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RESURRECTION

(A Spy in Hell)

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Prologue

“ His finger is twitching, nurse! Nurse, Oh, Nurse! Where is the nurse, oh my goodness, I can’t believe this? He is back, Nurse, he is back!”

Ravinah Kasson Londe stands up lamely and almost fell beside a gray rim-raised hospital bed. The room around her is about three hundred to four hundred square feet in size. There are over forty beds, divided by a long floral curtain with hooked pegs weaved around it.

The ward itself is an old rustic one, built by the Chinese during the head tax days; and with their skills, they had helped build many hospices and hospitals in this area. It was built from bricks, and it is strong enough to have withstood four hundred winters. It strikes a vivid contrast to those who come inside for the first time.

Outside, everything looks dull, lifeless, and gray. Inside, however, it is decorated in modern embroidery, with Persian-type furniture not only in St. Jesuit’s Hospital for the Critical Impaired, or SJHCI as the locals call it. SJHCI is the oldest hospital in Ingersoll, Ontario. It has seen better days.

They had put him at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto. But it was both too far and dangerous—that is, for security reasons—that she requested the Department of Veterans (so-called “The Department”) to relocate him to Ingersoll. The Department had initially refused the request, citing both the cost of treatment and the allowable portion earmarked for those who are recalled. The recalled include not only the retirees but also those who have

become critically impaired in war or in an incursion. Comatose is grouped in this category.

For him, however, the problem has been where to place him; official records show that he is demised, but here he is, very much alive, although, of course, he's in a coma.

Upon the transfer to Ingersoll, he was admitted to ward 457, commonly known as the Devil's Handbag, because whoever gets in here is eventually taken away.

Ravinah had contemplated giving up her well-paying job as a forensics accountant at Royal Bank in order to devote all her time to caring for him.

But "It helps me to care for him."

For the reason his boss couldn't explain to her, but which is plainly known to everyone in the Secret Intelligence Services of Canada, the government cannot give him healthcare benefits.

In her early thirties, she now looks older than her age. Since he has become comatose, she has hardly found time to go to the nearby Goodlife Fitness Gym, where she has been a member for the past seven years.

Besides, she is now with his child.

Beneath the façade of her tired look, Ravinah—five foot four, blue-eyed, and tan-skinned—is a very attractive woman. A Canadian of mixed heritage, she claimed, Ravinah said that the ancestors of her father, whom she had never seen, immigrated to Canada from Normandy in France. She never said anything more about him. As regards her mother, all she would say was that "she is the only one I know."

At twenty-five years of age, she had come to learn that the woman she had called mom all her life was not her maternal mother. Dr. Kasson had adopted her when she was a child through an adoption agency. Both Ravinah and Dr. Kasson did

not have an opportunity to know and see Ravinah's blood parents. Attempts to find her real parents in the last four years have not yielded any successes.

She has now stopped looking. She says she has surrendered to fate, to let it take its own course.

"I have my adopted parent. That's all right for me," she says resignedly.

Indeed, Dr. Kasson has loved her and given her a good education. Whether she is her real mother or not does not seem to bother Ravinah anymore.

Her friends say she is not a quiet woman, but since her husband had gone into a coma, Ravinah has withdrawn, and she seems disinterested in many things happening around her.

"You'll need to find somebody you trust to confide in. I am here whenever you need me," Dr. Yin tells her.

"No, I am okay, Doc," she says with a smirk on the right corner of her mouth.

"Really, really, I can have a nurse stay by the bedside for you this weekend. You can take at least one weekend off," Dr. Yin offers while Ravinah is busily nibbling her fingernails.

"Very kind of you, Doc, but...but...I am okay."

"Records show that you two are a married couple. You should be missing him a lot."

"A lot, Doctor, is an understatement. Since we got married, we only lived together for seven months—seven months only, Doc." She pauses.

Then as though she has been desperately looking for someone to talk to for a long time, she apologizes.

"You must be busy, Doc. Some patients may be in need of your presence. Otherwise—"

"No, Mrs. Londe," he interrupted. "We can talk. You can talk to me, if you so wish. I am listening."

She beckoned to him, by sign, that she really

wanted to release something she was holding on to. “It’s our marriage, Doc.”

“Yes, please say it.” He drew closer.

“After we got married,” she continued, “we were only together for a short while. During this time, we haven’t had enough time to ourselves. Ironically, this is the longest time I have been with him, although he is in a coma and it’s the only time, I have found to be together with him. I love him, Doc. And I have just learned that I am with his child.”

Then suddenly there was a code blue alarm, and Dr. Yin was called to attend to a patient in the adjacent ward.

“I must leave you, Mrs. Londe. But I will send Dr. Chris to attend to your other needs—pregnancy, I mean. He’s a pediatrician. It’s standard policy here. If you’re attending to a critical patient, we provide additional care, even if you may have your own family doctor.”

As Dr. Yin started to leave to attend to a code blue announcement, Ravinah quickly stopped him, albeit briefly, and whispered, “*Ravinah*. Just call me Ravinah, or simply Ravi, next time, Doc.”

Of course, when a woman tells a guy to call her by her first name, it means she is interested in him. Not with her.

All she wanted at that point was someone who would listen, who would talk to her. The last ten or so minutes she had chatted with the doctor had been very precious to her. It was the first time in over ten months she had talked to someone who had truly listened.

“Bye for now. But keep praying and take good care of yourself.” Dr. Yin wished her well.

She understood him. He meant she had to go on believing that Kirl would live. She had refused to entertain thoughts of removing him from life

support. The forms were always beside her chair—the chair that had become her bed for the past eight months.

When he was briefly at Mount Sinai in Toronto, she had visited only once or twice every week. She could not be with him every day because of her job. As a forensics accountant in a large financial institution, her presence was constantly required. Sometimes she worked seven days a week.

Then she began to give excuses, and these excuses became many. Her boss had observed that she was sleeping at work most of the time, and that she had changed.

Her friends at work also observed that she had withdrawn from them and had become too emotional ever since she returned from Vienna, Austria; and she got married.

The only thing she remembered was, “We have no other option left but to let you go!”

A letter had followed in a mail, which read in part, “We have noticed that you are not as you used to be. Although you did not tell us, we have learned that your husband has been hospitalized. We think that in the present circumstance, you need some time off. We are giving you leave of absence with half pay. We pray for the quick recovery of your precious husband.”

But Ravinah had explained that her new and hospitalized husband was still in Toronto, and that she had to attend to him. The company had indicated that she should have told them earlier, and they would have accommodated her.

Then came the bad news. Further tests done on Kirl revealed that his condition was more serious than first diagnosed.

So, when her company was talking to her about her job, it did matter to her even more. She needed

it to care for him. Ever since the confusion arose and Kirl's matter took a twist in the House of Commons and put the boss's and the prime minister's jobs at risk, Ravinah had understood the importance of holding on to the job she had.

But she didn't care anymore. Yes, she did not care about so many things now. She did not care that she had not found her biological parents after four years of searching. She did not care that she lived over twenty-five years believing she had a "normal" family.

But for two things she cared.

She cared that he was in the coma.

"He is the only family I have," she once told the head nurse when, together, they changed his position on the bed.

She cared also about the day when he first proposed to her and mentioned to her that she looked and walked "just like my ex."

She cared, too, about her job. She would need it to continue to provide care for Kirl, especially after her request to patriate him to Ingersoll had been approved. And she cared for her job, too, for another reason: "Because the baby will need it."

It is Sunday. She remembers this because a group of the Last Saints Church members passed by the Devil's Handbag to offer prayers and encouragements to those who were tending to their critical patients. Every patient is critical in the Devil's Handbag.

"Be strong in your God, Ravinah," Jane, an elderly lady of Taiwanese descent, said.

The first time she had come to this bed, she had asked Ravinah, "Do you believe in God, sister?" Ravinah brushed the sentiments as unimportant. But in the situation, she is in, any encouragement will do.

"I do," she answered reluctantly.

"You should. Your husband will need you to be strong, and to believe for him. You know, sister, God is closest to those who are suffering. His Son, Jesus Christ, also suffered. So, it is only God who can help you. Pray with me."

They had prayed, and after that, the ladies left. They were now coming here every week. To Ravinah, it is just one other thing she had learned to tolerate, although she had been raised an atheist.

She has been thinking, *these ladies mean well. I might as well be good to them. After all, they are so good to us.*

She touches Kirl's unresponsive hand as she thinks about the praying sisters.

He has lain motionless in this bed cumulatively for over eight months now. All hope had gone until this afternoon. Even the praying sisters had once advised Ravinah to simply "release him to God. He will be in good hands."

Ravinah had replied, "No, sister. I love him. He is the only one I have."

And she has been tempted many times to just pick up those forms there beside her and sign them. That would have been it. She has the right to keep him alive or to sanction that he be removed from the life support machine.

She cannot do so.

"I can't. I know he'll be okay. Besides, I want him to see our baby." This is how she has always answered those who want to convince her to just sign the papers and let Kirl go to eternal rest.

Four weeks after the attempt on Kirl's life, Ravinah discovered that she was two weeks pregnant. It was almost a routine checkup at her family physician when the blood test came back positive. Ultrasound had revealed that she was carrying a boy. Just to be sure—because two months

before she met Kirl, she had been involved in a love affair with another man—she had a DNA test done to determine whether the child she was carrying was indeed Kirl's, and the results confirmed that it was.

As for Kirl's dying body, Ravinah still believed. She hoped and hoped. She would cuddle his hands and talk to him as though he could hear her. She would tell him, "When you wake up, and you will, I will take you for a manicure." She faithfully changed his side, emptied the catheter, and gave him sponge baths.

She had taken photos and photos of him and her with her smartphone. She would position the phone and pose for pictures with him while he lay there. She would speak to the photos as though she was talking to a responsive friend. "You see, this one looks cute. You look as if you want to smile. Smile. Come on, smile at me. I miss your gentle smile. You know, that is what attracted me to you the most. You're smart, charming, and good-looking, but it is your smile that kills me inside. I can't wait for you to smile again," she would soliloquize endlessly.

She had taken photos of her protruding bump too and shown them to Kirl's unresponsive body.

"Here is your own blood. I will call him Kirl Junior," she had promised.

She drained the water out of a large jar of a bouquet of flowers left by the praying sisters last month. She redecorated it and placed it back in its usual place, just near his head, muttering to herself, "You love roses, especially dry ones."

"Is that a nod?" She pecks him.

This was the last conversation, as she thought of them, she was having with him before she fell into a deep sleep.

Suddenly, as Ravinah is still fast asleep, Kirl wakes up. He has been up by quarter to two in the

afternoon. The ward is buzzing with visitors. He is in a corner ward, separated from the other beds by a thick curtain. Before Ravinah's salary was slashed in half, she had kept him in a room. But it had become expensive, so she agreed to have him moved to a common ward. It is still in the Devil's Handbag.

She is awakened by the sound of loud banging. She looks around but does not see anything. When she looks at where the bouquet is supposed to be, she does not see it. It has fallen and scattered in pieces on the floor.

She bends down to try to gather the pieces, and that's when she sees the tip of his right finger moving, a slight movement that she thinks is simply a trick being played on her mind.

"I am not seeing this," she mutters to herself.

She is confused, especially since she has just been awakened from sleep. The fingertip moves. And again, and again. Within a fraction of a second, she has doubted her mind and thinks her eyes are playing tricks on her.

Am I dreaming? These flowers are real. This bed is real and... She touches and feels herself. *I am also real.*

Then it dawns on her that it is really happening. She calls to the station nurse, but no one can hear her. It is afternoon visitation; people are talking and chatting. Any calls in this confusion, at this time, simply disappears into oblivion. She raised her voice and calls with all her might. The nurse comes, and then the doctor, and the entire ward goes abuzz.

Kirl Londe has been recovering well. He has been moved to a paid ward, in a room and Ravinah has gone back to work. She comes to see him every

evening and stays with him on the weekend. For the first three weeks, Kirl has not been talking, and he continues to feed through a tube. But last week, he began to drink soup through the mouth. His rate of recovery has surprised even Dr. Yin, who keeps telling Ravinah, “It is as if he is on a fast-track recovering streak.” And the two of them would laugh.

Then this morning, Kirl talked. Ravinah was at work, and Vivien, an administrative assistant to Dr. Yin who had grown close to Ravinah, called Ravinah, but only managed to leave a message. When Ravinah returned home in the evening, she listened to her answering machine and heard the message: “Hey, Ravinah, it’s Vivien here at SJHCI. Just to tell you that, you know, Kirl spoke for the first time. Details later.” And then she had hung up.

Ravinah was elated. She took a quick shower and spent about twelve minutes in front of her dressing mirror. She was elegant. She planned to look her best. It was not necessary now not to groom herself. She had begun going back to the gym. She is back in shape and form.

Kirl Junior is only two months old now. She has promised herself, “I will not take the baby out of the house until he’s at least three and half months old.” This was also the advice of her family physician because the baby had been born prematurely. A babysitter will be arriving soon to take care of the baby as she rushes off to see Kirl at the hospital.

She leisurely throws on a red dress and then quickly grabs her black high heels. In mid-July in Ingersoll, no one cares to check CP24 about the weather, except, of course, to see if it would rain.

Within a few minutes, she is in her greenish-red Grand Cherokee, ignition on, and off she drives to SJHCI. Within forty minutes, she has arrived. She

takes a deep breath and tells herself, *Be calm, Ravinah, be calm.* She takes the elevator to the fourth floor; and as she checks her face in the elevator mirrors in front of her, she notices that she is crying—the tears rolling and mixing with her perfectly skin-matching makeup.

“Oh no,” she exclaims.

It is too late now. The room is across the hallway on her left; only one door now stands in between. She knocks gently and enters.

“Hi, KF!” she greets him.

“I...I escaped from hell, Ravinah,” he stammers.

“Yes, I know, darling.”

She pauses and then continues, “What you have been through is hell, but don’t worry. You’re now here with me, darling, and that’s all that matters.”

“No, I...I...” he chokes as he struggles to catch his breath. She holds his hand and says, Rest, darling. We shall talk when you’re completely okay.”

He closes his eyes reluctantly, and then he opens them again. As though he has been trying to squeeze out all the strength he possesses, he declares, “Ravinah, I may not continue to be your husband anymore!”

1 | British Columbia, Canada

Vansigra, British Columbia (BC), also known as Salmon's Paradise, is home to 250,000 inhabitants, most of whom are fishermen, and have been at the epicenter of a recent political upset. Until the last parliamentary elections in which the Liberals carried the day, Vansigra has been under the riding of the Conservatives for over 150 years, essentially since its founding by Francois Swarzeer, a British general whose army defeated the French at the Battle of the Siamese in 1863.

It was during this period of extreme conservatism, in 1920, that Coveran Stephen Fenner was born in Vansigra. Not much is known about his childhood, except that at the tender age of sixteen years, he entered into seminary, where he would graduate a Franciscan priest at the age of twenty-one in 1941.

He became the vicar of Qwasadra Parish in 1942, until he was disowned and excommunicated. The story surrounding his excommunication from the Catholic Church is unclear and is deeply embroidered in myth and secrecy. There are many versions to the story. The most believable of these stories is a tale of an enduring romance between a priest and his most loyal secretary. It began in 1945, just at the end of the Great War.

Father Fenner had been conscripted into the war as chaplain and fought on behalf of the Allies in Normandy, France. His bravery and exploits could be seen through the medals he earned and hung precociously on the wall.

But at his return to Vansigra to continue his mission there, rumors began to swell that he had

fathered an illegitimate child while he was in France. The sex of the alleged child was not known. Father Fenner initially rejected the allegations.

Things did not remain the same at Vansigra, and toward the middle of the twentieth century, Father Fenner's message began to change. Even before the rumor of an affair with a nun in Normandy began to fester, Father Fenner had begun to show signs of radicalism in his homiletic orations, commonly known as sermons.

Just before he was suspended, a few months before his eventual excommunication in 1952, he had preached a fiery sermon titled "God and Marriage." The date was Sunday, January 28, 1951; and on that day, in this sermon, he drew similarities between the priesthood of the Old Testament and that of modern-era Catholicism. He had preached thus:

When we contemplate celibacy in the guise of escaping some abnormalities, we are doomed to living a life of lies and malice. The human biological form demands that certain appetites be met. God, in his infinite wisdom, created man with orgies and provided a channel for fulfilling them. And that channel was marriage.

I pray to God that our leaders will one day come to reform our view of celibacy and its laws. I believe that priests should not marry so that they can devote much of their time to the ministry of the Word and to prayer. But what of those who genuinely cannot make progress in this enterprise? Can God reject them if they should come out in the open and say, "See, I love God, just like all of you. But my interest in having a wife, and possibly children, compels me to abdicate my station and marry." Can that man be sequestered from divine emblems?

The ultimate High Priest, Aaron, had children. Can we deduce from this, in biblical parlance, that the priesthood

had all the right of marriage just like all other people?

The rest of that sermon had been lost. But it was not this sermon that got him into trouble, although it contributed to it. It was the story of a child, a daughter. The rumor had become strong that Father Fenner did not only sire a child in war but was having an affair with his secretary and the little child she had was the same child he fathered with her.

After the war, Father Fenner had returned to Vansigra to a hero's welcome. Out of fourteen hundred cavalymen who had been conscripted into the war army from Vansigra, only thirty-seven had returned alive. Father Fenner was among them.

At a ceremony held at Vansigra City Hall on June 6, 1946, exactly two years after the Tuesday on June 6, 1944, D-Day, a throng of over a thousand citizens had gathered to merriment and music and speeches.

"Today, we gather," began Don Teddy, the mayor of Vansigra, "to commemorate the brevity of those who, for the sake of our freedom, have shed blood and sacrificed their own lives. Those who defied the callousness of that one mad man called Adolf Hitler. And those we honor today..."

As the mayor's speech went on, Father Fenner's mind had raced him back into time, nine hours away to Normandy, France. He could only faintly hear the inductions of the mayor's tribute.

He remembered the brief affair with Justie, as he preferred to call her. She was a naïve young nun fresh from the Monterey Missionary Academy in Southern France. She had an aura of sacredness, as her profession called for. But onlookers couldn't avoid clashing and come tumbling down breathtakingly when their eyes met hers.

Hers were not just a part of a complex optical system; hers were infectious—large, greenish-blue,

and terribly tempting two pieces of unique aphrodisiacs. They glittered as they lazily lured into insanity those who came within their circumference defenselessly.

Some had defined her as a queen under the guise of a habit; she embodied the opulence of *haute couture*, the famous of Charles Frederick Worth's grandeurs of mid-nineteenth-century Paris!

He was not immune to her charm, either.

He had seen it coming. He was young, and so was she. She was only twenty years old. He was twenty-five. Theirs was an incremental attraction. He had held her hand, in prayer. It was comforting, he thought. He had brushed it as a sinful thought. But the entire night, he had tossed and tossed in bed.

She is so pretty. Those eyes, he had thought.

Until this one Sunday evening, he had just encouraged the troops. He was resting in bed, casually.

"Evening tea, Father?" she had offered.

"Yes, my dear."

She had brought him tea in a silver military chalice. As he seized it from her, their hands let off. The pressure had been mounting. They both knew it but had intentionally ignored it. This day, however, it had been too strong. No, they were unprepared for it. It then happened. All he remembered was that she was in his arms, breathing heavily.

"Uhm, Father," she had groaned.

"Yes, yes, Justie." He had held on.

Then he it let off.

It was finished.

They rested there in silence for a while, which felt like a very long time. Then she rose up, brushed her hair with her fingers, briskly fixed her white gown, and then left the room. They never spoke a

word.

"This next person is indeed very special in that he is not just a brave soldier, but in prayers and intercessions, he had escorted the souls of the fallen into heaven," the mayor announced.

"This next medal is for Father Coveran Fenner," he shouted. And the crowd responded with a standing ovation.

Father Fenner awoke from his brief stupor; he rubbed his eyes incessantly as though he was just waking up from a deep sleep. He stood up, stumbled a little bit, and accepted the medal to the deafening cheer of the people assembled.

From then Father Fenner became one of the most revered and respected members of Vansigra. To some people, he embodied the rhythm and soul of Vansigra. He was so important to public life in Vansigra that when in 1948 a reference case on whether to criminalize abortion in BC was brought before that province's supreme court, the citizens of Vansigra appointed him intervenor. He had given a powerful submission, and many media outlets said it was the one that criminalized abortion in BC. Abortion had been illegal in BC since 1916.

