsuccessfully trying to prevent other world wars.

It was a very elegant event, with a lot of people, as Geneva has a fairly big American expat community, among other things due to the United Nations location in Geneva.

Richie wore a black tuxedo, and Modella a sleeveless golden sequin dress, that perfectly matched her golden blonde hair. They both looked stunning.

Richie knew a few people there, and was chatting to some Portuguese-speaking guests for a while. Modella excused herself, to go to the bathroom.

"All that champagne..." she told Richie and gave him a quick kiss.

In the bathroom, in front of the big mirror, she noticed a very elegant brunette with an exquisite blue evening dress, sequin like hers. Then she realised why that dress fitted her so well: because it matched her crystal-clear blue eyes.

"Love your dress," Modella told her.

"Yours is amazing too," said the woman with an American accent. "I can't locate your accent, where are you from?"

"Oh, my parents are from Sweden and Argentina, but I've lived in the US quite a lot, last time was when I studied architecture at Notre Dame in Indiana. I've lived in Buenos Aires in the last few years and am now working on a project here in Geneva."

"That's the best school for architecture, great choice."

"And you, what do you do?"

"I work for the White House, international relations."

"That must be so interesting," said Modella.

"Yes, I love it. Here, take my card in case you come by Washington sometime, I'd love to show you around."

"Thanks," said Modella, reading the card:

Emily P. Addington

Then it dawned on Modella: *brunette... blue eyes... White House... Emily...*

“What is it?” wondered Emily.

“Nothing. And I’m Modella, by the way.”

“Nice to meet you.”

“I’m hardly ever in Washington, but my partner Richie goes there regularly for business. I’ll introduce you to him, he’s here tonight.”

“Wonderful, thanks,” said Emily.

Modella took Emily by the arm, and they both walked to find Richie.

The Grooters architect was so proud of her self-mastery, doing this. A year ago, she would probably have done everything so the two wouldn’t meet. She was so glad that jealousy could be cured.

“Hi, sweetie,” said Modella, “I have an early Christmas present for you.”

“Christmas present?” wondered Emily, but quickly forgot that sentence as she was struck by Cupid’s lightning bolt. Modella could sense the electricity between both of them.

“Richie, this is Emily, she works in Washington, I told her you were there from time to time for business.”

“A pleasure to meet you, Richie,” said the outgoing American brunette.

“Likewise,” responded Richie.

“I thought of getting another drink, shall I bring you one as well?” asked Modella.

“That would be kind,” said Emily.

“Yes, champagne for me too, thanks,” said Richie.

Modella went to fetch the drinks and came back a few minutes later. Richie and Emily were in deep conversation.

“Here you go,” said Modella.

“Thanks,” said both Richie and Emily simultaneously.

“I’ll go and mingle a little and let you guys discuss DC.”

Before she left, Modella whispered in Emily’s ear: “We have a selectively open relationship, so don’t be shy. By the way, you look absolutely ravishing.”

And off she went before Emily had time to react.

An hour later, Richie came to find Modella.

“Thanks for the Christmas present, my love,” he said. “I hope you don’t mind, I invited Emily on a date tomorrow before she flies back to the U.S.”

“I’m so glad for you,” said Modella and kissed Richie. “Was she the same Emily as in your Dream World?”

“Yes, although her job specifications seem to change all the time.”

They both laughed. Modella hugged Richie, then said:

“I love this *Fantasies Play* stage that Sarika explained to us. Maybe you’ll be able to tick off your fantasy of having sex in the White House?”

Richie grinned. “Yes, and I also look forward to help you tick off any additional fantasies you may have. You must have some that involve more than just me and Rocco?”

“How did you know?”

Part 48 Lux

Geneva, Switzerland, 3 December 2018

“OK,” said Boss, showing the flipchart. “If we now look back at the agenda of the plan we did after activating Crystallica back in August, where do we stand?”

“We have discussed all the big projects,” said Leo.

“Yes, but we haven’t found a location yet.”

“Agreed,” said Boss. “That may take quite a while. We’ll start the actual big projects next year, and looking for a suitable location will be part of the planning work. What about the other points?”

“We have found the list of *Universal Human Needs*,” said Verity.