It was this respectful image that had given Father Fenner leeway in many omissions he had made. For example, in 1949, during an Easter Sunday presentation, Father Fenner had used the F-word in his sermon, and the parishioners just laughed it over. If that had been said by someone else, all hell would have broken loose on them.

And this is the same reason why when he gave that sermon titled "God and Marriage" in 1951, no one cared to implicate or report him to the archbishop of Vancouver, the Right Reverend Dixon.

The rumor was so strong, however. The rumor

was the message itself. It was the rumor that, to many analysts, had brought Father Fenner down, not the city, not the parish, and not Vancouver.

“It was the rumor that judged Father Fenner, and not Vatican,” remarked Jenifer Mackenzie, professor of Psychoanalytical Studies at the Thompson Rivers University, BC, when she was asked to comment after Father Fenner had been excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

The rumor just wouldn’t go away. It began on February 17, 1952, when the *Vansigra Herald* carried on its front page the photo of Father Fenner smooching a little child of between five and seven years. And the caption following that photo had read:

Do not think this is only a parish priest’s show of agape love to his flock of people; this is real. Rumor has it that he fathered this child. Can Vansigra’s morality hero, in fact, be its worst hypocrite?

Meanwhile, the Vansigra Herald is working on another story that seems to strongly suggest that Father Fenner had fathered another child with Sister Justitia, the parish secretary. The story indicates that that child was aborted.

To say that the rumor just couldn’t disappear will be an understatement; the rumor had grown into a large monster that would devour the life out of Vansigra and bring the heralded priest to the limelight. This time, for a very different reason altogether.

Father Fenner had shunned all requests for an interview. And this only worked to fuel the rumor further. The rumor had virtually brought life to a standstill in Vansigra. Mass had been interrupted at Qwasadra Parish.

The Vatican had gotten wind of it. It had secretly

sent Father Fenner a letter to explain whether the rumors were true. He had not responded. The Right Reverend Dixon had been tasked by Vatican to water down the rumor, “and preserve the integrity of the church.”

This also has not worked. The rumor is now a beast with a bulletproof vest. It has managed to duck all the bullets shot from any trajectory.

When Father Fenner was finally suspended from priesthood on March 22, 1952, people began to wonder whether the rumor was not just a rumor after all. He was placed on an indefinite paid leave. They had finally begun to believe that Father Fenner was an imposter.

It began with the announcement that Father Fenner had invited the media to an interview. He told the *KBJ News*, “I want to clear the air and protect those whom I love.”

Then came the morning breaking news at *KBJ News*, with a headline that would keep Vansigra glued to their TV sets for an entire week. The headline read, “Disowned Priest is a *Father!*” In an interview that followed, inhabitants of Vansigra would respond with mixed reactions.

KBJ: Father Fenner, you called for this interview. Why?

FF: I did. I wanted to clear my conscience and live, you know, free.

KBJ: You said you’re the father to a daughter, how is that possible?

FF: Yes, I am. In 1943, I was conscripted into the Canadian Fourth Battalion as a chaplain, Combat Division. I gladly accepted the call.

KBJ: Please, go on...

FF: I was head of an old church in Gregorian Infantry Belt, which was later used as one of the

training centers in the preparations for D-Day. At Gregorian, I fell in love with a young nun who, at the time, I believe, was about twenty or twenty-one years old. We quickly clicked. It was not love at the first sight, but ours was a romance developing through mutual challenges.

KBJ: What was her name—I mean, the young nun?

FF: At the time, she was only known as Sister Justitia. I called her simply Justie. We had a number of secret affairs until I came back to Vansigra in the winter of 1946.

KBJ: Father Fenner, when you say you had an affair, did that involve...intercourse?

FF: No, but yes...you know, it all just happened, but just once... [*Pauses*] I asked God for forgiveness, and I repented of it. But it seems the love was genuine, and we continued to write each other after I came back here.

KBJ: Why are you confessing now?

FF: I did so, on principle. I believed that God wanted us to be pure, especially us who administered the sacraments. Having an affair with a woman—least of all one who is not your wife—to me, is still sinful.

KBJ: What changed?

FF: When I came back, we continued to write one another, as I said. Then one day, she suddenly showed up. I was busy preaching, and at first, I did not recognize her. During communion, she held on to my hand gently and whispered, “My name is Justitia—Justie, from Gregorian.” And immediately, I knew it. She left me a note with an address where to find her, at a hotel.

KBJ: What did you know immediately, Father?

FF: First, it’s true the young girl that is seen with me in the papers is, yes, my daughter.

KBJ: So, is this the reason you called for this interview?

FF: You know, Joe, there are two things on my mind that I would like to resolve through this interview.

KBJ: What are those two things, Father?

Before Father Fenner could answer that question, the program was ended, with the promise that it would be aired the following week. Meanwhile, the story had generated enough interest and had reached the Vatican City, Rome. Through the archbishop of Vancouver, Father Fenner had been called to the Invictus Cathedral in Vancouver and had been warned not to continue the interview on television. He was told that if he disobeyed this order, Vatican could excommunicate him from the fraternity.

“Too later, too late, Father. I can’t stop the airing of the program now. It has already been lined up for airing,” answered Joe Kimble, the KBJ program director.

Father Fenner had called, asking that the rest of the program not be aired. But he had called on the morning of the day it was to be aired.

“You must stop it, or I will be in deep trouble,” shouted Father Fenner.

“Do you know what that would do to our loyal audience—our ratings, too?” Kimble said,

“I don’t care about that,” Father Fenner interrupted.

“I meant to say that they have already been told through ads that you’re appearing,” Kimble said.

“Just cancel it, or, you know...” Father Fenner insisted.

“Okay, okay, hold on just for a little while,” offered Kimble.

“No problem,” said Father Fenner.

Joe Kimble consulted with his superiors for a good fifteen minutes, and when he came back to the phone, Father Fenner, felt as though he had been waiting forever.

“It won’t air, Father,” Kimble assured.

He was relieved and hoped that this would save his job and get him out of trouble with the Vatican.

He was wrong.

The next few weeks, the public had started to ask many questions.

“Why did they fail to air the program?”

“Did Vatican threaten him?”

“We want to know what happened.”

“What about the innocent young girl?”

Then came a shocker in the Crown Network News (CNN), and the report read, “Father Fenner: What Vatican Doesn’t Want You to Know.”

The report read in part:

Our reliable sources have disclosed that Vatican called Fenner to Rome and warned him not to tell his story. We have also earthed information that Fenner initially refused to recant his story, but through pressure and intimidation, he withdrew on the morning of the show.... Deacon George Fleming, an ardent critique of Fenner, was interviewed by our sister tabloid, Voice of Reason, and he revealed that the faithful at Qwasadra Parish had all along suspected that there was something going on between Fenner and Sister Justitia...

FF: As I said, yes, the young child is mine. Justie had no option but to come with her. We had a chat about what we should do about it. We thought of many options. We settled on the idea that we could keep a secret. I kept seeing her in secret, and all along, we had to be careful that no one saw us. But you know—

KBJ: You were spotted?

FF: Yes, yes, I was. The fact is my conscience troubled me. And that was just the beginning...

KBJ: What do you mean, Father—what, is there something else?

FF: Let me explain. When Justie came, we continued where we had left off.

KBJ: You mean you continued the affair?

FF: Yes, we did. And she got pregnant again *(Sobs.)*

KBJ: Let me make sure I am not losing you here. You are telling me—you’re telling the audience, our faithful watchers, that you fathered two children, and not one, with Sister Justitia?

FF: Yes... *(Silence follows.)*

KBJ: Where is the other child?

FF: *(Sobs profusely.)* I don’t know, Joe!

KBJ: *(Hands Father Fenner a handkerchief.)*

FF: Thank you. Thanks, Joe.

KBJ: I get it from your...I mean...tears, she aborted, would that be fair to say?

FF: *(Still sobbing, wipes his tears.)*

KBJ: Why not risk?

FF: No, Joe. I couldn’t do that. Because those are just rumors.

BKJ: So, what is the truth?

FF: The truth is in what I will say next. I did sin, yes.

KBJ: But you had sinned. Adultery is just as much of a sin as murder, isn’t it?

FF: I sinned, fine. But I wouldn’t kill. *(Begins to lecture.)* The child is innocent. Should it die because of the sin of the father? I wouldn’t do that. Giving up a child for adoption because I believe that God has a purpose for every child who comes into this world? Yes, that I can do. You remember the reference case, Joe?

BKJ: So, that's your child. (*Shows Father Fenner a photo from a newspaper clipping.*)

FF: Yes, she is mine, yes. But—?

BKJ: But what?

FF: I did not know she had become pregnant. I was not aware she had my child. I learned about it all when they were already here.

BKJ: Did you do a paternity test?

FF: No. I just know she's mine.

KBJ: She could just as well be another man's child?

FF: Justice told me...after the affair, she continued on with her life. She did not know herself that she was pregnant. She had gone to see a doctor for a common cold when she was given the news that she was pregnant. Asked if she knew the father of the child, she said she knew. The only man she had ever had sex with was me. I know it's true. She doesn't lie.

KBJ: And the second pregnancy, that you also knew was yours?

FF: Yes. And I...

KBJ: Hmm, you wanted to say something, Father?

FF: Yes, but it may be not that important. I have prayed that God uses these daughters in a special way. I've handed them over to God, Joe.

KBJ: I am sure he will. (*Joe resonates, but his facial gesture betrays his words.*)

Many people thought Fenner was still a hero. This time, a hero against the establishment. However, there were some who thought that he had brought shame to the Catholic priesthood. They demanded action from the pope. Vatican was under pressure.

On October 25, 1952, Fenner was officially

excommunicated.

In the press, the Vatican released the following statement:

His Holiness, the Pope, understands that excommunication is a severe penalty and should only be contemplated in times of grave crimes committed against the Holy Catholic Church.

In the days following this egregious rumor, the Vatican has interviewed all interested parties, including Father Coveran Fenner himself. As a result, the investigations have led to the following findings: The Holy See has established that Father Fenner abused the trust and faith of the Church and undermined its authority by going against its orders.

It has further established that Father Fenner had engaged in an immoral conduct with a member of his parish and had, indeed, fathered a child out of wedlock.

The Church has further discovered that Father Fenner convinced the mother of this child to commit an abortion. The clinic where this took place has confirmed by way of documents, but the Church will not disclose the name of the clinic for confidentiality reasons.

Pursuant to the canon law of the Catholic Church under the precepts according to latae sententiae, sentence already passed, Father Fenner has been excommunicated from the Catholic ministry with immediate effect. He will henceforth cease from taking part in the Eucharist or other sacraments and from the exercise of any ecclesiastical office, ministry, or function.

This imposition has been inevitable under the plurality of de jure excommunication decree under the Procurement of a Completed Abortion sentence.

Father Fenner has, however, been spared the condemnation of hell.

*Signed and sealed,
The Vatican*

Fenner was denied any retirement benefits for his work as priest. He was, however, qualified for government pension, and for his service in the war. He moved from Vansigra to Victoria, BC, where in 1955, he formalized his relationship with Justitia in an official marriage. The couple continued to attend a local Protestant Church. Fenner works as a teacher at a Montessori school. He kept a very low profile.

Following the excommunication decree, Justitia, now Mrs. Fenner, had not spoken to the media. She, an introverted personality and described by the parishioners as a calm and reserved woman, preferred to keep all the happenings around her to herself.

She tried to, until recently when she had spoken up to the media following the child abuse scandals by priests. She spoke to the *Victoria Sun*. A crying and dejected woman, Mrs. Fenner revealed that her daughter was very precious to her. She believed God had forgiven them, and that they were happy together now as a complete family.

“[CFS] now calls him Daddy,” Justitia said proudly.

(The *Victoria Sun* apologized to the readers that in conformity with the law, the minor’s name was consigned to initials.)

“I always felt bad when she called him Father Fenner...before the truth came out.” She wiped her tears.

Asked if the allegation by Vatican was true that she had another child with Fenner when she worked as church secretary and had aborted it, she answered, “That is not the complete truth.”

Mrs. Fenner chose her words very carefully.

“You know, the big guys needed to, sort of, find something to justify an excommunication. I think it worked,” she commented with lucid resignation.

When the controversial question was asked as to why she didn’t just abort the first child when she was a nun and this would have saved Fenner and herself from shame, she responded, “She was a cute little angel, and her face still gazes in mine even after all these years. I held her in my hands and saw the spot under her left palm, and with tears, I left her, thought of just leaving her at the doorsteps of an adoption agency. I started crying. I wouldn’t do that. And I have never forgotten about that little pretty face. She has always been in my heart...Oh, poor little soul!”

Justitia also confirmed that Fenner never told her to commit an abortion, and that she had never committed any abortion in her life.

“A very gentle man, Coveran did everything for love,” she began. “He knew they would not accept it, so he did the only thing he knew would spare his little princess: he came out to the public. Coveran is my hero!”

The newspaper story further reported that Justitia and his family were not complete yet. “I pray every day for her wherever she may be; she will always be my little angel.”

And then the reporter asked her, “Do you now feel free?”

“Freedom, being free, freedom is an understatement,” she said.

“Why do you say so?” the reporter asked.

“Because when you hear people say slavery or slave, it never sinks in until you have been there. Slavery is not lack of freedom. It is a conspiracy. It is growing a garden from which you will not get

nourishment. It is digging for gold while you grope in poverty and misery. It is seeing the promise right before you but being forbidden from experiencing it.” She poured out her words, as though they were water drained from a faucet, in a faint Gregorian French accent.

“So, what you are basically saying is that the system is designed to enslave,” the reporter charged.

“Anyone or any system that enslaves another is a shameful loser,” she retorted.

“So...you—” The reporter wanted a follow up, but she stopped him in the middle of the question.

“I mean, I am pregnant again. I am carrying Coveran’s third child.”

2 | Alberta, Canada

Kirl J. Londe lived in a small village community in the County of Coopersville in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. An only child of the Londes, Kirl was born either in the late 1940s or early 1950s. His father, John, was a mechanics technician at Lavender Depot, while his mother, Julia, worked as a private secretary to the Chief of Staff in the premier’s office.

Kirl’s mysterious birth and the discrepancies in his birth date was owing to the depressive condition his mother, Julia, had experienced. She had lost memory for four, full years. When her condition had worsened, John had sent her to her parents in Jacksonville, Florida, USA. He never heard from her until she returned with a toddler boy called Kirl.

Kirl, too, knew very little about his maternal grandparents, except he remembers being told that his grandfather had been brought to America from an area that became known as Northern Rhodesia in Africa in the early 1900s.

Kirl’s passport indicates that he was born in Coopersville, Alberta. However, other records mention Jacksonville, USA, as his place of birth.

His driver’s license described Kirl as five foot nine and weighing 170 pounds. With big hazel eyes, strong legs, and arms, Kirl was easily attracted to girls. Initially a shy boy, Kirl started to become well-spoken in high school when he joined the debating society. Although Kirl was a handsome, good-looking, and charming guy, it was his voice that distinguished him from the rest.

Not so many people were as lucky as Kirl. Some people with big, deep voices had been employed as

news presenters or public announcers. Kirl's landed him a job with the Secret Intelligence Services of Canada (SISC). He was at first noticed during a televised debate on the effects of ash from the Alberta Oil Sands on the surrounding communities. He had represented George Harvey Collegiate Institute. He was in Grade 10.

Although his school came out second, the event had succeeded in bringing him to the attention of the SISC. Then the phone rang. It was from the premier's office.

"Julia!" Premier Franklin Morris called.

"Yes, sir," she answered.

"A minute..." the premier suggested.

"Of course, sir," she responded quickly.

There was a sense of urgency in the premier's voice. Julia was at first afraid.

What have I done, she thought.

She rushed, bypassing the first of the double doors leading up into the premier's office.

"Morning, Julia," Pamela Emerson, the premier's secretary, greeted.

"I am good. I'm good, Pam," she answered. "I..." she started.

"I know, please come in. Everything is fine," Pamela assured.

"Oh, thank God, you read me." She relaxed.

She entered the brightly lit room. This is the second time she was inside the premier's office. The first time she came here was when her boss, Daniel Menken, the premier's Chief of Staff, had taken her along to transcribe the premier's instructions on the resumption of a federal educational fund that had been discontinued ten years prior.

The premier was alone in his magnificent semi oval office. It was huge, about 125 by 225 square feet. It was silhouetted on the northern right with a

large conference room and with a storage room on the far south. It had five windows. It was as outlandish as it was vain. However, its eccentric nature was the glue that held the soul of Alberta together.

"Yes, sir." Julia motioned to Mr. Morris, who seemed to be more interested in the report he was skimming through than in Julia's presence. Without looking at her, he simply shoved an unsealed envelope toward her.

"Here you are," he said, smilingly, still not looking at Julia.

"Please confirm the details and let me know," he instructed.

It was a large brown envelope. Julia was shocked when she opened it. It contained twenty-five photos of Kirl and a video of the debate Kirl had participated in as a student at GHCI.

First Name:	Kirl
Middle Name/s:	Johnson Lukosha
Last name:	Londe
DOB:	Unknown
Address:	205 – 26 th Street SE, Edmonton, Alberta T6N 1M3
Eye Color:	Hazel
Skin Color:	Indeterminate
Hometown:	Coopersville
High School:	George Harvey Collegiate Institute
Grade:	Tenth, going on Eleventh
Interests:	George Harvey Debating Society, Red Cross, Maths Peer Camp, Founders Society for the Mentally Challenged (FSMC)

Julia was visibly shocked by what she was seeing. It was her son, Kirl. And everything recorded on the paper was correct. She began to think hard.

Has he committed a crime? What do all these things mean? she agonized.

The premier could immediately read her demeanor. She suddenly became distraught, tense, and shaken. She was now wiping the heavy perspiration that had begun pouring all over her face.

“No need to be alarmed, Julia. Your kid is very smart and has caught the attention of the SISC.”

She was trying to regain her composure.

SISC! Who are these people? she asked herself.

“Sir, if I should ask, what is SISC, and what do they want from him?” she asked politely.

“Julia, the SISC is like the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of Canada, got it?” he ordered, and again without lifting off his face from the bulk pile of reports he was skimming through.

“Tell your little one, they will be paying him a visit. You must promise to keep it a secret. Felicitations!” he congratulated her.

“Sure, sir,” she responded.

“Please, take the envelope and give it to him. They have originals. You may leave my office now. Thank you for coming,” he said matter-of-factly.

“He is our best agent, KJF-14. He will be on the next plane tomorrow morning. I will have him cleared tonight immediately. I wish you all the best,” said SISC director of intelligence Perry Hurst, whom his peers nicknamed the Boss.

He was on phone with Adrian Lucas, the

operations director for the Nachrichtendienst des Bundes (NDB), or the Federal Intelligence Service of Switzerland. The NDB has requested the SISC for help in defusing tensions between the student body at University of Lugano (USI) and a group they suspected of having Mafia connections. Data on agent sublist placed Kirl ahead of all the best spies in the world connected with learning institutions.

At Calgary University, Kirl had been enlisted as an art student and had spent three years there. Upon his graduation, he was employed by the university as an arts professor. It was during this time that Kirl came across and fell in love with Caroline F. Stephen.

When Kirl met her, Caroline was between twenty-one and twenty-two years old.

She had been in his classes, week after week, month after month; and for nearly two years, he did not notice how beautiful she was. It was until they paired together in a Shakespearean play, *Macbeth*, that he began to notice. He played Macbeth, and she played Lady Macbeth.

Carol, as he now called her, intrigued him with how skillful she was in her role. He would later admit that it was this role that brought the best out of her. But it did more: “It made me begin to realize that all that I was looking for in a woman was all right there in front of me.”

Caroline was always well dressed; very, very intelligent; and a devout Christian. Although she had a problem maintaining her weight, at a hundred and sixty-nine pounds, she did not look a bit overweight for her height. She carried herself with grace, and though the usual love-at-first-sight never

characterized her life, everyone who came across and got acquainted with her ended up being disarmed by her finesse and charm.

She was a good listener. She was not your typical average woman. There was something angelic about her, something pure and divine.

One evening, between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., after a successful rehearsal for *Macbeth*, Kirl asked Caroline out, and she replied, “No, Professor Londe, I have an assignment to do tonight. Sorry, sir.”

This was the third time she had declined his offer, but he was not dissuaded. He had continued to look for opportunities to talk and be with Caroline. Sometimes he gave lame excuses, such as when the cast had been dismissed and he had said, “Hey, Carol, can I see you for a minute?” Fearing that she would again decline, he added, “You know, there is a chance you might win a scholarship for your role in this play.”