“Thanks to you. What else?”

“We have found some ways to handle our emotions,” said Modella.

“Yes, boxing-champion,” said Leo. “However, that is an area which will require far more research so that we can come up with more solutions on how to handle our unwanted emotions. Not only jealousy.”

“I agree with you,” said the blonde beauty.

“And we have thought through how our Dream World lovers could fit into our big projects,” continued Boss. “Which made some of them already appear in our dimension. By the way, how did your date with Emily go, Richie?”

“Very well, thank you.”

“I’m so glad for you,” said Modella honestly, tenderly touching Richie because she loved him so much and was genuinely happy to share her treasure of a man.

“Great,” summarised Boss. “Then we all know what’s left to do right now: hide Crystallica in a secure place.”

“Yes,” said Leo. “Wendy has been nagging me about this, and she’s definitely not the nagging type, which means it’s very important.”

“And we absolutely need to find a solution before your parents come home for Christmas, Boss?” asked Modella.

“Yes. In the worst case we’ll temporarily hide Crystallica somewhere in the basement. But I don’t like worst case scenarios,” said Boss.

“Maybe we should ask Heidi to join us, she is good at everything linked to hiding,” said Webbo, half-jokingly.

“Sure, why not?” said Verity and Modella, mostly curious to finally get to know that enigmatic woman.

Pia had already met Heidi/Tamara, as the three of them had had a coffee together, and the red-haired had confirmed that she would remain Boss’ *dear friend... with benefits*. Benefits that Pia too could claim if she wanted. Which Pia wanted, now aware of how attractive Heidi was. Her open-mindedness was one of the main things Boss liked about Pia. He probably had to thank Reversa for that.

“Yes,” said Richie. “I also think that Heidi deserves to see all the crystals before we hide them. I mean, it’s partly thanks to her that we were able to find them.”

“You’re right,” said Boss and called his steampunk admirer who happened to be available, and could come over in an hour.

“Great,” said Leo, once everyone was there and the elegant red-haired Heidi/Tamara had been properly introduced to the other Grooters. “Where would you hide a precious device like the Crystallica?”

“In the pyramids,” said Verity.

“Could be a potential solution,” answered Leo. “Where else?”

“In a Swiss bank vault,” proposed Boss, not sure if his suggestions was serious or biased.

“Under a church somewhere,” said Modella. “Because most churches, like the pyramids, stand on various energy lines, and maybe that’s a good idea if we want to transmit the energy to other places?”

“I like your thinking,” said Leo. “But are we sure Crystallica needs to be connected to these energy lines?”

“We don’t know that,” said Verity, “but I read somewhere that the existing energy lines can be manipulated and often are to the detriment of most people, and to the advantage of the elite. I don’t understand these things in detail, I just know that for example the positive energy in churches is focused on where the clergy stands, not the public.”

“Why am I not surprised?” said Webbo.

Verity continued: “Instead of energy lines, power lines or telephone lines, which only benefit some classes of people, it would be better to have the energy somehow diffused equally everywhere.”

“Wow,” said Richie, “wasn’t that what Nikola Tesla tried to do?”

“It’s just common sense not rooted in greed,” said the living encyclopaedia.

“OK,” said Leo. “If we assume that we don’t need to place the Crystallica on specific energy lines, then that opens up far more options. Any you can think of?”

“On an uninhabited island in the South Pacific,” said Richie.

“In one of the many deep tunnels in the Swiss Alps,” said Heidi. “Not the tunnels for trains or cars, but other smaller tunnels built by the Swiss Army to... hide if necessary.”

“I didn’t even know they had such tunnels,” said Richie.

“Potential threats from all directions for centuries force you to think of creative ways of protecting yourself,” said Heidi.

“We could hide it the restaurant you took me to,” said Boss joking at Heidi.

“Then it wouldn’t be dark there anymore,” said replied, pointing at the pulsating light emanating from Crystallica.

Then they all remained silent for a moment.

“No, no, no,” said Leo.

“What?” asked Verity.

“We are not thinking out-of-the-box. Although these are all potentially good hiding places, we need to come up with a reason why Crystallica should be hidden on a remote island, or in a bank vault, or in a mountain tunnel. And not anywhere else. Why there?”

Everyone remained silent.

After a while, Modella said: “I may have an idea.”

“Tell us,” encouraged Verity.

“I don’t know what is happening to me, normally I’m not that kind of an original thinker, maybe it’s the Crystallica effect. Anyway, my idea is that we hide Crystallica in Helsingborg.”

“Sounds like it is a place in Sweden,” said Leo.

“Yes.”

“But why on Earth do you think this is the right place to hide it?” asked Boss.

“Let me explain. More precisely, I want to hide Crystallica in a heritage-listed fortress called *Kärnan*, which is the main landmark in Helsingborg, Sweden, overlooking the Öresund sound to Helsingør in Denmark. It is a medieval tower that has stood up for over 700 years, and hasn’t been attacked for over 300 years now.”

“So what?” said Webbo.

“Let me continue. The key is in the name: *Kärnan*, which means *the core* or *the kernel* in Swedish. And I think that Crystallica is the core of Earth energy. Also, *kär*, in Swedish means *to be in love*. Similar to and pronounced almost exactly like *cher* in French, meaning *dear*, or *expensive*, and I guess we can presume that the crystals of Crystallica are quite expensive.”

Heidi didn’t say anything, but she couldn’t hide her amazement about the crystals that the Grooters had gathered. In part, thanks to her, she thought, proud of herself.

“You’re starting to collect some solid reasons here,” said Boss.

“And the building has a phallic shape and stands in a phallic-shaped country, which reminds us of the last crystal we found, and that ignited Crytallica.”

“We can see what women have on their minds,” joked Webbo.

“Wait, it’s not all. If we admit that Crytallica is a very powerful energy, then Kärnan also reminds us of *kärnkraft*, the Swedish word for *nuclear power*.”

“Now you’re talking,” said Richie.

“There’s even more: *Kärnan* sounds like *stjärnan*, which means *the star* in Swedish. Like the star in our Dream Worlds. Our guiding star. The star we wish upon.”

“That’s an impressive number of solid reasons,” said Leo.

“Wait, I’m not even finished. *Kärnan* is the landmark of the city of *Helsingborg*, which contains almost all the letters of the word *healing*. And healing is what the world acutely needs at the moment.”

“You think the letters in place names are important?”

“I’m convinced of that. And there is more: *Kärnan* is located in Sweden. The country is called *Sverige* in Swedish. Look at that word carefully: sVERIGE. We can see that the capital G is made of a capital C and a capital T. So, we have the whole word *VERITE*, or truth in French, included in the country name for Sweden, *Sverige*. I see Crystallica as a powerful truth activator, and that’s an additional reason why I think it makes sense to locate it in Sweden.”

“You know you are biased, being half-Swedish?” said Richie.

“I’m fully aware of that. However, I think all countries have their specific purpose: France to promote liberty (think *femmes libertines*, or *liberté, égalité, fraternité*), USA to promote space endeavours (think *stars and stripes*), Sweden to promote truth, etc.”

When Modella was done, the other Grooters remained silent for a good while. Then Leo said: “Well, that is going to be hard to beat. Anyone better ideas?”

Silence.

“Good. Before we continue, I suggest I teleport over to Goldilocks and let tell her about what we came up with. Then she’ll need some time to discuss it with her elders. In the end, the decision will be ours, but they may think of things we may have missed.”

“Sounds like a plan,” said Boss. Leo sent a message to Goldilocks and when he got the green light, he teleported to Las Vegas.

Boss then took over the discussions:

“OK, let’s assume we go for this site at *Kärnan*, where exactly would we hide Crystallica? And how?”

“We need to first make a tour of the premises. And once we know what’s inside that tower, we can make more accurate plans,” said Modella.

“Yes,” said Heidi. “But in any case, I’d say that the most logical place would be to hide Crystallica in the basement, or better to dig a deep hole and bury it under the tower.”

“That makes sense,” said Boss, supporting his mysterious lover.

“We think so too,” said Verity and Webbo.

“It may be tricky to get access though.”

“I think I can rent some advanced archaeology or geology equipment so that we can see what exactly is under the tower.”

“It’s called *Ground Penetrating Radar*,” informed the Grooters encyclopaedia.