“Really!” She drew closer to him.

“Really, yes,” he responded.

He knew then that he had found something she was interested in. Caroline was such a girl that she would not go out with anyone without the company of another person. Her friends knew her as a very principled woman. Boys often complained that she was too sarcastic and proud. And Kirl had just begun to learn what all these boys had experienced with Caroline. But he was not about to give up. In fact, the more she evaded him, the more she intrigued him, and the more he became convinced that this was the type of the woman he wanted.

Then a relief came.

“Can I see you after the rehearsal, sir?” she asked him.

“Oh, yes,” he answered without thinking.

She had asked him at the very beginning of the rehearsals and now he kept looking at the watch. Thirty minutes before the end of their usual routines, he had told everybody that that day he was releasing everyone early. He had wanted to hear what or rather, he knew, whatever she would say to him. Besides, it was one more opportunity to be with her, even if it meant just for a second!

“I just wanted to say thank you,” she began.

“Thank you for what?” he asked, pretending not to have any idea.

“You mean, you don’t know?”

“No, not really.”

“You’re lying.” She giggled as she slapped him gingerly on his forearm.

“Whatever it is, I like what it has done to you, your smile.” He laughed loudly.

“Okay, I am not going to tell you. I will let you guess. Good night,” she offered.

They parted ways that night in a gleeful mood. She looked back at him right at the time he did. They waved at each other smilingly, as if they had not just been speaking to one another. They looked back again, and again.

Then she stopped and ran back to him, held him tightly, and kissed him on the cheek.

In the night, Kirl picked up the phone and dialed a clandestine line, the type that shows only “Unknown” and at the end of the line, a familiar voice answered.

“It worked, sir. Thank you very much,” he reported happily.

“I told you not to worry,” replied Perry Hurst.

“I knew you would pull this one out again, as you

always do in missions,” Kirl praised.

“I am just happy that now you can relax and concentrate on the mission. By the way, I have a new assignment for you. See me for details tomorrow, at the usual hideout,” Perry ordered.

“Sure, sir,” Kirl answered.

That week, Perry sent him to pose as a visiting professor of anthropology at the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN). As their star spy, Kirl was a genius in investigating student connections to organized crimes and espionage. At MUN, the *rat*, as they called their model spies, had discovered a *mole* as they called imposters who pretended to be friendly spies but actually spied for the enemy. This mole had been leaking information to the Syrians in the faculty of molecular engineering, for the development of a protocol used in the ambulation of fossil fuels for the possible manufacturing of uranium bombs.

Never in his over-ten-year career as a spy had Kirl been so distracted as he was this week. He did the job—it was almost as though it was someone else doing it through him—but he succeeded in identifying the mole and bringing her to the attention of the SISC. But he had something bigger on his mind. He could not stop thinking about her. Caroline had weighed so heavily on his mind that he couldn’t sleep.

Before he went to bed that evening, he took a pen and quickly removed a writing pad from a drawer and scribbled a few lines. Early the next morning, he read them. It seemed illegible at first, so he edited them and thought, *if only I had a way of sending this to her right now, I could transfer them to her.*

Then he remembered: “Every student’s name is in the database.” He became excited.

A database was a compilation of all the names of

not only students but of almost the entire population. He recalled how his mother had been served with a large brown envelop by former Premier Morris and all the particulars of his were recorded. This came from the same database.

He opened his diary and entered her date of birth or DOB, which he knew from the university list. He entered her last name, *Stephen*, and then *14/04/46*. Numerous images and names came up. But nothing resembling Caroline. He did it again, and this time, he entered the initial *F* for her middle name and sighed. “Hmm, I have never bothered to know what it stands for.” He still wasn’t any closer to Caroline.

“I will page the Boss,” he said.

He did, and after about two hours, it seemed at first that the Boss had also come up with nothing.

“Write down the following number,” Perry dictated.

“Thank you, sir.”

Kirl wanted to ask how the Boss got the number but decided not to. *He can easily get it from the local sources*, he comforted himself. Then he made the call.

“Who is this?” she asked.

“Me. Guess,” he mocked.

“Yeah, you think I can’t recognize your voice; that’s professor.” And before he could say another word, she followed up with, “How did you get my landline number?”

“Don’t worry about that. I have something for you,” he digressed.

“I am waiting for it,” she whispered

“I have already left it in a sealed envelope under your desk,” he disclosed emphatically, knowing that it was a risky undertaking in case what he wrote leaked to the class, which might land him in trouble.

“Good night, professor,” she said.

“Good night,” he responded.

The very next day, Caroline retrieved the envelope from her desk, and it contained a poem.

*You amaze me, you amaze me, O Carol
With your voice, gentle
And your touch, gentler
How can a poor soul as mine forget?
Your tender looks, your cheerful eyes,
How beautiful you are, how cute.*

He waited and waited and waited, but there was no response from Caroline to confirm receipt of the envelope or the poem.

After two days, and still no response, he started to become jittery. For the first time, he felt like he was being humiliated by a woman. In his espionage career, he had never been rejected by a woman. In fact, he had no trouble getting rid of the women he called “nuisance” in his life. He used women, especially fellow agents, as ragdolls; and having sex with them, for him, was like a sport. He had become very comfortable in it; he never thought any woman would dare shun him.

“Am I wrong or is she just strong?” he rhymed.

When minutes became hours, and hours became days and weeks, Kirl felt resigned. He almost started cursing when his phone buzzed.

It was Caroline.

She said nothing except “Thanks.” And then she hung up.

That was the last he would hear from her in the following four months. The school recessed for four months. Kirl was assigned to Moldova to attend an Olympics preparatory flame fanfare.

Kirl spent the entire time at the fanfare in the company of beautiful models—blondes, brunets, and very successful. These girls were specifically selected to ingratiate the spies at what they did and to make a lot of money doing so. For a while, Kirl forgot about Caroline, but did he?

Why, why can't I simply forget about this girl and move on? he deliberated. Meanwhile, as he was busily thinking, a gorgeous woman slanted across his chest and caressed all his delineations as she stroked his face and laboriously kissed his beardless cheeks. As she did so, his mind kept racing to CalgaryU, and he couldn't stop thinking about Caroline.

He was thinking about her when the woman moved back up and squinted at him and kissed his cheeks. He smiled.

“Why are you smiling?” inquired the gorgeous Karinenka, the Russian model who was stroking his chest.

“I know you're enjoying this, babe.” She cuddled closer to him.

He laughed again, jokingly. Then he shouted at her, “Get off of me, get out of this room, get out, and don't come back.”

“Why, what is wrong with you?” she answered as she straightened her G-string tanga over her vaginoplasted genitalia, properly aligning it within the boundaries of her highly liposuctioned side. She then picked up her pearl necklace and then her open-cup bra and threw it casually over the overtly augmented mammoplasty breasts. She jostled harshly into her high-heeled shoes and banged the door of room 164 behind her.

He had always loved big boobs implanted with the miracle of cosmetic surgery. He had always

enjoyed the blessings of Botox science. He had always been lost in the ambience of the revolutionary lip-sculpture.

But not today.
And not now.
And not this time.

“Carol!” he said her name loudly. Then he picked up a book under the drawer astride his bed and began to get ready to read it.

It was titled *The Lunar Solar Stellar Hypothesis*, coauthored by Alyssa Alexopoulos and Georgios Zervos. As he flipped over the first page, a small, folded piece of paper fell off the pages. He picked it up and carefully unfolded it. There were only two letters and a number.

“What does *L-P* stand for, and what about 500?” He tried to remember.

Kirl could not figure out the significance of the letters and the number. He immediately went over the past—especially to the time he was only twenty, when he began to receive strict training on the fundamentals of espionage and international spying. In the first four years of initiation into the SISC program, he was only subjected to the study of science and astrology.

“I think I know what this note is—what it means.” He said it smilingly.

He remembered it took place at what they only called the Academy. The letters stood for *library placement*. And, “I borrowed books under number 500.” He laughed mockingly at himself.

At the Academy, Kirl had fallen in love with astrology. He was intrigued with how the cosmic events determined the organization of human minds and affairs.

“It is like the human brain is an extension of the cosmosphere. Wow, what a discovery! These luminary bodies harbor all the secrets of life,” He spoke to himself as he recalled his first introduction into the world of stars, moons, and how they shaped life and events on earth.

Kirl was so good at astrology that besides earning himself various awards, he had since developed a habit of reading an astrology book, or books, each month in order to update himself with the latest discoveries in the field.

“Astrology sharpens my mind,” he confessed as he browsed the table of contents to the second edition of the book by Alexopoulos and Zervos, two famous Greek trailblazers in astronomical technologies.

A few pages into the reading, Kirl’s eyes began to get heavy. He switched on the TV channel, although he did not have any intention of watching it. His grip on the TV channel selector suddenly began to loosen until he could not control his hand any longer. Kirl was already snoring.

Back at CalgaryU, it was business—or perhaps school—as usual. Through the scholarship Kirl had helped secure for her, Caroline was now enrolled at the Alberta Institute of Art (AIA), about eighty kilometers from Calgary City. Kirl had visited her four times in the space of three months, and still felt as though it was not enough.

“You’re so different,” he began.

“Why, not really,” she exculpated herself.

Not even Caroline knew what Kirl did. They all knew that he was a diligent arts professor. Like all secret agents, Kirl had vowed not to disclose what

he did. Not even to Caroline. And, in fact, the Boss had encouraged him to go for Caroline because “she can provide you with a better front.” But Kirl had never felt for any other woman like he did for Caroline.

“Can I at least hug you before I leave?” he begged as he opened the door to his Ford Escort III XR3.

“No, that is how it all begins. All boys are liars. They pretend they love you when all they want is sex,” she told him boldly.

“You.” He pointed at her as he placed the key in the ignition.

“Good night, and please drive safely.”

“Thanks, and see you again,” he says.

It would take 364 and a half days—basically an entire year—before Caroline could consent to a marriage proposal from Kirl. Even with that, she had a condition.

“As long as you promise that there will be no kissing, no sex before marriage.”

He had thought hard about it. Then he came up with a plan. “I will endure until wedding day, but I will keep mistresses around to keep out the pressure.”

Then he remembered what she had said when the two of them had gone on a romantic walk along Calgary’s Chinook seaside. They had rested on the swinging hammocks in the Bayview Mountains. She said it matter-of-factly, “I hate cheaters.”

He pretended he did not hear her.

“Darling, the Senate president just named me delegate leader to the Kremlin,” he began. “We leave tomorrow afternoon.”

They had been married for barely six months—well, if you put a honeymoon of two days on the Caribbean cruise to the Bahamas, it was six months and two days. Already, marriage was proving to be a big blunder for his work—his real work as a spy, not his cover work as a professor.

The Boss had asked him, “How is marriage so far?” And he had answered, “So bad so far for the work, sir.”

He was right.

She demanded that he came back home on time. She had his timetable, of course—a bogus one. So, he had to adhere to it. They had shared responsibilities at home. She was in charge of the living room, the laundry room, and the washrooms; he was responsible for the bedroom and for cleaning outside the house.

“For how long you will be out this time?” she had begun. And before he could reply, she continued, “I hope it will be the last time. Just last month, you were out seven times, and the lawn outside is drying.”

“Don’t worry, darling. This is what is paying for all the bills. As long as we get to earn something,” he comforted her.

“But what about those...those.” She choked.

“Those what?” He jerked back.

“Those condoms I found in your jacket,” she said angrily.

Kirl was taken aback. “She has discovered,” he mumbles to himself.

He was in no shape to answer that question right away. But he also knew, from experience and based on the *New Secret Agent Manual*, that milliseconds could cost one the truth. He had to buy time as he framed a good lie.

Caroline, now Mrs. Londe, was taking family

planning pills, and condoms were not part of their bedroom routines. So now that she found condoms in his pockets, he had some explaining to do. To buy some time, he dropped the cup of hot chocolate he was imbibing.

“Sorry,” he said; he meant sorry for dropping the cup and not for having condoms in his pockets.

Then he laughed deliriously.

“Why are you laughing?” she charged at him. “Don’t you know that no adulterer will inherit the kingdom of heaven. Besides, you are cheating on me, Kirl.”

“Come on, relax,” he began. “No one is cheating here. By the way, that thing called heaven actually doesn’t exist. Don’t be mendacious to yourself.”

“Who told you it doesn’t exist? As I always tell you, Kirl, you must believe in God.”

“Carol, I thought we agreed to respect each other’s philosophies. God is a conspiracy, and don’t be wasting your time going around and saying there is a God. If he did exist, why would he be in hiding for billions of years?” Kirl lashed out on Caroline.

“A conspiracy? God is real—as real as I know you are a man. He’s my Father,” she answered.

“Look, Carol, I don’t want to quarrel with you over a trivial issue here. Have you ever taken time to understand the evolution of species? You will learn that we are masters of our own destiny. Charles Darwin settled it in his *The Origin of Species*. Stop believing in those lies about a God somewhere. If it were so, I would be the first to have met him. Whom have I never met on this earth or another?” he fired back with a question.

“You see, even with all your travels and knowledge, you don’t know that God came to earth and lived among us. Jesus is not just the Son of God—he’s God!” she charged on him.

“Ha-ha! Now see what you are saying, it makes no sense even to you, doesn’t it?” he pokes fun at Carol’s attempt to explain God.

“Why does he hide, if he did exist, if he ever had a form? You see, Carol—I beg you, try to be logical and reasonable. People like you have wasted their life trying to chase after the wind. My friend, God is what you think he is. Jesus was just a Jew, a good philosopher at the break of the first century. And by the way, he died. God wouldn’t die, would he?” he gulped into Caroline’s throat.

“The devil has deceived you, Kirl,” Caroline accused him.

“No way. No way, my dear. Never ever again contemplate the idea of the devil. He doesn’t exist, either. Morality is what helps you solve pertinent problems. If good or bad seals the deal, so be it.” Kirl was on his toes shouting at the top of his voice.

Caroline dropped a tear, and almost stumbling on a corner chattel, she found herself in Kirl’s arms.

“Be careful, darling. You nearly broke your ankle,” Kirl chimed in.

Caroline did not say a thing. She simply grabbed her keys and started to leave the kitchen. She stopped, looked intently at Kirl, and then said, “Well, you will know someday, and I just pray that it wouldn’t be too late. I pray for you, Kirl. I do, you know.”

“Know what?” he answered.

“That God is, and that he rewards those who diligently seek after him,” she said with a look of concern on her face.

“Stop that nonsense called prayer. Stop wasting your time. My stars tell me I will reincarnate into a tiger, and that’s all I have ever wanted. So, stop telling me there is this or that after death—you people just deceive the ignorant in order to continue

to dominate weak minds. There's one positive thing about it," Kiri let off, and after a long sigh, he tried to approach Caroline for a hug.

"No. Don't touch me. You haven't explained about those condoms to me yet," she dismissed his gurgles.

"You should know better, darling," he said.

"Know what? Are you cheating on me, Kiri? Tell me if you are now!" she roared at him like a lioness who had not fed in a long while.

"They are part of the props for the upcoming play, the modernization of *Romeo and Juliet*," he lied.

"But you didn't tell me about this play. What is going on, Kiri?" she wanted to know.

"I forgot. Sorry, it won't happen again," he assured her as he approached her. He held her by the waist, tickled her and gently caressed her nipples, and he knew it was her weakness. She gave in, and they ended up making love to each other—a truly great and unexpected one.

Then a phone rang.

A familiar voice spoke at the other end of the line.

"Caroline, I am so sorry. Your father left us in the wee hours of yesterday. I was trying to get a hold of you but wasn't successful," she sniveled. Then she stopped crying and said, "He died peacefully, Caroline. My heart is at peace."

"I will be there for the funeral, Mom. Please be strong," she sniffed.

Both Caroline and her mom had known this day was quickly coming. Fenner had been diagnosed with prostate cancer two years earlier. Since then, he had been in and out of the hospital. Caroline had

been to Victoria to see him at least once every month. They were very close. The last time she visited him, he was hospitalized.

"Caroline, sorry I couldn't come to your wedding," he started to apologize.

"Shh, Dad, please let me do the talking." She stroked his hand.

"As long as I receive your blessings, I am okay. That is all that matters to me. Mom was there, and so was Uncle Jean-Paul. He flew all the way from Marseille. Dad, I'll always pray for you," she comforted him.

They had sat there in silence for the most part. She had told her mom to take a break and just stay at home as she stayed there with him. She was there for the whole week. During that time, they had discussed everything from inheritance to her new husband to her plans for the future.

"Caroline, I need you to take care of Lori," he begged her.

Lori was Caroline's only sister. Their parents had tried their best not to bring up the story of their other daughter, whom they said had been offered for adoption and could not locate. They gathered together to pray for her "lost" sister many evenings. This happened when Caroline was a teenager and Lori was a little girl. But as they grew older and became involved in their own affairs, the memory of her "lost" sister faded.

Then he changed the conversation. And as though he had gained some extraordinary strength, he turned and looked intently into her eyes and said, "You must love him, Caroline. Please promise me you will love your husband. Please stay with him till death do you part."

That was bittersweet for Caroline.

During their brief period as a married couple, she

had already experienced more emotional turmoil than others experience in a ten-year-old marriage. It was only two weeks ago when she was even doubting the marriage itself; she had twice in the last eight days contemplated divorce. She had tried to love him, but he had continued to make her life hell. He traveled constantly, and she had twice found condoms in his pockets.

She had stumbled upon a cache of weapons he claimed he collected as mementos, and she had been very suspicious of what he hid in *that* briefcase.

She knew he was a passionate and patient lover—in fact, he had taught her a lot about lovemaking techniques, and she had been a fortunate beneficiary of their great bedroom escapades.

At first, she was very afraid that he might inadvertently do what he did to her with other women. She knew this would bring on problems because “he’s such a great lover. No woman can resist.”

She was right. And wrong at the same time.

“I will try, Dad. I will try to love him,” she promised her father.

So, when she heard that he was now gone, all this came back to her. It was now almost a year ago. And there was a problem. Things had gotten worse than the last time she spoke to her father. She now had more proof that Kirl was not who she thought he was.

He had continued to leave her for abnormally prolonged periods of time. He carried weapons, and he read newspapers and magazines like crazy. Then when he had forgotten to lock the pantry to which she had no key, she saw a rare collection of newspaper cuttings of people she had no idea who. There were pornographic materials, cameras, and a

stash of photos of beautiful women. There were also knives, assault weapons, condoms, and other disturbing stuff she did not recognize.

Then there were all these books—piles and piles of books.

Does my husband study stars? What are all these astrology books? That’s why he reads horoscopes incessantly, every day.

She further observed that in the stockpile of his hidden library were hardcover books specifically placed and still in plastic.

The Secrets of Ancient Civilizations and the Mayan Conspiracy. *What kind of a book is this?* she wondered. *What and why?* When she noticed something peculiar, she snapped, *This book also. He gave it to me on my birthday. He said it would help me in my forensics.* The Marriage of Anthropology and Forensics: How It Helped to Solve the Herodias Riddle *by Rover Faucette. I guess he returned a copy for himself.*

She started to think that Kirl was infamous, and even mysterious. However, this did not disturb her. She simply brushed it aside as his obsessions. But the photos, condoms, and weapons...*Is my husband a sociopath, too?*

She had confronted him about it. He reacted very badly, and she thought, *He looks just like the devil.*

He warned her not to tell anybody about it, or “You’ll put both of our lives in danger.”

“In danger?” she asked.

“Why should I put you in danger, Kirl? You’re putting me in danger of disease and what-have-you,” she sputtered violently.

He pushed the door wide open and drove off in the night. When Caroline woke up the next morning, she saw that Kirl had not returned.

Instead, she found another man in her living

room very early in the morning.

“You scared the hell out of me.” She jerked as he set alight his Cuban cigar, lamely smiling.

“And how the heck did you get in here?” she tried to investigate.

He was still sitting quietly on the corner couch folding his legs and now smoking his cigar. He was a six-foot-tall figure, lanky and weighing two hundred pounds plus, she estimated. He was as huge as the dragon-like moustache he wore. He spoke with a slight Germanic accent; the Boss’s ancestors came from the Rhineland area in Southern Germany. He grew up with his grandfather, who had immigrated to Halifax in the early 1920s and worked as a sailor. His grandfather had been lucky to acquire a piece of land in Nova Scotia and had become a very successful farmer.