“Thanks, Verity,” continued Richie. “And once we have a picture of the underground architecture, we can make an informed decision on where precisely to place Crystallica.”

“You’re a genius, Richie!” said Modella, admiring her main admirer.

“And Richie,” said Verity, “what about that cloaking technology your research teams were working on and that wasn’t ready last spring for Rio and Boston?”

“Good point, Verity, I’ll check with them straight away.”

Richie called his team and got confirmed that a prototype had been successfully tested for the first time a fortnight ago. He also made a few calls to organise a team to go and map the underground of *Kärnan* with *Ground Penetrating Radar* technology.

A few days later

Wendy had come over to Geneva to see Crystallica for the last time and monitor the proper placement of it in its permanent location. She had discussed the Grooters’ proposal with her elders, and they had all accepted Modella’s solid arguments for the proposed location.

“And how do you plan to transport Crystallica up to Sweden?” she asked.

“With *Lady Globalia*, I guess,” said Richie.

“What about security control at the airport?” asked Boss.

“You’re right, it may be tricky.”

“What are our alternatives?” asked Wendy.

“Driving it up,” said Webbo.

“What if we rent a mobile home?” said Leo. “Then we will have enough space to put it somewhere, and we will not leave it for a second until we’re ready to offload it at *Kärnan*?”

“And who will drive?”

“What about Wendy and I?” suggested Leo.

“Sure,” said Boss.

“Can I come with you?” asked Verity, who was the Grooters who felt the most affinity with many of the crystals.

“Of course,” said Wendy.

Geneva, 8 December 2018

The Grooters had planned to leave for Sweden at the beginning of the coming week, which gave them time to properly celebrate l’Escalade in Geneva, a tradition that commemorated the failed French invasion of Geneva in the year 1602.

The story goes that an old lady, *Mère Royaume*, threw hot soup on the French soldiers trying to climb the city walls. And she even threw the cauldron itself. That’s why the Genevans every December now eat a chocolate cauldron with marzipan vegetables inside.

All the Grooters and their respective main admirers were present: Igor had come from Russia, and would be the engineer-in-charge for the new placement of Crystallica. Pia was still in Geneva, and Sarika had joined from the *rive droite*. And Wendy had arrived two days earlier.

Next to celebrating l’Escalade, everyone was there to say ‘goodbye’ to Crystallica.

After dinner, it was chocolate time.

Boss, the most Genevan of the Grooters, gave instructions:

“OK, the tradition is that the youngest and oldest of the party should *casser la marmite*, break the cauldron.”

“I think Igor is the oldest,” said Verity.

“And Sarika would be the youngest?” said Webbo.

Boss told them to stand on either side of the marmite, and showed them how to hold their hand together over the chocolate cauldron. And at his signal, they had to crush the cauldron.

“Ready?” asked Boss.

“Yes,” said both Igor and Sarika.

« *Ainsi périrent les ennemis de la république !* »

And a second later, the whole table was covered in small chocolate pieces and marzipan vegetables.

The Grooters had already celebrated l’Escalade a few times when they lived as children in Geneva, but, except for Boss, their last time was over 25 years ago.

As for the newcomers to the Grooters’ family, Wendy, Igor, Pia and Sarika, they all enjoyed to watch this tradition. And to eat the chocolate.

Then the Grooters DJ turned on the music.

♪ *Flames of Love – Fancy*

A while later, Sarika was talking to Verity, and told her bluntly, as they were both watching Igor:

“There is no way I’m not going to steal that man from you from time to time.”

“In that case, I’ll probably be tempted to steal yours. We know what African and Siberian heritage have in common. Igor is such an exceptional man. It would be so egoistic of me to just keep him to myself.”

“Same with Webbo. Sounds like a fair deal.”

“Win-win,” said Verity. And they hugged each other.

Verity told Webbo about Sarika’s plans. Then it dawned on him: “Wait, wasn’t Sarika’s previous roommate at Splendour named Igor?”

“Yes, I think you’re right.”

“Does that mean that...” Verity asked Webbo.

“... parts of my Splendour Dream World memories were transferred to you when we had sex together on the Crystallica party evening in August?”