But the Boss had proved himself in mixed martial arts (MMA) and was the first Canadian MMA champion. He easily won the attention of the newly minted SISC. He rose quickly through the ranks and became assistant DI to the unorthodox General Frank Porter. Upon the retirement of General Porter, the Canadian Parliament had no difficulties ratifying his candidature as the best replacement for General Porter. He received an overwhelming vetting across party lines to become now the longest-serving DI in Canada. He was as feared as he was loved. He had once addressed a graduating class of cadets and warned them, “I would rather be feared than loved. Call me what you may. I am the Boss because that’s who I am.” That was when he acquired the nickname *The Boss*.

“Come and sit here, Caroline Fenner Stephen, born April 14, 1946, in Paroy (Seine-et-Marne) at Cathédrale Saint-Étienne de Sens,” he said.

She sank down in her middle couch, and already

she was palpitating uncontrollably. She had never told anyone about the details he had just released, not even Kirl.

How does this man know so much about me? she contemplated.

Who is this man, and why is he here instead of my husband? she kept asking herself in her mind.

Then he motioned for the ashtray, and he broke the silence that had begun to build up.

“I am Perry Hurst, director of intelligence. Kirl is my agent,” he said, as though he was not telling Caroline something new, something she had not known before.

She even sank farther into her seat. She squeezed her eyes repeatedly, and almost as though she was dreaming. She looked mystified, lost, and confused.

“Agent? For what?” she asked.

“Kirl is Agent KJF-14 under the SISC program. He’s a secret agent. He does not work for CalgaryU. That’s only a front. He works for the Canadian government as a spy,” he told her while looking her straight in the eyes.

Then the Boss explained that she was now a part of the system. He said that Kirl could not function if his wife was suspicious of his every move. He warned her that she could not disclose to anybody that Kirl was a spy. She would be breaking the law, and she could be punished. He emphasized that she had to cooperate fully and give Kirl all the support he needed.

Then he took her by the hand, just like his own little daughter, and walked her up to the second floor of the house. He told her to remove her top blouse.

“No, I can’t do that. What do you want, sir?” She was holding her hands tightly over her breasts.

“Relax, you’re not going to be raped. You have a

chip in the upper section of your back. I want to show you,” he clarified.

“A chip!” She was startled.

“Yes,” he answered.

The Boss explained how they had put her on some “mild drugs” and performed a “small operation” on her when she had gone for a breast pulp scan at her family doctor’s. He explained that the SISC worked in cooperation with her family doctor to accomplish that. He said that the purpose was to protect her, Kirl, and national secrets. He said that every agent who chose to marry had to agree to be monitored, and this included his family.

“So, you see me all the time?” she asked, not believing her own words.

“No, and yes. And only if we think you could be in danger,” he reassured her.

Since the revelation, Caroline had acted with care and had cooperated with the SISC. She had had a long chat with Kirl, and they agreed to set parameters. She was mostly concerned about his fidelity, even if it meant to accomplish a mission for the nation. She was concerned that he could contract something like HIV virus or any sexually transmitted disease and transmit it to her.

Since the revelation, Caroline stopped undressing herself or using her own washrooms.

Since the revelation, Caroline withdrew herself from sexual relations with her husband. “I want to, but I am afraid,” she told him one day when he complained about their lack of coital activity. As the days progressed, they grew more and more apart.

She was thinking seriously of a divorce, but she feared for her life. “He might take it the wrong way,”

she reflected.

She began to pray for him and for their marriage. *If only he can stop being a spy. I love him.*

But all Kirl had known in life was spying; he knew nothing else. What complicated the matter was that he was the most successful spy Canada had ever produced. Out of his 678 missions so far, he had failed in only seven, giving him over 98 percent success rate—an unprecedented feat in Canadian history. As such, he was the very best, the finest, the cream of the cream.

“I am not a bad person,” he told Caroline. “I only deal with really bad people,” he fumed.

“But why should you choose to deal with bad people? Just be a common man and live happily,” Caroline suggests.

“Carol, understand me. Without us the country is naked, and your lives are in danger. We provide agile surveillance on interests that concern us all. You get me?” Kirl explains.

“No, no, Kirl. Stop lying. Everyone knows what the secret agency does. It merely perpetrates lies and obfuscations. Do you have to get in someone’s pants to defend a nation?” Caroline stomped her feet.

“You may not agree with me, but it is chiefly because of our activities that the world is safe.” Kirl turned his back on Caroline and moved toward the exit door.

“You don’t make the world...” Caroline starts, but she is interrupted.

“You think we haven’t protected the world? You don’t know what I know, *Caroline*,” Kirl answered.

“Really, what do you know? If what you know is the different shapes of womanhood, their twisted curves, and the limited protection you choose to

grant those who are governed—is this what I don't know, Kirl?"

"Bottom line, my friend, is that you're in. The SISC is like any other spy agency, you cannot escape. You're either dead or in. And I am merely trying to save your life."

"I know. I understand. I am already dead. In fact, I died the very moment I said yes to you. But I want to be buried with my dignity. But you, if you don't change, you'll go to hell." Caroline, now very furious, threw all she could at Kirl.

Kirl controlled himself from throwing any tantrums; he simply walked back; tried to take Caroline's hand, which she refused; and whispered into her ear, "I have your back covered, sweetheart."

"Kirl...Kirl..." Caroline called to Kirl in a low and measured tone.

Kirl, who had been almost out of the house, stopped, turned slowly, and gun-pointed his right index finger at her and responded, "Hmm...what now?"

"Do you kill, Kirl? Have you killed people?" Caroline asked.

"No. Not in peace. Not without cause," Kirl answered.

"I married a murderer, didn't I?" Caroline spoke without looking at Kirl.

"Come on, Carol, let me tell you something. And as you heard the Boss, you cannot tell anyone outside of this space. We do it when the mission calls for it. There are really, really bad guys out there, you understand?" Kirl jabs back.

"Your own people? And even loved ones?"

"No. Bad leaders and moles, I mean—those who are burnt at sabotage or espionage, we burn them, you see," Kirl asserted, gazing intently at Caroline.

"You also make other people poor, miserable,

and—" Caroline fails to complete the statement.

"That's not true, what you read in the papers. That's what has made you enjoy life and peace. If we don't disturb other regions—third world regions, for example—where would our additional resources, and even power, come from? We do all this in the interest of freedom and peace on a global scale, you catch?" Kirl stated, matter-of-factly.

"You—all of you are evil. Devils. How honestly would you think you're bringing *freedom* when you disrupt peace and change innocent regimes?"

"How do you think those people feel? You create wars and then pretend you're helping to bring peace?"

"You steal their resources and then claim that they are poor, struggling, weak states. Where is the love here?" Caroline was going out of her mind, and she broke into heavy sobs.

Kirl ignored the plodding from his wife, banged the door shut behind him; and before he got on his motorcycle, he repeated a thought that had been brewing in his subconscious: *Why one can conquer all and fail to conquer one woman, his wife, is a mystery to me!*

As for Caroline, she still did not buy into it. She had tried to forget all about it and accept Kirl's situation, but she couldn't bring herself to the understanding that Kirl had been cheating on her all the while. Of course, he was fulfilling a national assignment, but how many girls did he need to sleep with to make Canada safe?

Should he sleep with every model and pretty Jean to win Canada a place in the community of nations? What about me, should I suffer because the whole nation is being kept at peace. What about my peace?

All these questions were running through her mind. She was distraught. She had sunk into depression and begun to lose weight. She was afraid that if she continued with this “marriage,” she would be sick.

After two years of marriage, she asked Kirl for a separation.

“I have consulted with the bureau, and I am reliably advised that separation will only be accepted if we continue to live under the same roof and don’t give the neighbors or public the impression that we are separated,” he told her.

“Fine,” she said.

“What about our relatives, shouldn’t we tell them?” she asked.

“No.”

“What of *this* chip?”

“I will find out.”

Caroline and Kirl had now been on separation for over eighteen months, and he had been away on a mission in Europe, and that was all she knew. She had thought about just finalizing the divorce so she could carry on with her life.

But the piece of advice from her father haunted her every day, “You must love him, Caroline. Please promise me you will love your husband.”

These words had been the only anchor that had held the now-defunct marriage together. Had it not been for these words, she would have attempted to end the marriage, despite the bitter resistance she would have run into from the SISC.

Today, however, the news that her father had passed away was both bad news and good news. It was bad news because the most important man in her life, her own father, had died. It was good news because she would be released, she thought, from the duty her father had imposed on her—that she must love her husband.

“Let me start getting ready for the funeral.” She beckoned to her mother.

“Bye for now, sweetie. And see you soon,” Justitia called out.

3 | Nunavut, near the North Pole

Looking at her, the people around her would never think that a tiny woman like her would command such respect and honor. She had everything to look for: Power, education, money, and everything a woman longed for. Except, of course, if one happened to know her very closely, one could not help but be struck by her sense of hopelessness. For now, at least, and just before she adopted her daughter, Ravinah Kasson, whom she loved with every breath in her, this uncomfortable feeling troubled her and festered hard in her soul.

Sinking deep into her lavish and comfortable swivel, she cuddles herself past her squatting position and got herself lost in what happened to be both grandiose and painful thoughts.

“I have so much to be thankful for—why am I still not happy? Ravinah means the whole world to me. Why am I still unsettled within?” She held her tiny hands between her eyes as she squeezed the tears from her eyes.

Indeed, Dr. Ravinder Kasson was a very powerful woman: Five undergraduate degrees, three master’s degrees, and two doctorates in pharmacology as well as in general medicine—all attested to this fact.

“I did everything well. I did everything with all my heart, except, of course...except...” She began to sob.

Each time she thought this kind of thought, she could not hold the tears. It had been an elephant in the room. As she was getting older, none of all the accolades that now adorned her professional and

career life made her happy. In this regard alone, she felt like a failure.

At school, she was always a very intelligent girl. When she went to university, she had forgone all the other titivations and encumbrances of life and focused only on education and success. She did it. She succeeded and had done so throughout her career. Twice she was voted the most influential lady under the age of forty in the entire Western Canada. At Plymouth Regional Hospital (PRH) in Iqaluit, Nunavut, where she was now head of the hospital, she was celebrated as a model leader.

As though getting up from a hangover, she yawned ungracefully; but thankfully, no one else was here inside her magnificent corner office. And that voice, that irritating voice that has been eating at the very core of her being keeps bothering her.

“You wasted your years pursuing things that don’t satisfy you. You have all but your own blood child,” the voice clogged her mind.

For once, she admitted to herself. She had refused marriage several times in her life. By the time she was forty-eight years old, she was still a virgin. Then she met Jonah, then a fifty-two-year-old civil engineer, and they got married.

Their attempts to conceive had failed.

Tests conducted on her showed that, apart from the complications of menopause, she had a biological defect she was never aware of. She now knew that had she known this in her late twenties or early thirties, it could have been rectified. But no, she was too late, and now she must accept the fact that she would have no chance of bearing her own offspring.

She was devastated, until, of course, when they adopted her in the 1950s.

They named her Ravinah: “Ravi” from *Ravinder*

and “nah” from *Jonah*.

They had gravitated to the idea of an only child. Ravinah had been brought up smart, embracing all the rudiments of learning and getting a full scholarship to the business school. She could have become a doctor like her adopted mother, but she was not interested in medicine. She wanted, instead, to have her own business. So, she chose to pursue business with a passion, becoming the first female forensics accountant. Prior to her being employed by the banking industry, she had been employed as chief accountant at PRH, where she worked for three years.

For twenty-one years, Ravinah did not know that Dr. Kasson and Jonah were not her real parents. All she knew was that they loved her a lot; and like any normal kid growing up, she was punished for being unruly and rewarded for doing well. She grew up a very balanced young woman, although she had a grave repugnance for God. Throughout her growing-up years, she identified herself as an atheist, just like both of her parents did.

For over twenty-two years, as she was busily raising Ravinah, and Jonah was an ever-present helper beside her, she had forgotten about her deficiencies, especially her inability to bear children. But now that Jonah was dead and Ravinah had moved on to Ingersoll, she had more or less fallen into depression.

“We need to let her know the truth, Ravinder,” Jonah had implored just before he passed away. “She needs to know that we are not her biological parents,” he had suggested.

It was very painful, but Dr. Kasson had to do it.

“Ravinah, your dad has something to tell you—I too have something to say,” she had said, a sense of betrayal and angst rolling sharply across her face as she uttered those words.

“You were adopted, my daughter. Your mother and I had difficulties trying to conceive, so we adopted you,” they told her. And then Jonah had added, “We love you so dearly like our own child, as you know.”

Ravinah was devastated with the news. But she had moved on. For over four years, she had tried to locate her real parents, but without success. She gave up searching for her biological parents and focused her energy on her career instead.

From time to time, she had dreams of her biological parents, but those were simply dreams. She would wake up with a sense of emptiness.

I am lucky I have a mother who loves me and has supported me throughout my life growing up, she would encourage herself.

When she got her letter in the mailbox, she saw that it simply said, “Remember the Memorial Day!”

And she could not stop thinking about her mother, who just a month earlier had been hospitalized for a minor stroke. Dr. Kasson was well liked by friends, and her colleagues at the hospital where she worked had been calling Ravinah and expressing their concerns about her mother’s condition.

“She keeps saying that she is missing you very much. Can you come back to live with her, Ravinah?” a long-time friend of Dr. Kasson’s,

Mirabella, said in a telephone conversation.

“I will call her. I have been talking to her this whole week,” Ravinah said.

They met on Memorial Day. Jonah had been dead for five years now.

Dr. Kasson stared intently at Ravinah, as though she was seeing her for the very first time. Then she shouted rather gawkily, “My daughter is now a *lady*.”

Mirabella was very surprised at her friend’s sudden burst of emotions.

4 | Alberta, Canada—Europe—Ontario, Canada

In the outskirts of Coopersville, Alberta, for over five years now, stood a sculpture of cherubim guarding above the grave in the Redemption Cemetery. And the epitaph, “Safe in Heaven,” remained engraved on the tombstone.

Both Julia and Caroline visited the gravesite every month—one for an only son and the other for the only man she had ever known. In tandem, they changed the flowers and combed the lawn around the grave. Caroline always offered a prayer. “God, Father, into your hands I place his soul. Amen.”

And theirs had been like the modern-day story of Naomi and Ruth, the once daughter-in-law and mother-in-law now brought closer by the death of the man, they both loved dearly despite his flaws.

“My daughter, you are still very young. Get married and sire children. Enjoy yourself. Life is too short,” she advised Caroline as the two sat near his grave meditating over the inscription:

RIP
Kirl J. L. Londe,
Beloved Son and Husband
“Safe in Heaven”

And Caroline meant it when she suggested the epitaph. She had come to know a man who never took time off to rest. In their brief marriage of four and half years, she had seen him for less than 804 days. Most of that time she saw him was also spent on quarrels and heated talk. It was mostly because

she had not approved of his spy career. It was as though she was married to the SISC. She had no say in his decisions; he was here today, and the next thing she would hear was that he was flying to another country, another assignment. He must have been to all the known countries of the world in his lifetime.

“No, Julia. I do try. I try to simply forget about him and start all over again. It seems like I now love him more in death than in life.”

Julia held her tight, and they both cried unrestrainedly over each other’s shoulders as though he had just passed away today.

They both remembered the headline that fateful day. The story was all over the media. Even Cable Network News (CNN) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) had aired the sad news. In Canada, it was read by all the major news anchors—CBC, CTV, and so on. Julia heard the news first when it was broadcast on the local channel Shaw Television. It was the breaking news:

Breaking news, 200 militias of the Somalia’s Al-Qaeda-linked Shebab insurgents in coordination with ISIS on Wednesday blasted their way into Mogadishu Proteia Hotel, killing 23 people who stayed there, among them Kirl Londe, a Canadian senior professor who had been part of the UN-led taskforce to investigate the alleged use of chemical weapons by the rebel group.

It was not too clear, though, owing perhaps to the nature and the way in which they were killed. A caveat on his caption noted, “Readers, be warned. These images are too graphic and may offend some. For those close to these victims, we advise you not to view them because you may not recognize your own loved ones properly. Some were mutilated and had to be stitched together for identification

purposes.”

Caroline didn’t bother; it was too obvious. And as the news was being broadcast all day that day, the Boss visited Caroline to offer condolences and to arrange for the funeral.

“He was the best the agency had ever produced,” the Boss began. “He will be sadly missed.”

Caroline and Julia were inconsolable. With the help of the agency and the support of Justitia, John, and other family members and relatives, they managed to give Kirl a very elegant funeral.

Caroline received a hefty pay from the government, but it could not compensate for the loss of the only man she had ever known, literally.

Caroline was a much closed-off personality before Kirl came into her life. She was a virgin, too. It was Kirl who had opened the vistas of her libido fountain. She viewed life, especially now, through Kirl’s eyes. He was her true love, and a passionate lover, too.

He nicknamed her V-Carol with V-Power, because of the way they made love. She tried very much to have him quit the bureau and concentrate on the marriage. She thought that if only he was a stay-at-work man like all the other men around him, he wouldn’t be tempted constantly to use women as pawns in the espionage chess game.

But the agency was too strong; it controlled Kirl. He had had no life of his own. He talked what the bureau put into his mouth, he thought what it put into his head, and he went wherever it pointed its scepter.

And she sometimes blamed the agency for his untimely demise: “If only they didn’t send him to

that trouble-tone part of the world, he would still be alive today.”

It had been quiet for the Londes now since the news of Kirl’s death surfaced. Life for the Londes seemed to have returned to normal, and Caroline now lectured on art at AIA, the same institute from where she graduated.

In Antakya, Turkey, the agents gathered together for their very last test. It had been over seven weeks now, and the camp had had the best of the instructors from across the Western-backed spy syndicates. For Canada, the Boss had chosen Agent 0077, the best the Canuck had produced in a long while. He would learn the latest tactics in VIP infiltration-detection micro-mechanisms (VIMs). He would report back to the Boss before attending the International Congress in Forensic and Cyber Defence (ICFCD), at Vienna International Center, where he would accompany the prime minister.

Agent 0077 had just returned from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he underwent a very successful plastic surgery. Dr. Barrack Yekin, an experienced surgeon who specialized in general plastic surgery and maxillofacial surgical operations, was a frequent and sought-after physician who had performed thousands of disguised medical surgeries on many secret agents across the globe. At the instigation of the SISC, he had been hired to do a corrective modification of the shape, function, and form of Agent KJF-14, who had now been christened Agent 0077 and had been given a new name: Kirk Foreman.

Kirk Foreman levitated from what seemed to be a very deep sleep and was wondering what had just

happened.

“Your name is Kirk Foreman. Your name is Kirk Foreman. Your name is Kirk Foreman. Your name is Kirk Foreman. Your name is Kirk Foreman,” an automated voice kept repeating in Kirl’s ears.

“You have no family, no wife, and no history. You have no family, no wife, and no history. You have no family, no wife, and no history. You have no family, no wife, and no history,” the machine continued.

After a drilling by the machine, which seemed to last forever, four masked individuals took him into a secluded room, and there began to re-educate him into who he was and who he was not.

“You were born on September 11, 1959. Your father and mother are deceased. You went to Mackenzie High School. You graduated valedictorian from McMaster University. You have never been married. You have worked as a computer programmer all your life...” they brainwashed him repeatedly.

From the sequestration, Agent 0077 awoke a totally different person, both in looks and in thinking. All he knew was that his real name was Kirk Foreman; he was born on September 11, 1959; and he had no father and no mother.

“Agent 0077, I am Perry Hurst, director of intelligence at SISC, but everyone calls me the Boss. You will be assigned to protecting the prime minister from now on. You will be stationed at rue 111, 47 Slater Street in Ottawa.”

In Kirl’s mind, this guy’s voice was awfully very familiar, but there seemed to be a problem. He couldn’t remember. He had been so brainwashed

that he thought and talked like 0077 and not KJF-14—a great feat for the Boss.

“Impressive,” said the Boss. “Impressive. This kid is now all ours. He will never think about his wife or family. He can now concentrate on the mission ahead and not have to worry about state secrets being threatened.”

Kirl thought that there was no shred of light in the darkest side of his fears. He couldn’t deny that he was the same old person, but he couldn’t accept the idea that he might be hallucinating. In his day-to-day dealings with his agency, the Boss, and his fellow agents, he remained calm and unobtrusive. However, deep within him, there was a struggle. He must rediscover himself, but he didn’t know what was hindering all that.

There was no question Kirl was the master of disguises. Had someone else played a prank on him? He designed the famous XCG Guizer Project. No one knew what XCG stood for, but the concept centered around creating fake identities and infiltrating groups that were suspected of having hidden agendas.

XCG itself, one would say, was an accidental experiment. It began when 0077 came across a deceased young girl’s paperwork in an old city clerk’s office in Bradford, Ontario. It had the city register of births, deaths, and marriages. Kirl, now 0077, adopted the identities of the young girl for all the members of his squad and with fake driving licenses and with their undercover aliases, they helped jail three so-called notorious activists from the Patriotic Liberation Front (PLF) who had been accused of attempting to plant incendiary devices at the Para-Olympic games in Vancouver.

In three years’ time, 0077’s past had returned to haunt him. The previous year, Billy Kennedy, a

defector-spy from the SISC and now a member of the PLF, was revealed to have spent the last twelve months infiltrating the organizers at the ICFCD. Like him, Billy, his nemesis, had undergone a plastic surgery in order to escape the wrath of the SISC. He would be very difficult to identify. Agent 0077 was equipped with all the modern technology to help analyze DNA, teeth structure, and all aspects of identifications that would help 0077 get a hold of Billy before Billy laid his hands on the prime minister. The PLF had planned to assassinate the Canadian prime minister at the ICFCD.

Agent 0077 was deployed to diffuse this impending danger. He would be leader of the advance party that included some members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). They were on high alert. They had been in Vienna for the last three months and reported directly to the Boss.

“Clear?” asked the Boss.

“Clear. All clear, sir, so far. We busted the grudging mole and buried all the holes,” Agent 0077 had reported. “The PM will be in fine hands.”

“Fine,” the Boss began. “I will brief the National Security Defense Council (NSDC) at our next meeting tomorrow night. The prime minister will be attending this meeting.”

When the NSDC met that night, the Boss proudly reported the success of the 0077-led party:

“Your Right Honorable, Mr. Paul Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, and to this august body, it is my honor to report that the enemy of this Great North Nation, that evil delirious mole, and his impetuous compatriots who have terrorized our nation and were planning to assassinate you, sir, have been

caught and detained. Agent 0077, whom you all know by his real name *Kiri Londe* and now answers to the name *Kirk Foreman*, did a commendable job of busting not only the morose Billy Kennedy, but also his twenty-three parasites. Billy and his group had entered Vienna on US passports as tourists. Billy was wearing a disguise, but he was busted by one of 0077's deputies who was posing as a pimp."

The NSDC, including the prime minister, stood up and gave a resounding ovation to the Boss and, in absentia, to his star agent, 0077. The prime minister thanked the Boss and dismissed the meeting.

Now the prime minister's office could, in earnest, begin preparations for the famed ICFCD.

Agent 0077 had several intimate relationships with women while preparing for the PM's attendance at the ICFCD, including one that lasted six weeks. Ravinah Kasson worked for the National Banks Security Unit (NBSU-Canada), a national body that protected information contained in databases across Canada. Ravinah was a forensics accountant with her office in Ingersoll, Ontario. She was one of the three-member delegate advanced party sent by the NBSU-Canada to set up equipment in preparation for the ICFCD.

Love at first sight? If in moderation, yes. But it was after she had delivered the following speech on behalf of the NBSU-Canada that something began to bother 0077 (in a positive way, of course):

"Banks are not immune from this scourge. In North America, over 200 million people now use online banking. In a world of cyber sarcasm and Internet scams, the greatest threat right now is

phishing and identity fraud. What NBSU-Canada has done is to implement the Florida Protocol, which stipulated a maximum of seven years' imprisonment. And yet, due to international legal loopholes, still many cases remain unprosecuted. There is a need to reach a platform of action at this conference, for governments to own and localize the legislative demands of both Florida Protocol and of what regime shall be adopted at this forum. If governments of the developed worlds are reluctant, perpetrators will continue to have field days, and sooner—and I repeat, sooner—rather than later. Heads of states would wake up to finding that their personal data and information and communications were at the mercy of identity fraudsters.

"And the SISC has long recognized this threat. Critical infrastructures in Canada and around the world have for some time been the target of cyber-related attacks for criminal, political, or other motives. SISC broadly defines a cyber-related attack as the use of information systems or computer technology either as a weapon or a target.

"Governments as well as banking institutions are at risk.

"I thank you all for listening."

It was a blister. The whole auditorium erupted into a sustained applause. She had delivered a twenty-five-minute speech, and it looked like a five-minute stunt. The noise was deafening, and many people gathered around her to congratulate her. The Canadian prime minister, who had attended the conference and had given a speech earlier, even invited her for breakfast the next day. She had become a conference sensation and headlines across the globe carried the now-famous phrase cybersarcasm. Interviews followed her speech.

"What is cybersarcasm? How does it work? Who

is avoiding the conversation?” And so, questions floated from major and minor media syndicates.

For 0077, however, it was not the popularity; he had dated far more popular personalities than Ravinah.

Ravinah’s speech seemed to have awakened 0077 from a deep slumber. For the first time since he underwent the plastic surgery in Brazil, there was the slight realization he might be getting back his memory. Since that surgery, he had forgotten who he was, whether he was married or not, and what his real names and history were. He could not even keep track of the time. For example, he did not know how the years had come and gone.

Her voice, her eyes, and her constitution—I know this woman. But how? he agonized. I have been with this woman, but where?

To think is free, but to act is not. For over a week now, both Ravinah and 0077 had disappeared. The NBSU-Canada delegates, as well as the Boss and the SISC, were looking for Ravinah and 0077, respectively.

For the Boss, an agent who has accomplished a great feat can disappear for a while; it was normal. For Ravinah, however, her friends and colleagues had verifiable concerns. She had just arisen from obscurity. It was too early for the delegation to report this as missing person, or to alert the NBSU-Canada of the purported disappearance of Ravinah. After all, every delegate had an additional one-week leave for shopping after the conference.

Ravinah was needed because the team had to conclude a report that would be submitted to the NBSU-Canada in three weeks’ time. Ravinah was the team leader, and she was missing!

For 0077, his work was just beginning, so, there were some concerns there too. The Boss had called

what they called an insurance band, a clandestine squad that acted as a spy-on-spies consortium.

The squad had reported some commotion amid the outcry over Billy Kennedy’s arrest earlier. There had been a renewed push among agents to unmask the lingering PLF infiltrators. It was some of 0077’s old, cooperating friends in Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz und Terrorismusbekämpfung (BVT, Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism) of Austria who eventually made the connection, comparing the last video movements of 0077 and those of Ravinah’s.

Ravinah was giving a talk in an Austrian auditorium when members of the audience—accountant technicians—confronted her on the need to delink accountancy proper from the so-called cybersarcasm. She left the stage and walked out of a side door. Outside, she was stony-faced as she was chased down the street by someone who looked like 0077. They jumped into a taxi and melted into the afternoon traffic.

“Yes, yes, oh yes,” Ravinah groaned as Kirl, with medical precision, unwrapped her angelic figure. Indeed, she had the features of the goddess Aphrodite, the goddess of fertility. Kirl could not believe what he not only saw but felt as well. None of the women he had had before were anything like her, he thought.

It was only the start of a local media frenzy that would soon grip the international scene, and would almost tarnish the reputation of the BVT. In the news bulletin of the following day, the BVT had recanted its earlier story that it had spotted the duo

getting into a taxicab. Instead, it changed its story, saying that the person seen in the photo was not 0077 but someone else.

In July of three years prior, a counterterrorism chief of the BVT was found dead in Geneva, and the BVT had denied connecting the death of the chief with reliable intelligence that the PLF's sister group in Europe, the Al Quadarino, had something to do with it. Now with evidence that the PLF were busted only a few days before the ICFCD was officially opened, doubts arose over whether the intelligence bureau was hiding too much.

Although no one was hurt in the crump on the PLF, reports now indicated that over £75 million had been spent just to provide security to the ICFCD. Now public opinion was virulent in the press: "Is this worth it?"

Pointing to evidence that suggested that the Al Quadarino had planted the device, which was later found to be false, led the leader of the opposition party in Austria to ask, "Did another undercover agent parting with his love become an issue of agent provocateur?"

The BVT denied the accusations. It denied having knowledge or creating the false impression that agent 0077 had existed. The BVT insisted that it was merely a ploy by the deleaderized PLF to diverge the general public's attention from real issues of national, and in this case, international security.

Many voices began to speak out: "How could the terrorists commit crimes in broad daylight by planting an incendiary device at the ICFCD?"

But the very next day, newspapers carried the story alongside pictures of the spy posing as the *Oceana Santana* captain. Ravinah was leafing through a copy of the *Daily Telegraph* and sitting beside 0077

in gray tights. The revelation that Ravinah, the star of the ICFCD, was not abducted, or perhaps was in danger, was now clarified.

"She is a woman. She has feelings," one letter to the editor of the *Vienna Tribune* read.

"For sure, they look very, very good together," commented others.

The *Toronto Star* carried a story of the Canadian chief spy who hoodwinked Ravinah—she herself was, at this juncture, a household name in Canada—because of the speech she made at ICFCD. The complete report in the *Star* read,

Canada makes news. A new agent, whom onlookers say looks nothing like Kirl Londe (who died in an attack in Mogadishu two years ago but is exemplarily similar in feats and tactics) was seen running away with Ravinah. Sources say that the duo was seen aboard the *Santana*. Meanwhile, both the SISC and the NBSU-Canada are stranded because reports on the successfully organized and just-ended ICFCD are still pending. Reports suggest that the new agent has the USB that contains the report while Ravinah ran away with the laptop. Prime Minister Paul Harper has advised caution and commented, "The lads may just be having a good time or may not. Our eyes are open."

The news about 0077 and Ravinah had spread too fast too quickly. Could it be this liberality that would soon lead to the attempt on the life of 0077?

Just when everyone was beginning to forget about the escapee lovers—an agent and a geek—news lines across the globe began to trickle in with reports of a potential tragedy.

"Star spy and his star lover are presumed dead!" reported the *Vienna Tribune*.

"Kirk Foreman, and Ravinah, in a tragic accident," the Germany *Global Trotter* reported.

“Canada Hit by Another Tragedy— Kirk Foreman in a Coma,” announced the *Globe and Mail*.

“Love Affair Cut Short,” headlined the *Atlanta Morning*.

“Foreman Attacked,” read the *Zambian Post*.

“Young Couple Shot,” the *Hong Kong Journal* reported.

“He was young and smart; she was a smash hit. Now Foreman and Ravinah have been targeted,” the *British Review* wrote.

Just as the public was being buffeted with this sad news, the NSDC had a meeting at which the Boss was to report to the prime minister what exactly happened. The PM needed answers to know how to report to the Senate and the House of Commons. The Lower House was itching to know the truth and what happened to the USB that the fallen agent had carried.

There were talks of impeaching the PM for the comment he made that “the lads may just be having good time or may not. Our eyes are open.”

The opposition New Liberal Party (NLP) was furious at “the laxity of this administration to play a slam-dunk naïveté when vital national secrets are at risk of landing in the hands of bad guys.”

In the question-and-answer session, the Boss reported to the NSDC and to Prime Minister Harper:

It is our conclusion that the media had put 0077 into harm’s way when they revealed his ID to the PLF. In connection with the Al Quadarino, the PLF had planted a bomb on the sea cruiser *Santana*; but fearing collateral damage, they had withdrawn it and planted a sniper on the deck. Kirl was relaxing and

smoking his cigar when someone fired a silenced .33mm caliber pistol three times through his chest. His lungs were badly severed, but the vital arteries were barely grazed. He was in a coma, in Florence, Italy, where medical officials said it would take a miracle for him to live. He has been placed on a ventilator.

“Where is Ravinah?” asked Peter Magee, the defense minister.

“Apparently, sir, she is now Mrs. Foreman. We learned that 0077 and she had tied the knot aboard the *Santana* with the admiral of the vessel blessing their vows.

“Hmm.” the PM muttered.

“Oh, my God,” screeched the defense minister. “Doesn’t this kid have a wife in Alberta?” he probed.

“Yes, sir, but that marriage is technically dissolved by death,” answered the Boss.

Just when the defense minister was about to ask another question, the PM interrupted. “Perry, see to it that this doesn’t get out of control. We have two or more fronts to contend with: Billy Kennedy and the issue of the USB and the plastic surgery. Make sure nothing of this becomes public record. Meanwhile, I will talk to the Commons,” he began. “But I need all of your support. The NLP wants to make this an election issue next year. All dismissed,” he ended.

As the NSDC was being dismissed, the PM called the Boss aside and ordered, “Perry, bring that kid home.”

Still in a coma, 0077 was brought back to Toronto’s St. Margaret’s Hospital. All this was done

in secret. But there was a problem. The so-called Kirk Foreman's medical treatment could not be financed by the government coffers because "he does not exist."

The national database listed him as Kirl J. Londe, but "that person has long been dead."

"Ravinah, at present, you'll have to rely on your savings for his medical treatment as we sort out this issue," the Boss had advised.

"In that case, sir, can I have him transferred to Ingersoll where I can be close enough to take care of him?" she begged.

In Ingersoll, Kirl was admitted to a Catholic hospital, where Ravinah shocked the hospital administrators. "His name is Kirl Londe. Please, don't record him as Foreman," she instructed.

"But...but..." a senior administrative officer, named Gorger, stammered, looking uneasily at the transferred paperwork from St. Margaret and comparing them with what Ravinah had just registered 0077 with.

"Yes, I know. Simply write what I have told you," she ordered while tweaking a new tag near his bed.

She remembered those few seconds just before he slipped into a coma.

Struggling for words, he whispered, "Ravii, my real last name is *Londe*...Kirl J. L. Londe."

And he was gone.

5 | Ingersoll, Ontario, Canada

Surrounded by two inglorious shadowy figures, quiet and steadfast, they took him; and although no words were being said, Kirl could hear and know whatever these figures were thinking. It was as though he had been transformed into a spirit himself. He could hear, see, know, and even understand whatever someone was thinking, except, of course, he did not have a body. It was all in this super mind that had become him.

They took him to what seemed to be the center of the earth, though the earth itself was just a mass of an expanse. As a semi-spirit, he was still very much aware of who he was and what he had done. The only difference was that in this real dream, he could control his surroundings. In dreams on earth, he had no plan, no agenda; and things simply unfolded as he slept. Here, he was the conductor. But not just now.

Who are these? he pondered. Where are we? And where are they taking me? He was now beginning to get really concerned.

At the speed of light - in fact, faster than that speed by an infinite calibration - they dove deep south, with one of the figures on each side of him. Although his mind was capable, his strength was not. It was as though he had been paralyzed by a strong sedative. It was a cataclysmic dive; from one side, the left side, was sheer darkness. From the next side, the right side was a sensation that there was light beyond the chasm. In the passage where he was being lodged, the color tended to be grayish black. He could hear the distant cries of people on the left

side. He could also hear joyous repertoires on the right, albeit intermittently.

Kirl was not dreaming. He was in complete control of his faculties - at least of his mind. His body, well, it was dead - or perhaps dying - lying irresponsive in a defibrillator, a lifesaving device, in Ingersoll. Ingersoll itself now was not a place; it had become a condition, not a place. He was out, literally. He could see everything, and everybody, and yet not in his body.

He and his body were separated, albeit momentarily. He had hovered around it for a while. With his invisible hands, he had touched and comforted Ravinah. "Please, don't be sad, Ravii. I am all here, I am fine, I am free."

But Ravinah did not hear, never noticed, and didn't even realize Kirl was there.

Kirl was becoming agitated. "Why are you ignoring me?" he shouted at Ravinah, thinking everyone in the entire ward had heard him. But no, no one heard him; no one was even aware of him.

"Time's up," a voice from his immediate shadow to the right said. Soon a tall, dark-cloaked, and extremely handsome figure emerged from the shadows.

"My name is Cjaron. Call me death, and I will be your boatman," said the figure.

"Wha...wha...wha..." Kirl's mind squirmed.

"I will lead you across the Styx. Today is December 31, and this - he points to another figure just emerging from the shadows - one is Azosis-Azrael, my companion, the angel of death, and together we will take you home."

"Indeed, Father Time," bowed Azosis-Azrael.

And after that, no more words were uttered.

Kirl immediately realized these figures meant business. In fact, every statement they made was juxtaposed with swift action. It was like watching a movie in flashback. When one instruction was given, a corresponding action was simultaneously taking place. Everything was quick and fast. Kirl's honeymoon, a state of wondering over his dying body, had come to an end.

Now he is quickly being taken deep down under. He knows he is going and there is no stopping. The sensation of knowing all, of being everywhere and watching his body and his lovely Ravinah, are fast slipping from his control. The state of somethingness is slowly turning into the nothingness. As they moved deeper, the deeper his sense of existence eroded; he begins to believe he is now dying for sure.

Kirl observes that the further away they move from the earth, the more he experiences discomfiture. He begins to become more and more fearful. Kirl, who was the darling of disguises, the fearless and most decorated state secret agent and the one who knew how to untangle every conundrum, now for the real first time he is beginning to fear for his life. Yes, for his real life. Memories of his escapades on earth flash furiously across his soul. He can remember everything he has ever said, done or thought. It is not a beautiful feeling; he becomes desperate.

The grayish appearance of the chasm begins to turn into reddish black. Suddenly they fall into a strip of the world without elements, only a combination of fake laughter and flickering lights.

Kirl is mystified. When *Voyager II* made a landing in the known galaxy and brought to earth extraordinary discoveries of the universe and exposed the mysteries that had long vituperated the great scientists, it was then hailed as a remarkable decipherment of the mysteries beyond Earth. And when *New Horizons* finally captured vivid images of the solar system and showed humanity the intricacies of the universe, the earth's greatest minds finally relaxed their searches for wonder and mystery. Rock, gas, and ice, to a larger extent, make up the world beyond the human eye. With the discoveries especially of the largest planet, Jupiter, which in size can accommodate a thousand earths, and Pluto, which is still being sized whether it is even a planet, Kirl's curiosity had made him an astrological illuminatus.

In 1994, Kirl had joined the Crackatowa Cagarami Illuminati, a secret mission branch of NASA, and was exposed to the wonders of the universe. He learned about the probability of life beyond Earth and the likelihood in future years of the discovery of other livable planets like Earth.

From these experiences and knowledge base, Kirl had formed the impression that there is no afterlife, and that humans are who they make themselves to be. He believes strongly that the future of the world is men's to master and control. To him, death is a robber, an enemy of human adventure. He has reduced his philosophy in life to eat, drink, and enjoy life while science makes strides to find a solution to death.

But not now, and not here. He has been out of his body for many months. His bodiless being has seen the wonder of creation beyond *Voyager II* and *New Horizons*. He is slowly realizing, albeit uncomfortably, that what the human eye or

ingenuity cannot see, his spirit eyes can see very clearly.

Why has this been hidden from our natural eyes, he ponders, but the question seems to answer itself.

Kirl now understands: Human-beings are more than just a mass of flesh. They are also spiritual beings. And as he ponders further, he begins to relish the thoughts that Earth also provides clues to this phathomation.

“So, all those who die are actually alive in some form,” he quibbles with himself in his mind.

“What is your name?” Cjaron asks Kirl.

“You’re talking to me...my name is Kirl?” Kirl grunts.

“No, your name is Sinner, you hear me. Tell everyone your real name,” Azosis-Azrael orders.

“Very soon we shall be passing across the domain of Abaddon. Give the liege his due respect,” Cjaron demands.

“Come on,” Kirl begins, “who is this Abaddon, and where are you taking me?”

“A General in hell, you get me? You know him as destruction or Apollyon, the Destroyer. He has the largest control over Locusts. I hate the loser,” responds Cjaron, as if he is speaking in an aside.

“What are you talking about – I mean who are the Locusts?” Kirl inquires.

“Sinner, you are asking too many questions already. Azosis-Azrael, tell the lad who the Locusts are,” Cjaron orders.

“You call them poker chips or pawns in a chess game or demons in the Church, but here they are called Locusts because they know how to terrorize our Enemy...hmm, yes, that Enemy, you know,”

says Azosis-Azrael rather uncomfortably.

“Now you’re confusing me, you’re freaking me out,” Kirl curses.

“Locusts, and now Enemy—are you creeps?” Kirl is becoming furious, and very agitated. He is becoming thirsty, too.

“Sshh...” Cjaron hisses. “We’re now reaching the gate.”