“Now, that’s spooky,” she said. “But I like how the cards have been shuffled.” And so did all the others who were involved.

As the party went on, Modella got an idea. She wanted to organise a spontaneous *boum*, and realised that the pulsating lights from the Crystallica crystals would serve perfectly as disco lights. She explained the ballads part of the *boum* parties to everyone, and then turned off all the lights in the house. She asked Boss for help to remove the armchairs of the living room so they could make a small dance floor. Then she switched to softer music.

♪ *Reality – Vladimir Cosma & Richard Sanderson*

Except Modella and Richie, who had been together for almost nine months, all other couples were very recent. Leo met Wendy in August, Verity met Igor in September, and both Boss and Webbo had only met Pia and Sarika in November.

As Richie and Modella had a drink watching the others dance in tight embrace, she told him:

“Remember when we all first re-met here in January. We were all single.”

“Yes, and now most of us have gone from single to double.”

“Or triple in your case,” Modella teased Richie.

“Maybe we should leave maths out for the rest of the evening,” he replied, kissing Modella.

“You win. By the way, have you noticed the NRE in this room, amplified by Crystallica? The energy is incredible.”

“Yes, it looks like we’ve managed to build some bridges between dreams and reality,” said Richie, kissing Modella.

“Yes, and you are my dream man,” said Modella, kissed Richie, and took him back to the dance floor for the next ballad.

“What an incredible year this has been,” she whispered in his ear as they were dancing.

“Yes, and the year is not fully over yet,” said Richie, silently pondering his wish to very soon propose to Modella.

After a while the music caught up speed again, and everyone happily danced through the night.

♪ *Rave kun vi – Kajto*

Helsingborg, Sweden, 12 December 2018

Early the coming week, Leo, Wendy and Verity rented a spacious mobile home, put Crystallica under one of the kitchen seats, and drove all the way up to Sweden. Fortunately, it didn’t snow on the way. Leo was a little frustrated seeing sports cars doubling them at double their own speed on the German *Autobahn*. That made him think of his adventure in Adrenaland with Leandra. He wondered where she was, but couldn’t complain about his two charming driving companions and the amenities of the mobile home, far better suited for horizontal activities than futuristic sports cars.

The story does not say if the Grooters librarian scored her third trilogy of the year on some German *Autobahnraststätte*. Or on the ferry between Germany and Denmark.

At the same time, Richie, Modella, Boss, Pia, Webbo, Sarika and Igor went through the last few plans on how to bury Crystallica under *Kärnan*. They had received the plans from the underground scan. Igor gave them a lot of valuable input from an engineer’s perspective. Then they flew up to Sweden, again landing at Sturup, because the runways of the closer located Ängelholm-Helsingborg airport were too short for Richie’s Dreamliner. Not a big deal, Sturup was less than an hour’s drive from Helsingborg.

Both teams then met up at a hotel in central Helsingborg where they discussed the last few details of their upcoming nightly ‘coup’. Although the Grooters were used to such early

hours' adventures, this one was the reverse of the others: instead of extracting a hidden crystal, they now had to place all the crystals back in a secure location. And that would require more time.

Indeed, the operation required several hours and they were glad that it was Wednesday and winter so there were not many people around after midnight. Which gave them approximately six hours to do what they needed. Richie's cloaking technology made their intrusion incognito; the only thing was that they had to be silent.

In the end, everything worked out as planned, and Crystallica had now been buried deep under the *Kärnan* fortress tower in Helsingborg.

Then Richie told the other Grooters:

"We will stay another day here in Helsingborg. I have a surprise for all of you tonight."

They went back to their hotel, and slept in, but at 10AM, Richie woke Modella:

"Hey, good morning angel, you need to get up and get ready for your rehearsal."

"Rehearsal?"

"Yes, look at the date."

It took Modella a few seconds to understand.

"Seriously?"

"Yes, the others will love it."

"OK," said the beautiful half-Swede.

Late afternoon, once it had gotten fully dark outside, which was fairly early even in southern Sweden at this time of the year, Richie took the other Grooters to the *Sankta Maria* church, only a few hundred meters away from *Kärnan*.

"Some kind of mass?" asked Webbo, as they had entered and sat down in the fully packed church.