The Wilderness

What Kirl sees next is not only perplexing but baffling as well. As they enter what Cjaron calls the Wilderness, they come across a block of countless rooms which look like offices. Then a creature appears, and with it a semblance of light.

“His name is Adramelehell. He brings light and orders the glory of the sun. The *grass* must be grateful to him. If he is mad, he can cause all the grass to wither.”

“He is about to greet us,” Azosis-Azrael advises.

They come to a room, and there, seated behind a desk in the form of the sun, is Adramelehell. He looks like an upright beast with a peacock-like tail behind him. Pictures of crying children adorn his walls, and in one of the pictures, he is holding a swastika, busily sacrificing a child on the altar of fire.

“Hail Cjaron and your minion Azosis-Azrael. Who is this *grass*?” Adramelehell begins the greeting. “You blew the horn on the *grass* that has not yet been deceived with the seal of the Enemy on his forehead.” He chortles.

“Oh, grass, infidelity is written all over you, welcome to the gate of hell. My good friend Sir

Abogorias will love you,” Adramelehell welcomes him with a sense of jokey seriousness.

“I know you’re thinking, Who is this one welcoming me? Relax. You are one of the lucky ones. Coming to Hell is a lot more fun than you think. I see in your head you’re asking, *Who am I?* Well, I welcome grasses into Hell, but I have no keys to Hades,” he laughs with disappointment.

Just as soon as Adramelehell finishes talking, a handsome creature appears, riding on a horse and carrying a scepter and lance.

“They say that when you talk about our Ruler he appears. You’re just like son like father. Welcome to greet your own, Sir Abogorias,” salutes Cjaron, who is now winding down, seeming to be prepared to continue on the journey.

“Sinner, this is Abogorias, and I will bring you back to his fold after your initiation ceremony. For now, it is enough to know that Sir Abogorias is astute at war, in addition to perfecting the grasses like you into better sinners. He is trusted by the Ruler to command sometimes even up to sixty legions of Locusts. As you can see, he is as attractive as the Ruler himself,” he concludes, and then Cjaron commands that they should continue on the journey to the next gate.

Abogorias simply grins and waves welcome to Kirl. And the three continue on their journey to the second gate.

From the outset, Kirl has observed that whoever these creatures are, they are first intelligent beings with IQs well above the 140th percentile. They seem to be organized in ranks and are ordered by someone who seems to have total control over them. So far, every one of these creatures calls him the Ruler with utmost reverence.

Second, they have a noticeable sense of distrust

among themselves. In each other's presence, they give each other immortal and total respect; but as soon as one of them goes away, he becomes a topic of ridicule and gossip. In the SISC and in all national intelligence, he has had the privilege of intermingling, gossip is tolerated, but not at this scale.

Just as he is engaging his mind in some mental discourse and trying to understand these creatures and their abode, they come across another gate. It is brownish-gray in color with what looks like rust on its beams, and they stand outside as the Master of Diplomacy, as he has come to nickname Cjaron, knocks perceptively on the gate.

"Master Cjaron, welcome to your territory, and with another trophy with you?" He salutes.

"Hail Geron! Only thirst and desperation on our way, but we shall soon arrive," answers Cjaron.

Geron is a giant of a creature, between twenty-three and thirty feet tall, and weighs possibly anywhere between four hundred to seven hundred pounds. Kirl looks like an insect in its presence. It is a demon with the face of a human, with seven wings, and what seems to be four legs, which Kirl's mind informs him is called a sentar. Geron is the guard of the second gate of Hell.

Emerging from the other side of the gate, a female voice shouts, "My good Lords, let me discern, you're from harvesting grasses, aren't you, and this one—she touches and examines Kirl—is, let me guess, Casanova!"

"Spot on, as always, Madam Furvur—your sorcery powers cannot be overrated," Azosis-Azrael responds and continues, "Father Time and I

snatched him when we found him wandering in Limbo."

And turning to Kirl, Cjaron says, "This, as you have heard, is Madam Furvur, the magical and psych queen of the Underworld. She lurks in the territory of the second gate so that she can have swift mobility to serve those who need to know about themselves."

As he introduces her, Furvur nods appreciatively while bowing her head ingenuously.

"You're unlucky, Sinner, I didn't find you first. I would have already lined you up for initiation," she winks with a somewhat long but fake smile.

But just as they are leaving the second gate, Cjaron, in an aside gesture, spits on the territory and silently whispers to Azosis-Azrael, "She is a crazy liar, and the only thing she is good at is telling on other Locusts. I hate her."

Then the two demons of death laugh mockingly. "These ignorant grasses worship her as bringer and trigger of love between men and women. They call her Cupid, how stupid!"

Anguish

Geron pushes the second gate wide open, and they enter into the territory known as Anguish; and from the name itself, it is clear to Kirl that nothing good exists in this place.

Despite the name, the place has what looks like glasses of suspended waters. It gives all the impressions that the place has cool and available drinking water. But as they pass along, it becomes very clear to Kirl that it's all but a setup.

Anguish indeed rules in this territory.

Kirl feels like drinking water, and the place seems to offer plenty of it. Alas, it's all but appearances. Kirl's soul gets drier and drier. He cannot wait for them to pass on from this terrible region.

If Hell is an experience and not a place, Kirl reasons that Anguish is worse than Hell. Already, Kirl is in terrible shape. He wants to say something, but he cannot. He wants to think; his mind is retreating. He wants to make himself comfortable, but any attempt at doing so betrays other faculties. His soul is buttressed in Anguish while his spirit is battered. They now come to the peripheries of Anguish, and Kirl sighs with a sigh of temporary relief.

Just as they pass Anguish, they dive deeply into an unfathomable darkness. It is so dark that Kirl feels like he can touch the darkness. It is irritatingly callous, and all his faculties are in great need of light, even just a glimmer of it. No words are uttered; it is not necessary.

And they have just started.

How Azosis-Azrael knows that they are approaching the third gate can only be through sheer experience.

Darkness

"Father Time, we are here," Azosis-Azrael says to Cjaron.

Cjaron educates Kirl. "We're here, and now in the region called Darkness, guarded by Erebrus. He is also known as Erebad, the Protector of Darkness."

At this time, Kirl is completely deflated, weary and terribly tired. All he seeks is a drop of water or

a tiny gleam of light.

Erebrus speaks. "Father Time, welcome to my territory. You have a trophy?"

"Indeed, Protector of the Darkness of Hell. You who were born from chaos, and from it spreads darkness everywhere you go. Give us a glimmer of light so that your servants may see where the Great Expanse fellows, O Mighty Er Mo!" Cjaron says, paying homage to Erebrus.

Just then, Grand Boois—whose name means "big woods"—appears and brings a glimmer of some sunshine, and the gates open.

They cannot see Erebrus, at least Kirl cannot, because he exists only as a thick dark shadow. Kirl learns that under him serve four terrible evil spirits.

"The first one is Alocher—a grand duke. He commands thirty-six legions in Hell. They also call him the Dark Knight, rider upon a mighty steed. He blazes with fire in his eyes, and he wears an outrageously rigid coating on him. His characteristic appearance is with the face of a lion. Alocher speaks authoritatively in a deep and narrow voice. He guides astrologers, and many people mistake him for a gentleman," Cjaron says and then sighs deeply, as if to exonerate himself from speaking about what he hates doing.

"Father Time, you forgot one thing," says Azosis-Azrael.

"What is it?" asks Cjaron.

"You didn't tell him what Alocher did recently," chuckles Azosis-Azrael as if he is someone who has just won the jackpot.

"Well, he has been to the grassland trying to persuade the grasses to read Dan Brown's, *The Holy Grail*, commonly known as *The Da Vinci Code*.

Then Cjaron explodes into a weird laughter. "Grasses are the most naïve creatures there are.

They are lazy when it comes to truth. Leonardo di ser Piero da Vinci was a lefty, dyslexic, and terribly poor at letters. He was astute at geometric shapes, which is expected of a man who uses the left side of his brain for everything. He never embedded any codes in his works; he was simply struggling to explicate letters. There are no Da Vinci codes as postulated by Dan Brown; there is only the *Da Vinci Dilemma*.”

Kirl feels fooled. He had been mystified by Dan Brown’s writings, especially *The Da Vinci Code*, which he thinks is a work of genius when, he is now learning, it is simply the work of linguistic attenuation.

“It has brought into Hell thousands of weak believers,” Cjaron explains, and as he does so, Kirl can see malice written all over his face.

Cjaron takes a deep breath and then continues, “The second of these spirits is Amduscas. He commands twenty-nine legions in Hell. He is also christened Grand Duke. He appears as a unicorn. He is the only one I know who is comfortable to stage himself as a human, and he has been to most of the churches disguised as a member. He has brought many into our glorious kingdom. The Ruler depends on him.”

Cjaron then informs and warns him, “And do not be deceived by his frail appearance. He can bend trees at his command.”

Before he can start to explain the third and fourth spirits under Erebrus, Erebrus interrupts. “Please proceed cautiously. Today we were wrecked by some barrage of missiles from the Gapers,” he points out.

Then he sums up, “And the Ruler is furious that we did not see that coming.”

“I know you will be asking. The Gapers—yes,

the Gapers. These are what they call in church circles the prayer warriors. Every now and then, they throw those big, well-organized prayer rallies and rattle our defences in Hell, you see. But don’t worry, we’re well able,” Cjaron comforts him as Azosis-Azrael, on Kirl’s other side, nods in agreement.

Just then, in tandem, Kirl and Erebrus begin to say something.

“You go first,” Erebrus offers.

“Don’t worry, Grand Duke, he’s a very inquisitive lad. I know he wants to know more about prayer,” Cjaron is now trying to explain.

But before Cjaron can make his point, Azosis-Azrael reveals, “Prayer is a powerful weapon against us. It is only second to the Words of the Enemy.”

In disbelief, Cjaron and Erebrus simply gaze at each other. And after a brief silence, Erebrus suspends what he has begun to say before he is interrupted.

“We will,” responds Cjaron to Erebrus, and they enter into the Terrain of Morose.

The Terrain of Morose

“This is where Andras wreaks havoc,” begins Azosis-Azrael.

“In case you’re wondering like you’re used to, Andras is the third of the four guardians of darkness under Erebrus. He is a marquis. He commands thirty legions in Hell. I have seen him only twice because he is always on missions,” Cjaron shows off.

And as if not to be outdone by Cjaron, Azosis-Azrael jumps back in: “Me, I have seen him on seventy different occasions. Each time I saw him, he

appeared as a man, although more like an owl than a man. He even has wings on his back. He appears, I think, like an eagle, but he rides on a wolf, you see.”

Then Cjaron adds, “He carries a large, luminous sword with him. He is considered highly dangerous.”

“He is the recluse of the Trojan War. He brought Troy to its knees single-handedly,” Cjaron says with much pride.

Kirl notices that each of these creatures doesn’t want to be outdone. They all want to be the best, the first, and the most popular. Pride rules at the very core of their being. They don’t want to engage in sustained adoration of another’s exploits. They would rather say little, but in so doing, they fulfill their duties rather than continue to heap praises on someone else’s achievements. He observes too that when one of these creatures is being praised, they pretend not to be happy, but they are extremely excited within. Moreover, Kirl notices that inconsistencies reign rife in their descriptions of one another.

Kirl, in his work as a spy agent, sometimes had spells of feeling blue, but these were almost always watered down by women, beer, and his signature Cuban cigar. Now for the first time, there is none of that across the Terrain of Morose. All there is here is misery, glumness, depression, gloominess, and a feeling of extreme lowness. He has never felt like this before. He thought that the previous region, dubbed Darkness, was unpalatable, and he was wrong. This region is worse than the previous three.

Kirl wishes he was never born. He cramps inside and wants to vomit, but he has no physical body. He wants to die, but death is his present companion. Cjaron and Azosis-Azrael are death themselves in real time. Then he begins to wonder about those

who wish they would die when they go through terrible times on earth. He now sees the futility of it all.

Death is the worst kind of experience. No one should wish to die.

Then he makes a wish that shakes even his ripest imaginations: *The maimed, the disabled are lucky in Hell, for they enter in here with one less part of them, one part less pain and misery.*

The trio doesn’t slowdown in its never-ending pace, and Cjaron instructs, “Bow cautiously to Aquarias, Grand Duke. He lurks ahead of us. He commands thirty legions in Hell. He is the third of the four under Erebrus.”

What Kirl sees next is a mere pale man riding on an alligator and carrying a spear-like dagger. And he is further shocked when he is greeted in a language very familiar to him.

“Wie geht’s?”

Kirl knows that this is Germany; he spent the summer of 1992 in Germany and had learned some basic Germanic greetings, and this demon has just greeted him: *How are you!*

Then Cjaron clarifies, “Aquarias can speak in all languages.”

“I won’t tell you more about the fourth guardian of darkness, Attaroth, as we are nearing the end of the Terrain of Morose, except that he commands the western legions of Hell, the official exit for the Ruler. He has confused many grasses on earth—bringing them laziness and sloth,” Cjaron continues to speak.

Just then, Cjaron orders that they stop a while and look at the Notice Board of Attaroth, and there on line number 121334 was Kirl’s name. And Cjaron, turning to Kirl and pointing at his name, says, “You see, you exist on this list under the

category of vanity and self-centeredness.”

Kirl finds himself gazing at the walls of Hell. Sins make up the walls of Hell. Each sin is a brick upon which the walls of Hell are built. And Kirl starts to wonder why this is so.

To Kirl’s amazement, the names of some major TV evangelists are here too. Most of them come under “Greed” and “Pride.” He’s shocked because he had thought that preachers would be the last group of people he would see in Hell. He observes with regret under the name of one American TV evangelist who is celebrated worldwide the following inscription: *He collects offerings and tithes in the name of God’s kingdom, when all he builds is his own domain.*

Shortly after, they meet a creature that appears as a disfigured man with wings riding a doglike beast.

“That is Attaroth,” Cjaron says.

Meanwhile, Kirl is filled with many thoughts, thousands of thoughts at once; and he is mostly perturbed by his name already existing in Hell.

What! he groans. *What, my name is in this horrible place?*

Eventually, Kirl resigns to his fate; he now knows he has reached the point of no return. If his name is already written in Hell, what chance on earth has he of returning home? He simply begins to accept his fate. He now knows that nothing good, even a semblance of good, awaits him. He can feel it. He can taste it. He can smell it. He can even try to touch it. He is doomed. He is finished. And Kirl is now so frail and dejected that he simply admits, *I am lost forever.*

Then the Darkness awakes them into what is known as the Solace of Abraham.

“Here you find the souls of all the dead in Christ,” Cjaron begins. “But they are cheated that

eternal life awaits them. The Enemy has a way of making humanity revert into lies.”

Kirl can see that Cjaron does not mean what he says. His demeanor betrays him. Passing by the Solace of Abraham, the soul of Kirl feels very comforted, but it is only for a tease. Kirl can see Abraham and thousands of thousands of souls dressed in white. They are all happy and praising.

Then an old man comes toward the fringes of the chasm that separates the Solace of Abraham and the Patch, as they call the very narrow strip on which Kirl, Cjaron, and Azosis-Azrael are passing.

With tears in his eyes, the old man shouts, “Oh, Kirl, my son, I prayed. I prayed for you, and for Caroline and Ravinah. I am their—”

Before he can complete the sentence, Azosis-Azrael interrupts: “Ignore that old ignorant man. Keep going. Don’t listen to him.”

But it’s too late. Kirl has heard it all. Suddenly he can see. But the unfinished sentence bothers him. What did the old man want to say? What did he mean when he said that he was their *what?* *He knows Caroline? He knows Ravinah? And he calls me his son! Who is this man?* So, Kirl’s inner troubles have just doubled.

The trio enters what Cjaron describes as, “The territory for princes and princesses.” By now, Kirl is so weary that he can barely respond. He has seen things that he only spoke of in clichés and hyperboles or figures of speech on earth.

If only I had the chance to go back to earth, I would tell people that what they hear about Hell is real.

But at this time, all hope is gone. He has become an inhabitant of Hell.

As a young boy growing up in Coopersville in Edmonton, Alberta, Kirl had attended church only during Good Fridays and Easter Sundays. During

that time, he had a platonic view of the afterlife. He had participated in Mass only as a way of pacifying his mother, Julia, and father, John. He had rarely heard about Hell. When he heard about it, it was only when it was referred to as an excuse to exploit the weakness in people.

To Kirl, real men needed not concern themselves with things that did not exist. Hell was just a ploy by the Christian masterminds to keep the masses under the grip of ecclesiastical control. It helped the religious establishment to acquire wealth and gain control over weak individuals.

The Echelonia

“Order, we are in the Echelonia, the Hoard of Principalities,” whispers Cjaron.

They come to a large expanse of orderly marshes and swamps, which resembles water in appearance, but does not have any known elements. There are seven altars with what looks like burning substances. Toward the north of the Echelonia is a black covering that can stretch hundreds of thousands of miles; by mental estimation, it is not less than 12 million miles long. Outside the Echelonia, in the peripheries, are myriad Locusts—what Kirl has now come to know are demons. They appear in all shapes and sizes; some look like humans with animal faces while others have figures and shapes he cannot identify. It is all an organized confusion. Even what Kirl sees looking like water is actually the backs of myriad demons that form the path on which the principalities walk. In shifts, the demons change positions, and others take their place.

As they approach the first altar, trumpets begin

to sound, at the count of six and then at four; and Kirl begins to observe that everything in Hell exists in twos or fours or sixes.

At the strike of the sixth trumpet, the Echelonia comes to a standstill. Every demon bows, and enters Aiperiois, a prince, and with him the thirty-six legions at his command. He is revered by the demons both in Hell and on earth.

Around the Altar of Aiperiois are four pulpits, with nonstop preaching. Each demon in Hell is supposed to register at least seventeen *events*. In Hell, events include attendance at the altar to hear the message or attendance at the Masonic Lodge or the Wiki Temple or the Illuminati covens on earth to witness a ceremony or answer to the calls of witches, wizards, and witch doctors or psychics who invoke demonic presence in sacrifice.

The trio stops briefly at the Altar of Aiperiois.

“I need four more events. I will add one more here,” suggests Cjaron.

“I have nine more to go. I will add the tenth here,” answers Azozis-Azrael.

They stand around the Altar of Aiperiois and listen to the sermon. Shortly, they sit down as Ashtraron opens her mouth to speak. No one misses her messages because she keeps repeating them over and over and over. She is attired in purple, and she has sweet lips and a canny mind. She turns men on earth into jokes. She rules over inflated egos among women. Some of her tricks are to cause upheaval in the feminine circles. Kirl learns she has been at the center of the women’s movement on earth.

“Not that women are less, but that they should think that they are less than men—that is what makes them unstable,” the heathen goddess promulgates. “So far, we have succeeded in making

them concentrate on external beauties at the expense of the inner sanctity. When you go to the grassland, let the women hear this,” she implores.

“For the great words of our Ruler are still true today. As this great kingdom was established at the weakness of a woman, Eve, let it also be strengthened at the strength of her,” she admonishes.

As she speaks, the demons are nodding their heads, and there are periodic assertions of “Hail Ruler!”—which Kirl comes to learn is equivalent to the acerbated shouts akin to Christian chants of “Amen!”

From there they head straight to the second shelter at the Altar of Aiperois, and there they meet Chemobog, or the black god; and they are just in time for the present message.

“Nightmares, nightmares—that is, the dream you cannot forget. When the grasses sleep, scare them with nightmares,” she preaches.

Unlike Ashtraron, Chemobog always invites questions. One demon in the crowd cries out, “When I was on the shift yesterday, I could not penetrate the houses of those X-ians who offer orisons before bedtime, and we have devastating blows when there are Gapers’ overnights. What do we do in that case?”

The mother of nightmares, known to bring evil at night, jerks uncontrollably, and her appearance begins to change as a chameleon would change colors. She turns, at one point, into a man and at another into a cow, and then she answers, “They cannot win. They lost once at Calvary, and they will continue to lose. Hail Ruler!”

Everyone in the watery crowd responds, “Hail Ruler!”

Immediately, they rush out of the chamber of

Chemobog and come to the southern end of the Altar of Aiperois and are just in time to hear the aggressive and most zealous Halboryn. Things here get truly scary for Kirl. Halboryn hisses hysterically and virulently and shakes his tail, and all his three heads crane as if to catch a deep, vulgar breath. And the snakelike beast he is riding on roars like a lion running after a prey. And then he speaks in a loud voice: “No mercy. Eat them all. I, commander of the flies, cannot stand some of you who run away from their little tricks. Give them more and more lies and let them repeat the lies as truth!”

And an equally loud applause emerges from the watery crowd, “Hail Ruler! Hail Ruler! Hail Ruler!”

The demons in Hell who have heard the message begin to leave the altar, faster and more determined than ever before. They are now positioned to go out and wreak havoc among the grasses.

“We have paid our vows. Now it’s time to take you to the supervisor and to complete all formalities,” Cjaron starts. “You will be given a mark on your forehead and a name only you can answer to, and if you are lucky, you will see the Ruler within a week. Most people wait for years before they can see him.” Cjaron pauses.

Kirl is trying to chew through what he has just heard, and by this time, he is worn out and extremely thirsty. His anguish is so great that he has become a moving ghost. He doesn’t know what or how to feel; everything about and around him is out of place. He has become completely useless to his purpose. He doesn’t know who he is anymore. Everything in him wants to break out of here, even for a fraction of a second. But he can’t, and this thought itself is torture. It stings him like the bite of a cobra, and all of his being feels like exploding, but he can’t seem to find a way.

After they reach a large chamber, which looks like an office building with thousands of rooms, they go straight to report to Xibbaba (who is also known as Xibalba). Unlike Cjaron and Azosis-Azrael, Xibbaba brings unbearable pain and sudden death to humanity. Fear is his scepter, and wherever he is, he institutes a place of fear. Legend in Hell has it that he has never laughed since creation. His instructions are short and to the point, like when he ordered Herod the Great during the time of the Magi: “Kill every child of two years and below!” Every demon of death report to him. And right now, Kirl is just two seconds away from Xibbaba. It’s an established fact in Hell that when a soul’s eyes meet those of Xibbaba’s, that soul has no chance of going back to life.

Xibbaba has only one eye. It is a closely guarded secret in Hell of the circumstances that led him to lose one of his eyes. Two thousand years ago in Jerusalem, they arrested a Man who claimed to be the Son of God, the number one enemy of the Ruler.

When that Man died and began a journey into Hell, Xibbaba got very clear instructions from the Ruler that he should make sure that his eyes met that Man’s so that the Man should not live. But whispers in Hell, because no one has been allowed to remember this incident, state that when Xibbaba looked intently into the Man’s eyes, Xibbaba’s eye was blinded, and he fell down and fainted.

Kirl, very interested in this story, asks, “Who is the Man who came here two thousand years ago?”

There was silence, and then Azosis-Azrael says, “From now onwards, don’t ever ask a question about that Man, you hear me? Don’t!”

Kirl observes that each time they talk about this Man, his pain and anguish are relieved for that while.

He is interrupted, however, every time he tries to think about the Man.

“I notice you,” Cjaron yaps each time Kirl begins a thought process about the Man. And each time Cjaron says that, Kirl suffers an excruciating pain. Kirl is now more than confused; he is very frustrated and completely disoriented. He cannot say or think about the Man, which brings him some level of relief; but he cannot continue not to think about the Man because, as he has now come to discover, it is the only avenue through which his anguish is being alleviated, albeit for a short while.

“We are nearly coming to the end of the Styx. Your lessons will soon come to an end. Once you receive the mark, we will attend the Assembly,” Cjaron advises.

At this time, Kirl is starting to understand the implication of receiving a mark. He has never been a religious devotee, but in his missions on earth as a spy, certain terms came up from time to time. For example, when the agent was on a dangerous mission, the number *13* was deliberately voided, and the composite number *666* was used to curse the mission of rival spies. He now understands why.

“Before we exit the Styx, we all are required to pay homage to the Throne of Azhazhel—where the Ruler left a stamp and fathered a Son from the Wind. His name is Satanael. He is the standard bearer of the armies of Hell, the Ruler’s only begotten Son,” Cjaron worshipfully educates him.

“We will be required to bow *six* times, to crawl on our knees at the hike of *six* stairs, and at stair number *6*, we will pay homage,” adds Azosis-Azrael.

Kirl then learns that Satanael is always at the right hand of the Ruler. Where you see the Ruler, Satanael will be there, too. At his command, he summons all the hosts of Hell and determines the

ranks of all the generals and principalities. Defiance to him is as good a defiance against the Ruler. Therefore, he is extremely feared. Legend in Hell has it that you can insult the Ruler and the Wind, but not Satanael—that is an unforgivable sin, and it invites eternal condemnation. His name is rarely spelled out in Hell, and he is only known as Lord.

“Now that you’re here, I will tell you about the myth of Egypt,” Cjaron begins. “And if we get to have time before the Assembly, I will narrate the resurrection story.”

“But, Father Time, you’ve got to tell him. Remember the Ides of March?” Azosis-Azrael reminds Cjaron.

As Kirl is wishing somebody could explain what happened on the Ides of March, Cjaron interrupts, “And I know what you’re thinking, Sinner. Well, I’ll tell you, lest I incur the wrath of the Ruler.”

Kirl learns that when Julius Caesar was betrayed by Brutus, it was a powerful event in Hell. Julius was anointed by the Ruler, just as the Lord was. However, due to a weak link between the armies of Hell and those of Rome, a group from the Nile Valley known as the Calvarines had initiated strong prayers and intercessions to ask the one Hell calls the Enemy for the recapture of the Nile Solstice, believed to have been the entrance to Heaven. The Calvarines believed that when Julius conquered North Africa, he had inadvertently taken a chalice from one of the pyramid temples. Julius Caesar had become a hero in Hell, so when he came to Hell, in the excitement of the moment, Cjaron had forgotten to introduce Julius to the rudiment of Hell.

At the Assembly, when the Lord of War was called upon to stand and invoke, Julius, because of this very title assigned to him on earth and because of the manner in which he was welcomed in Hell,

stood up and was about to make his way to the podium when he was stopped and told that the invitation was meant for the Ruler’s own Son, Satanael. Cjaron was disciplined, suspended for two years, and warned never to ignore such a fundamental part of the order of Hell.

Still, you haven’t answered my question, Kirl thinks. But why should Julius be a hero for stealing a chalice. Shouldn’t he be damned for that?

“I know what you’re thinking, Sinner. Or perhaps, why Egypt?” Cjaron repeats himself.

“Father Time, take him to the Legend of Osiris Tower so that he can read by himself. And if he has any questions, then he can ask you or Azidahelhaka for clarification,” suggests Azosis-Azrael.

“Perfect. A very excellent thought,” commends Cjaron. And off they fly to the tower.

Upon their arrival, they are greeted by Azidahelhaka.

“Welcome to the tower, great friends – and I am sure this soul will find peace in our great oration,” welcomes Azidahelhaka.

“Thank you, Great Liege, friend to none yet friendly bearer of three heads yet uses none, expert at spells and harbinger of dark craftsmanship and yet”—here Cjaron speaks in a faint voice only Kirl, who is closest to him, can hear—*deceivable*, thank you.”

And through an aside, Cjaron whispers, “Liar. All you do is deceive the foolish. How despicable!”

At this time, Kirl is beginning to realize that no one seems to enjoy what they do here in Hell, but that they are all bound by an unbelievable allegiance to the Ruler. Any showing of weakness in the service is punishable by instant imprisonment. Kirl learns that there is no justice system in Hell.

The Ruler is also known as Chief Justice; he is

justice in principle. Whatever he determines, it is!

Then Kirl realizes that this is a basic difference with governments on earth. He had been where the spy agency had unilaterally floundered several social mores and democratic principles, but that was all in the interest of the majority's well-being. Here in Hell, Kirl ruminates, it's the Majority of One, and tyranny of the majority does not have a place.

Everything is centered on the Ruler.

Whatever individual demons know, should know, or ought to know, or perhaps discover in their wonderings in outer space and on earth, they must keep to themselves, unless it substantiates the dictates of the Ruler. Whispers, though, escape unpunished, and Cjaron has used them rather assiduously throughout his existence.

At the tower, gaping at him, is the plaque *The Legend of Osiris*. A female demon by the name of Orisius, covered in what looks like the leaves of the Iroko Tree and blowing a trumpet, begins to recite from the plaque:

O my brothers and my sisters, gather around me that I may tell the tale of the Before-Time, of the Golden. Know then that in those ancient days, long before even the grandfather of the Pharaoh's grandfather was born, Osiris, the great-grandson of Ra, sat upon the throne of the gods, ruling over the living world as Ra did over the gods. He was the first Pharaoh, and his queen, Isis, was the first queen. They ruled for many ages together, for the world was still young and Grandmother Death was not yet as harsh as she is now.

Voices from the wind echo, "He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart."

His ways were just and upright, he made sure that Maat remained in balance, that the law was kept. And so, Maat

smiled upon the world. All people praised Osiris and Isis, and peace reigned overall, for this was the Golden Age.

Voices from the wind echo, "He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart."

Yet there was trouble. Proud Set, noble Set, the brother of Osiris, he who defended the Sun Boat from Apep the Destroyer, was unsettled in his heart. He coveted the throne of Osiris. He coveted Isis. He coveted the power over the living world, and he desired to take it from his brother. In his dark mind, he conceived of a plot to kill Osiris and take all from him. He built a box and inscribed it with wicked magic that would chain anyone who entered it from escaping.

Voices from the wind echo, "He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart."

Set took the box to the great feast of the gods. He waited until Osiris had made himself drunk on much beer, and then challenged Osiris to a contest of strength. Each one in turn would enter the box and attempt, through sheer strength, to break it open. Osiris, sure in his power yet feeble in mind because of his drink, entered the box. Set quickly poured molten lead into the box. Osiris tried to escape, but the wicked magic held him bound, and he died. Set then picked up the box and hurled it into the Nile, where it floated away.

Voices from the wind echo, "He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart."

Set claimed the throne of Osiris for himself and demanded that Isis be his queen. None of the other gods dared to stand against him, for he had killed Osiris and could easily do the same to them. Great Ra turned his head aside and mourned; he did not stand against Set.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

This was the dark time. Set was everything his brother was not. He was cruel and unkind, caring not for the balance of Maat. War divided Egypt, and all was lawless while Set ruled. In vain our people cried to Ra, but his heart was hardened by grief, and he would not listen.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

Only Isis, blessed Isis, remembered us. Only she was unafraid of Set. She searched all of the Nile for the box containing her beloved husband. Finally, she found it, lodged in a tamarisk bush that had turned into a mighty tree, for the power of Osiris still was in him though he lay dead. She tore open the box and wept over the lifeless body of Osiris. She carried the box back to Egypt. She changed herself into a bird and flew about his body, singing a song of mourning. Then she perched upon him and cast a spell. The spirit of dead Osiris entered her, and she did conceive and bear a son whose destiny it would be to avenge his father. She called the child Horus and hid him on an island far away from the gaze of his uncle Set.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

She then went to Thoth, wise Thoth, who knows all secrets, and implored his help. She asked him for magic that could bring Osiris back to life. Thoth, lord of knowledge, who brought himself into being by speaking his name, searched through his magic. He knew that Osiris’s spirit had departed his body and was lost. To restore Osiris, Thoth had to remake him so that his spirit would recognize him and rejoin. Thoth and Isis together created the Ritual of Life, that which allows

us to live forever when we die. But before Thoth could work the magic, cruel Set discovered them. He stole the body of Osiris and tore it into many pieces, scattering them throughout Egypt. He was sure that Osiris would never be reborn.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

Yet Isis would not despair. She implored the help of her sister Nephthys, kind Nephthys, to guide her and help her find the pieces of Osiris. Long did the search, bringing each piece to Thoth that he might work magic upon it. When all the pieces were together, Thoth went to Anubis, lord of the dead. Anubis sewed the pieces back together, washed the entrails of Osiris, embalmed him, wrapped him in linen, and cast the Ritual of Life. When Osiris’s mouth was opened, his spirit re-entered him, and he lived again.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

Yet nothing that has died, not even a god, may dwell in the land of the living. Osiris went to Duat, the abode of the dead. Anubis yielded the throne to him, and he became the lord of the dead. There he stands in judgment over the souls of the dead. He commends the just to the Blessed Land, but the wicked he condemns to be devoured by Ammit.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

When Set heard that Osiris lived again, he was wroth, but his anger waned, for he knew that Osiris could never return to the land of the living. Without Osiris, Set believed he would sit on the throne of the gods for all time. Yet on his island, Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis, grew to manhood and strength. Set sent many serpents and demons to kill

Horus, but he defeated them. When he was ready, his mother, Isis, gave him great magic to use against Set, and Tboth gave him a magic knife.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

Horus sought out Set and challenged him for the throne. Set and Horus fought for many days, but in the end, Horus defeated Set and castrated him. But Horus, merciful Horus, would not kill Set, for to spill the blood of his uncle would make him no better than him. Set maintained his claim to the throne, and Horus lay claim himself as the son of Osiris. The gods began to fight among one another, those who supported Horus and those who supported Set. Banebdjetet leaped into the middle and demanded that the gods end this struggle peacefully or Maat would be imbalanced further. He told the gods to seek the council of Neith. Neith, warlike though wise in counsel, told them that Horus was the rightful heir to the throne. Horus cast Set into the darkness, where he lives to this day.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

And so, it is that Horus watches over us while we live, and gives guidance to the Pharaoh while he lives, and his father Osiris watches over us in the next life. So it is that the gods are at peace. So, it is that Set, wicked Set, eternally strives for revenge, battling Horus at every turn. When Horus wins, Maat is upheld, and the world is at peace. When Set wins, the world is in turmoil. But we know that dark times do not last forever, and the bright rays of Horus will shine over us again. In the last days, Horus and Set will fight one last time for the world. Horus will defeat Set forever, and Osiris will be able to return to this world. On that day, the Day of Awakening, all the tombs shall open, and the just

dead shall live again as we do, and all sorrow shall be gone forever.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

Lo, this is my tale. Keep it in your hearts and give it to others, as I give it to you.

Voices from the wind echo, “He who hears this must come with a right mind and an open heart.”

“Many *thoughts* ask why Egypt, and I am sure this wondering soul has already asked you, is that correct Father Time?” asks Azidahelhaka.

“Yes, indeed,” answers the now-tiring angel of death.

“You see, Sinner, your earth is a strange place,” Cjaron charges.

“There are a lot of lies told to the grasses, and the biggest centers around the birth, life, and death, and what they think is a resurrection of the Enemy’s alleged Son,” Cjaron continues.

And just then, Kirl begins to remember a dramatic play of the death of Christ he had witnessed several years ago at one of the Easter Sunday services his parents had taken him to as a child. And he is now thinking, *This should be the story of Jesus Chri—*

And just before Kirl completes that thought, Cjaron collapses on the floor miserably and awakes quickly with a stern warning to Kirl: “Never, never ever mention that combination in here. The Ruler can imprison you and punish you so that you may wish you were never formed, understand!”

“Yes, I do,” Kirl answers timidly.

By now thoughts in line with Jesus Christ are bumping on one after the other, and he is at odds to try and suppress them. And this is turning out to be the most difficult balance of his being in Hell. On earth, he was being tempted to lie, kill, adulterate, and so on; but here in Hell, he is being tempted to say the name of Jesus Christ. He can't. If he does, he will be punished instantly. The temptation is so huge that it is weighing him down. It is torture now to even contemplate the thought. Kirl is in pain—not of fire or whips, but of his mind. The suffering is so great that he begins to gnash his teeth and to shake uncontrollably.

Recognizing that Kirl is in grievous pain from the temptation of Jesus Christ, Cjaron suggests that they invoke the spell of Pharas-Asmodeus. However, there is a problem. The key to the spell lies under the guardianship of the noble Adramelehell, the bringer of the light of the sun, and whose abode is the Wilderness. If they have to return to the Wilderness, they will miss the initiation ritual already scheduled to convert Kirl permanently to the Dorsal of Hell. And Xibbaba, the supervisor, is already waiting for them. But it is the risk Cjaron may have to take; otherwise, Kirl might be tempted in the midst of the session of the next Assembly, in the presence of the Ruler, to make the combination and forever have Cjaron banished to the Dungeon of Hades, where the fire never ceases to burn.

They return to the gate of the Wilderness, and there consult the spell of Pharas-Asmodeus.

“*Resurrectionem ex mortuis. Redivivus. Redeo ut vita.*” Cjaron invokes.

He is saying a prayer at the tomb of Pharas-Asmodeus. And what Kirl sees next is very disturbing. What he sees is a monster with seven heads. On each head is written the following: *superbia* (pride), *avaritia* (greed), *luxuria* (lust), *invidia* (envy), *gula* (gluttony), *ira* (wrath), and *acedia* (sloth).

Immediately, Kirl realizes that these are the infamous seven deadly sins. These heads are hooked on four wings and propelled by multiple legs. Although it has seven heads and fourteen eyes, all the eyes converge into one, and it is extremely difficult to look the beast into its eye.

“That’s why I didn’t want to pass through this tomb when we reached the Wilderness,” Cjaron assures Kirl. “From experience, each time a fallen grass sees him, they wither, and its utmost unwise to take an uninitiated soul to the tomb.”

“I concur,” adds Azozis-Azrael. “That’s why they call him the president of sin; he’s just second to Leviathan in terms of honor by the Ruler. He portends a tough opponent to the Enemy. On earth, he keeps little and big churches on their toes.”

“He is subtle,” Cjaron starts to explain, “and he makes grasses get comfortable in sin. He makes them call good bad, and bad good! He also makes their music sell on earth. But his greatest talent is the way he invents sins year after year.”

But they are now here, nevertheless, and Cjaron has a job to do. When Cjaron is done with his invocations, Pharas-Asmodeus, the ugly and terrifying monster, shrieks feverishly and froths at all of its seven mouths. As it goes through the motion, akin to sexual dance, gyrating through its gargantuan thighs bringing in and out what looks like male and female genitalia, Kirl is hypnotized.

Kirl begins to experience confusing sexual thoughts; and as though possessed, he begins to

follow through the rhythmic actions. And as the lust heightens, he begins to perform an orgasmic movement. And within a second, all is done, and Kirl is calm again. All the thoughts of the Christ are now gone, and Kirl has no recollection of what he was thinking.

Cjaron examines Kirl's mind and is satisfied the Assembly will not be disturbed. Just as they are about to leave the tomb, the monster shrieks in a queer sound and lets off what sounds like a deep breath. It contours into a falcon-headed man, and then into a lion with the head of a falcon, and last into a sphinx. Then it disappears.

Kirl will never dare to think of Jesus Christ in Hell, but he will miss the initiation as a result.

They return to the tower, where Kirl has another moment to look at the plaque of the Legend of Osiris. He has no further questions in his mind. He begins to believe all that is written on the plaque.

"Welcome back again," greets Azidahelhaka.

"At your doorsteps, Hell's greatest story-teller," answers Azozis-Azrael.

Cjaron shakes his head in disapproval but does not show it. Kirl, however, has already seen. *This is trivial, and there is no need to reflect on it*, Kirl keeps comforting himself. But he cannot afford not to notice the repugnancy in Cjaron's mind and his lackadaisical attitude towards any demon of the rank of Duke, Prince or General.

Then Azidahelhaka embarks on what would become a great detour in the cognition of Kirl, and which would keep him completely beleaguered.

Azidahelhaka's expostulation of the legend stems from the ancient belief that Egypt, not Mecca or Jerusalem, is the Gate of Paradise. As such, the Ruler has ensured that it remains guarded by some of his finest guardians. The secret has been in the

disguises used to mask the exact image and activities of the Ruler on earth.

"Since the X-ians believe in the Resurrection, we give the world another version of events. We try to show them how deluded they have been by Judeo-X-ianity."

Accordingly, Azidahelhaka goes into the details of the Way of Egypt as he calls it.

The Way of Egypt is carved from the Great News, which pities Ra, Osiris, and Horus on one hand and Set on the other.

"What the ancient failed to understand is that Ra and Osiris are one and the same person, Osiris being the theophany of the Ruler, and the incarnation of the Ruler on earth," Azidahelhaka educates.

Kirl feels that this story is very interesting.

"The beginning of Ra and his brother Set is shrouded in mystery. From the mouth of the Ruler himself, they are both uncreated Beings who have existed from the beginning." Azidahelhaka pauses. And after taking a deep breath, he continues, explaining that Set had become jealousy of Ra because Ra was more handsome, was smarter, and was more intelligent. Set had become so jealousy that he planned to usurp his brother Ra's position and beauty.

"But what you must know is that Ra, existing as father of creation, and his theophany Osiris, existing as his incarnate on earth, has always existed as primary, the First and the Last. In power, he is second to none, and only to his father, Ra, leader of the gods on earth and in here," Azidahelhaka narrates.