"Yes, sort of, but a rather pagan traditions I'd say," replied Richie whose mother country also celebrated this tradition.

"Wait," said Verity. "Where is Modella? Isn't she coming?"

"Don't worry, Verity, she'll be here on time," said Richie.

The church had dimmed chandeliers, plenty of candles as well as light from two nice Christmas trees at the front of the church. It was a wonderful setting.

Then the Grooters could hear voices singing behind them. The voices got louder, as if someone was moving into the church.

They turned around and who did they see? To their surprise, Modella was this year's Lucia and she slowly walked down the nave, dressed in white with several real candles in her hair,

her hands in a namaste position, singing *Sankta Lucia*. She was followed by about a dozen equally beautiful girls, even four non-blondes, they too dressed in white, and carrying a candle in their hand. They were all singing the *Sankta Lucia* song. The last part of the choir, in this instance called *Luciatåget*, the Lucia train, was a half a dozen *stjärngossar*, the star boys. All dressed in white as well, and carrying a candle.

♪ *Sankta Lucia – Annica Risberg*

The choir's combined voices echoed almost magically in the church. At the front of the church, at the foot of the podium was an orchestra, playing the old *Santa Lucia* melody that somehow had made its way from southern Italy to Scandinavia where the lyrics were adapted.

The Lucia train came to a halt at the podium and turned into a regular choir where Modella stood at the front singing and shining among the other beautiful girls. And the star boys at the back. Modella was the oldest of them, but her radiance made up for a few tiny early wrinkles. And, Modella being 40% Italian and 28% Swedish, who could better incarnate an Italian saint singing in Swedish?

Richie's heart felt unusually warm. He genuinely admired Modella and reckoned she was a true role model for humanity. He had now made up a definite decision in his mind: to propose to her before the end of the year.

Verity asked Richie: "Do you know why the Sicilian *Santa Lucia* was killed?"

"Because she gave money and food to poor people. As we've seen in movies like *In Time*, and stories like *Robin Hood*, that's something powers to be tend to frown upon. But that's another reason why I like what Saint Lucy represents."

Then Boss whispered in Richie's ear: "So, what exactly is being celebrated for this event?"

"We pray that *Sankta Lucia* comes to bring light back to the northern countries in spring after the long darkness of winter."

"Aha!" realised Boss, "*post tenebras lux.*"



2048

Toledo, Spain, 1 July 2048

Boss looked himself in the mirror. He wasn't displeased with what he saw, he just got his first grey hairs last year, thankful that Pia had shared with him some of the longevity tips Reversa had taught her.

10,949 days had now elapsed since Boss had launched his countdown app. It had been almost exactly 30 years since he had met Reversa, and still he regularly thought about her. Somehow, she had made a major impact in his life, not just their amazing day together, but the fact that she managed to convince Pia to patiently wait for him. That couldn't have been easy for his university love, but she claims the wait was worth it. They had been happily together since they re-met in 2018.

First, they had spent two years to fully live out their *Fantasies Play* stage. They reached a point where they honestly could claim emotional maturity, unlike the Swiss high-school diploma, *la maturité*, or most other countries' equivalent diplomas by the way, none of which was teaching young adults how to handle their emotions.

And after that, they married, and had two children in the following years. They had made sure that the umbilical cord of their babies was not cut straight away, but left until all the nutrition of the placenta had been transferred to the new little humans. That enabled their children to grow up healthy and they were now in their late twenties, living through their own play stages.

As for the Grooters' *Repact*, both of them had supported Verity, Leo and Modella with their big projects, and together they had built amazing things over the last three decades. And now, they had all slowly started to transition into the *Relay Play* stage, teaching, mentoring and coaching the next generation of Grooters.

Given Reversa's tremendous impact on his life, Boss wanted to thank her. In person.

He had had long discussions with the other Grooters to try and understand timelines. To make things simple, they had drawn a line with a fork in time, and one future leading to the year 2048 where Reversa came from, and one fork leading to their current year 2048.

Leo had come up with the creative insight that if Reversa's missions had been successful, which they all agreed they had, then her job was done. Which means that Boss could try and convince her not to do her reversal.

But would he be able to find her in this timeline? And if yes, would she recognise him?

He looked her up online, but didn't find anything.

Boss told himself that if she was involved in secret science experiments, then it makes sense that she wouldn't have her face all over the Internet. His only lead was Toledo, so he boarded an airship and flew there seven days before the date of her planned reversal.

The old town of Toledo wasn't that big, so he hoped he would bump into Reversa in the coming days. If she was there. However, Boss didn't want to push his luck too much, so as soon as he arrived, he made sure to ask around if anyone knew her or knew about a research centre located in the old town.

For three days, he found nothing. Then, on the fourth day, he got a message at his hotel: *"Please come to Restaurante la Orza, tonight at 9PM. Gracias."*

"That was weird," thought Boss. On the other hand, given his assiduous doorknocks in the last few days, he reckoned that maybe the message had reached its destination.

He still walked around town the whole day, just in case he would bump into her. Then took a nap and a shower at his hotel, and went to the restaurant mentioned in the message.

As he entered, he said he was meeting Ms. Eltiempo.

"She is already here, sitting on the terrace,"

"Gracias," said Boss and walked out on the terrace.

There she was. Even more stunning than when he had met her back in 2018, looking slightly younger, a little less mature.

"Hola, Reversa, nice to see you again. I'm Boss."

"Again? Who are you? I was curious to know who was so intensely looking for me like you've been in the last few days."

"I am someone you met on one of your coming missions."

"Coming?"

"Yes."

"Tell me more."

"He told Reversa that he had met her in Geneva on the 8th of July, 2018."

"That's my birth day!"

"I know. And I think we celebrated it in style: adventure park, paragliding, nice lunch, sex, and mind-bending discussions."

"What's your name again?" asked Reversa, while most normal people would probably have stated that it would have been impossible for them to meet in such a way.

"Boss Pibolodari."

"I don't recall these events."

"That's because they probably happened in a parallel timeline for you. And on top of that they happened in the past. Tell me, what are your plans at the moment? Do you work on a scientific experiment, like you told me you did when we met?"

"It is top secret."

“I already know most of your secrets,” said Boss, explaining that he knew about her reversal, “so do you plan a reversal soon?”

“I don’t know how you were able to get hold of this information. But yes, I plan a reversal in a few days.”

“That’s why I’m here.”

“You want to talk me out of it? Many others have tried.”

“What if I told you that I think your mission was already a success?”

“How is that possible? I haven’t even started the mission yet.”

“That’s just timeline confusion. I met you on your way back in time. I don’t know how far back you went, but I am 100% sure you were around in 2003, when you met Pia, a university crush of mine, and convinced her that I loved her. She has now been my life partner for 30 years. You changed my life. And you prevented a major pandemic in the early 2020s.”

“But there was a big pandemic back then.”

“Yes, but it was by no means as big as it might have been without your mission. Without you, the death toll could have been 100 to 1,000 times higher. Sure, after the pandemic, most people fell back into their comfortable lives, but at some point those lifestyles became unsustainable, and they started to remember the quiet times during the pandemic when even wildlife came roaming the inner cities. They started to listen.”

“You think that’s partly thanks to my mission?”

“Yes, and I’m convinced that your mission has helped prevent many other calamities too, but they don’t write about things that don’t happen in history books.”

“What are you trying to tell me?”

“I am just thinking logically: if I met you in 2018, and my wife Pia met you in 2003, that means that you’ve already done your mission. How else could I know you and all this? You may not have been able to prevent all the world’s problems, but I’m absolutely certain that you made a huge difference.”

“So, you think my mission is no longer necessary?”

“There are many other things that still need improvement. But doing such a reversal is a huge altruistic sacrifice. And somehow it seems that you’ve already done that sacrifice, in a parallel timeline. You now deserve to enjoy the future. And by the way, there may be ‘remote’ ways to change the past.”

Boss told Reversa about the Grooters’ successful history hacking helping Karl Blitz escape concentration camp.

“I need to talk this through with Renato and my bosses.”

“Of course. Do you want me to be present, so that I can fill in with my understanding of the events?”

“Yes, that would be kind.”

“Why do you do this, Boss?”

“Because I love you, and want you to be happy.”