Kirl is a little bit confused, but he does not want to show it. He is more interested in the entire story as he beckons to Azidahelhaka to continue.

The storyteller of Hell then narrates that the

jealous Set became murderous and butchered Osiris, thinking that he had the entire creation to himself.

Set was mistaken. Ra, the Most Merciful, had other plans.

Ra sought the help of the blessed Iris—partly human, partly a goddess, and having been empowered by the Ray of Life and of Light—who resurrected Osiris with the Ritual of Life and has this not been accurately recorded into the Book of the Dead.

Osiris had a brief blessed affair with the blessed Iris, and they sired a son, Horus, who is worshipped as Satanael, the Most Blessed Redeemer.

Then Azidahelhaka adduces a rarity. “And on earth, you know, Set continues to deceive the grasses, calling himself God and making the grasses call the Ruler the devil.”

Satisfied with his own way of putting things, Azidahelhaka, hammers an enchanting doxology: “O the mystery of the unending enigma, O the wonder of our Ruler’s genius and wisdom, O that all grasses on earth should learn and understand, that all along, the Enemy is not, and has never been their Father and Creator, but the Ruler and his Son who rule the known and unknown worlds!”

Kirl comes to the understanding that all that he had been bowing to on earth when he attended Mass was not a woman known as the Virgin Mary. He is learning that the real woman who is blessed is Iris, who is the epitome of sacredness and who makes intercessions for all the rising and falling grasses. He also learns that the Enemy of the Ruler has persisted in deceiving the grasses, making them hate the Ruler by calling him the devil.

“These X-ians are wrong. They are mistaken. They worship the fallen Set and think he is God!” the storytelling demon sighs.

Kirl somehow knows that the story is not adding up, but he is powerless to believe otherwise. Kirl quickly learns that in Hell, believing the lies is a vocation. It is the most important part of daily living in Hell. There is nothing as miserable as truth in Hell. You are better, absolutely better off believing in lies and keeping believing in them. You gain more favors, have less trouble, and become a Hell celebrity simply by hating truth, loving lies, and propagating the same.

“Now, you see, what the X-ians say is the resurrection from the dead of the Enemy’s Son is a hoax, phony assertions of the poorly informed. You’re very lucky. You’re getting to hear the truth for the first time,” says Azidahelhaka.

Then Azidahelhaka tells Kirl that the grasses on earth can kiss their faith in the Enemy good-bye because “all cultures have these myths of the resurrection. They are all based on our escapades in Egypt. You see, you now see. No one tells these miserable grasses that the Enemy’s Son didn’t resurrect as did our Ruler’s incarnate.”

“Why does Azidahelhaka keep saying ‘the X-tians’? Why can’t he just say ‘Christians’?” Kirl puts it across to Cjaron.

“Harr...harr,” Cjaron chokes.

“Don’t ever mention that. Never again,” Azosis-Azrael sternly rebukes Kirl while raising a hand against Kirl as though he intends to strike him with a bare fist.

“Let me show this recluse piece of grass what that name did to me.” Azidahelhaka opens his back and shows it to Kirl. What Kirl sees are egregious scars. Azosis-Azrael quickly explains how the deadly demon got those unpalatable scars—due to a “failed” mission in an attempt to prevent the grasses from using the term *Christmas*.

“You see,” Azosis-Azrael says, literally hijacking the story, “the Ruler had come up with a plan. He observed that after Halloween, our activities subsided tremendously because the grasses inadvertently kept using that name. Each time they did so, we became inoperable. The mention of that name paralyzed our activities, whether the X-tians used it knowingly or unknowingly. So, Azidahelhaka was assigned to stop grasses from using that name and instead to substitute it with *X-mas*, and that is how now most grasses in North America say *X-mas*. It has helped us remain reasonably successful during and around the twenty-fifth of December each year.”

“Yes. That, in short, is how I got these scars. I was fighting for the interest of our noble kingdom. The Ruler is proud of me,” Azidahelhaka says with a great deal of relief and pride.

Cjaron and his team of two have heard enough and satisfied that Kirl is now well schooled in the intricacies of Hell, and being already late for the initiation, they now head to the Great Assembly. There, Kirl is now partially christened into the fraternity of the doomed. He is not to be told he will forever be lost, but all innuendos and insinuations so orchestrated have pointed to that end. Hell, to Kirl it's not a place of perpetual fire as he heard silhouettes of narratives on earth. If it were so, he would elect to burn to ashes and, therefore, complete his ordeal. To his astonishment, Hell is an experience of pain and anguish and suffering designed to depress the soul and humiliate the mind. It's an experience only the one in it can appreciate. All along, one is in there; they can feel all the

discomfiture of pain and misery existing into one.

“Quickly, we need to register at the Temple Stone,” suggests Azosis-Azrael.

They all run as quick as they can. They get into a deep frenzy, and Kirl doesn't know what is happening. There is such a wide cluster of nothing that it affects the soul. As they continue, his soul becomes emptier and emptier. He begins to drown in hallucinations, perfectly turning into a walking dead.

He cries, “Oh, my mother, why did you give birth to me?”

He wants to exude his emotions through tears, but the tears cannot come. He wants to stop and rest, but there is no chance of resting. They continue until they reach a big desk, decorated with the map of the earth. On it are flags of defeat and postures of near victories. People and governments are paraded together and notes of what has happened in the missions follow.

In front of them is a demon with a tag on his left chest that says “Akopios, the Demon Marauder.” They place him on the door to the Great Assembly because of his huge stature and his no-nonsense approach to the management of demon affairs. Kirl thinks he resembles the bouncers of the earth's beer chambers and nightclubs.

“Father Time, we have your seat reserved. But none for Azosis-Azrael. We are working on that one,” he motions.

“But...but...” Cjaron stammers.

“But what about this Sinner? He should come under the name *Kirl Johnson Londe* on your register.” Cjaron feigns ignorance, knowing that he missed the

initiation because he was trying to protect himself from being banished if Kirl should entertain thoughts of Jesus Christ while in the presence of the Ruler in the Assembly.

“I can’t find his name. Let me ask Apepiad. Perhaps he knows where his record is,” he says.

After a while, Akopios returns. “Nope, nothing...I am told he has just missed his confirmation. Did you delay somewhere, Father Time?” he asks.

“Oh, no!” yells Cjaron.

“We had to get him to erase his dangerous mind,” reports Cjaron.

“As you know, dangerous minds are a menace to the Ruler,” Cjaron pleads.

Apepiad, a snakelike demon, the only one ever to oppose Ra and evade the Dungeon, and is also known as Sun God, comes up with an idea.

“I can make him attend the Convocation of the Great Assembly. But he has to be disguised, buying you, Father Time, some time so that you could place him on the next schedule. That will be twenty-three sunlights ahead,” offers Apepiad.

As a demon of night, known for disappearing, especially in concert with the sun rising and setting, Apepiad is as harsh as he is canny. He makes even the Ruler get confused sometimes. He deceives presidents and prime ministers on earth. He is said to have given the impression of the Presidium under the Council on Foreign Relations when it contemplated creating a New World Order in New York, USA, Earth.

“Thank you, good gentleman, Apophis,” rumbles Cjaron. Meanwhile, he curses on an aside: “This ugly beast, one day when it does not concern my welfare, I will tell on him to the Great Assembly president, the Honorable Bueranjie.”

It is only Cjaron who ever calls Apepiad by the nickname of Apophis, which Cjaron learned of when the duo was on a mission together to prevent the abolition of the Apartheid in South Africa. They had been dealt a terrible blow by the continental prayer machine organized by Bishop Desmond Tutu that had interceded for the smooth transfer of power in the southern African country. Cjaron has no idea what *Apophis* means.

“But there is a caveat to this favor,” says Apepiad.

“Say it, my friend,” answers Cjaron.

“You must promise to stand with me against Belfegor when the Council on Indemnities calls me to account for the loss of a pastor I had gained,” he whispers.

Belfegor is the lead demon of sloth. He is adept at the art of trickery, especially of procrastination. He and Cjaron have been very good buddies as both of them deal very well with the regime of time. Belfegor calls Cjaron his half-brother from a different mother, jokingly, of course. And Apepiad knows that the only way he can have a leeway on the Council is if he forms alliances with Cjaron.

“What option do I have,” asserts Cjaron.

“Deal,” Apepiad offers

Cjaron nods. “Deal.”

Just as they are talking, a troll-like-man with a skinny ratlike tail appears in the company of six other demons. One can tell that he has tremendous authority and rigor. Kirl, who has overheard the conversation between Cjaron and Apepiad, now understands why Apepiad seeks alliances with Cjaron. Belfegor will be very disappointed, and even disgruntled, if he should learn that Cjaron is abating Apepiad. Belfegor and Cjaron, dubbed Money and Death, work together in majority of the missions on

earth. But now, just for this moment, and in order to protect his own back, Cjaron is willing to forgo his loyalty to Belfegor.

“After all, I could be imprisoned, and only Apepiad knows how to avoid that,” Cjaron comforts himself.

After a while, Apepiad comes along with disguises. And he presents to Cjaron a mask and a scepter that belong to Brumalin.

“Don’t worry, he will not be showing up soon. He is tied up in the Philippines. There is a bloody coup there, and he is keen on feeding on some free kidneys. I am reliably informed that the dead are in their thousands, but they will not be brought to your attention until the Great Assembly is dismissed, so you’re also covered,” Apepiad soothes Cjaron.

Then it hits Kirl. These demons plan just about everything: floods, cyclones, typhoons, hurricanes, droughts, and various natural disasters. They do not care whether the innocent perish. He is thinking of the recent typhoon in the Philippines that devastated that country to the core.

“Great. Fine,” Cjaron agrees. They all go ahead and disguise Kirl, who looks exactly like a demon. The disguise makes him look like a wolverine. And he sits right near Azosis-Azrael with a perfectly good view of the podium where the Ruler will be delivering the speech. He feels pretty comfortable relative to the condition of the auditorium. He still feels too hot and too cold at the same time. For now, however, his badge reads “Brumalin.”

6 | Somewhere in Hell

Brumalin, as Kirl, now being called for the purpose of attending the Great or Grand Assembly, sighs in disbelief. He has just entered the Grand Presidium, the incarnation of two heads of nations, namely, Bueranjie, Hell’s president, and grand master of ceremonies (MCEE) *ex officio*. He’s dubbed Teacher, the guardian of natural and moral philosophy. And of Chaxivil, copresident with Bueranjie.

Seated almost in unperturbed silence are the seven princes, also known as principalities: Baal, Beelzebub, Belial, Cresiliad, Merihimiad, Proserpiniad, and Dagon. They are adorned in purple with grayish raised thrones set on highchairs with golden ivory trophies. A raised podium greets those gathering in this state-of-the-art hall, surrounded by semblances of marble pillars and silver embankments.

No, Brumalin begins to see what is and what is not. From the periphery, when you enter the Assembly, there is an illusion that all you see is pure, authentic, and grand.

But it is not.

The mawkishness created by these illusions baffles logic. The marble is burnt, and so are the seemly golden or silvery chalets and thrones. The grayish covering is inundated by what looks like polished spiderwebs, and all Brumalin can exclaim is “Rotten beauty.”

Am I the only one who can see that this, basically, is the ugliest place I have ever been to? he reasons.

During his earth days as a spy and a formidable

top government spy, he had been to palaces and government houses. He had seen true beauty and uncompromised majesty.

How is it that the place where they claim all power emanates is made of cheap materials, dead fabrics, and rotten pillars painted and depicted as real and grandiose? Why is it that, it seems, I am the only one seeing this place for what it is?

Everywhere Brumalin has been so far in Hell, he has not seen the streets, or perhaps what they are made of. But his mind is gaining momentum. He has begun to see beyond the gimmicks and innuendos of the demonic masterminds.

Why the initiation before one enters the Presidium? Is it because it brainwashes or rather deceives the attendees from seeing what this place is and who these ugly beasts are?

Now he can see where the principalities are stepping. The floors are the backs of myriads and multitudes of demons.

Is it fate or chance that I missed the initiation so that in disguise I can see the truth? he again reasons.

Then just above the podium, Brumalin now understands what he is seeing, one very ever-present presence, an All-Seeing Eye, and he can now see that it is on every gown and garment.

Then it is this number, unwritten anywhere in Hell, and yet everything it is wrapped in triple sixes. It is the connection between the All-Seeing Eye and the number 666 that is now causing trouble. Here he can clearly see the link. The so-called Ruler rules by fear and deception. He claims he sees all that has been done, and demons are left with no option but to believe they are seen all the way. This keeps them in check.

Then it is the number 6; it is the number of *man*.

And the number 3 and how it is connected to God; it is a symbol of divine perfection and is

attributive only to *God*.

Brumalin is now awakened to the realities.

Oh my God! he weeps within himself.

And now his mind cannot be read by the demons because he has entered the Presidium uninitiated, without a spell that keeps the truth from been revealed. *All along the real thing is Man*, Brumalin reasons.

At this point, Paymoor, the renowned master of ceremonies of Hell, enters. By profession, he specializes in self-satisfaction through various rituals and celebrations.

“My lieges, lords, and compatriots,” begins Paymoor, “today our lovely Hecate will be passing on the MCEE buttons. His Excellency wants her to become comfortable as in the coming few lights my duties may be taking me to Brazil, South America, where an event of world importance will be taking place.”

What—this demon is interested in things like World Cups and conferences? Brumalin ponders.

But more than this, it is the thought he has been developing about the place of man in Hell, which is troubling him.

And just before he can solve the puzzle, a demon with a snake wrapped around her and a large brown horn enters, and with her a thousand single-filed entourage of all types of ugly-looking creatures.

Written on her forehead and on her badge is her name: Hecate. The uninitiated soul in the Presidium is king over mind. Here Brumalin is king; he can see what no one else can.

“I am Hecate, queen of the witches. I seduce men into marriage and get pregnant on my own terms, and the children I bear, in all appearances, are human; but they harbor terrible demons in their inside. I am a Succubus. I sleep with men in their

dreams. I am their utmost orgasmic pleasure. I deceive, I lie, and I feed on the lust of men,” she announces herself as she leads a retinue of the seven principalities riding on the backs of demons.

Hecate is carrying a white cross in both of her hands, but Brumalin realizes that this is not the kind of the cross he had seen in the Catholic church he attended as a boy. This cross is turned upside down; and rather than being black, it is white. Brumalin is alarmed, but with a clear mind and having entered the Presidium uninitiated, it immediately dawns on him that this is a sign of the Antichrist.

“My lords, fellow campers, and new bloods, welcome. Today, we are gathered in our year of great harvest. Our presidents will elaborate. It is my pleasure now to welcome Prince Baalberith. Our legions prefer his short form of Baal, to make the first incantation,” says Hecate.

Baal, one of the worst demons there is, has no ounce of mercy in him; and at his command are warriors of wrath and destruction. He stands up to a resounding ovation that can prick a hole into a young child’s eardrum. His seat in the Presidium is third from Satan’s throne and second only to Satanael. Brumalin notices that Baal has a goat-like head, with the dark-yellowish wings of an owl, and has women breasts, big and firm.

Hecate motions to the crowd to come to silence. But the resonance of the shouts keeps going on for a little while, until finally the Assembly is silent.

“I call upon thee, Father of the Dead, Master of Fraternity, and King of All Grand Masters. O Lucifer, O Day Star, Son of Dawn, without Father, without Mother, you reign in unparalleled splendor and glory. Come to us. Come to your children. Come to your most high throne. We bow to no other but to thee,” Baal invokes.

The myriads of demons, princes, and principalities and all generals and rank after rank, bow prostrate on their faces. No single noise is heard, and Brumalin notices that a group of 741 beautiful young mermaids appear, each carrying what looks like lampstands with eleven ivory candles burning dimly. They are completely nude and covering their genitalia only with black and orange beads. Behind them is an orchestra led by a demon known as Murmur, playing the latest musical numbers Brumalin knows got released on earth.

His mind begins to educate him. And Brumalin realizes that some artists who are highly valued on earth, who sell albums in millions and are held as celebrities actually play to the tunes of Hell. He sees some of the big names in music who have died, he sees their souls in the balconies of the Presidium: Some are crying with unending tears; some are in chains and others are still composing new numbers to inspire their progenies on earth. He actively remembers a song he used to love on earth, “A Prayer to Thee”—it was now playing in Hell. The message in the music, now backtracked, is the exact incantation that Baal just invoked to invite Lucifer into the Assembly. Brumalin is dumfounded.

“That was Dresley Hellion’s song, but he’s not here himself. He was snatched by the Enemy just before he died,” whispers Cjaron.

I love that song. So, all along I have been a devil worshipper, vicariously, Brumalin curses himself.

How many people on earth can believe if I were to tell them this? They would think I am trying to drown their music business. Oh, poor me, now it’s too late, Brumalin cries silently.

Then it hit him. As a seventeenth-degree holder in the York Rite, Brumalin was always of the impression that he was in it for charity, usually a

casual requirement by most secret agents who join because of access. The Freed Marions, a clandestine fraternity on earth specializing in building projects, have leveraged enough resilience to penetrate governments and otherwise very impenetrable establishments. Brumalin joined for those very reasons. Now he realizes that the picture of Baal was most prominent in the temples, clothed as an expensive antique of Michelangelo prescience. It never occurred to him that there was anything diabolical or dubious behind those paintings.

Oh my God, the earth is not as innocuous as we thought. Satan is at every corner. Sadly, he is worshipped without people knowing it—the Master Deceiver!

Now the stories he overhead of worshippers in many cults who make sacrifices of human blood in Freed Marions temples are, in fact, true.

Revelation too late. Too late, he cries again, albeit in silence.

Hecate returns to the podium and prepares the Assembly for the next set of incantations.

“I am calling upon His Lordship, the Great Prince Beelzebub, Lord of the Flies and at whose command demons in Hell and on earth salute.”

And from the fourth seat from the throne comes a fly-like man-beast, stocky but handsome. His appearance doesn't hint of danger, until he opens his mouth. Blazing vampire-like teeth emerge, and his voice betrays his stature. It is a voice of a god of ephemeral vantage. It rings into Hell like a robotic firearm in London. When he is called, every demon cowers, folds their tails, and literally ducks down, as though seeking a place to hide. He is feared like a Molotov bombshell. He is the only principality who casts out fellow demons with a single command.

“O Helel, Most High. You who has ascended to Paradise, you who has raised your throne above the

stars of our Enemy, you who has sat on the mount of the Assembly on the heights of Zaphon, and you who has ascended to the tops of the clouds. You're God, and I beg you to come to your servants now gathered,” he entreats.

At the end of his invocations, the multitudes of demons erupt in chants of “Hail Ruler! Hail Ruler! Hail Ruler!”

Trumpeters all wearing black and orange masks appear, and trumpets sound continuously. Brumalin cannot pinpoint for how long the echoes last, but they seem to have lasted forever.

By this time, every seat on the throne stage has been filled except for two, the Ruler's and, Brumalin believes, the other empty one immediately on the right side of the Ruler's must be for his feared son, Satanael.

Then Hecate invites the vice president of Hell, the Honorable Chaxivil, who is also known as Scox and Shax. A horse-like man having the head of a stork stands up with a very large black book. He brims with occult powers and is also known as the Chief of Thieves. He is known to have organized Hell as a prison camp. The Ruler anointed him after the resurrection of Jesus from Hell because the Ruler had blamed his predecessor for letting “the Enemy's Son escape.”

Honorable Chaxivil turns toward Honorable Bueranjie, and opens:

“Your Excellency, princes and principalities, rulers of darkness and generals of all ranks, members of this august Assembly. It has pleased the Lord to summon the Ruler to address his children today.”

At this point, the Assembly stands and ululates, and Brumalin sees what looks like fireworks popping up from all corners. The atmosphere is

charged with all kinds of shouts and chants. Some demons go into serious convulsions and begin to speak other languages. Brumalin can hear African languages, European languages, and all dialects of the islands. The crowd turns into a ball of mass dancing to all types of music and drumming. It has suddenly become an organized chaos, but no one seems to mind. Demons begin to change shapes and colors, while the Assembly begins to shake as though it will fall apart.

Then Belial, who is also known as Beliel and Beliar, comes forward and shouts, “Worthless. Worthless. Oh, worthless are the works of your Enemy, O Most Liege. Now show thyself and let us all in awe bow before thee, and only before thee alone!”

Brumalin can see through him that he is a dangerous specialist in trickery and false prophecy. In appearance, he is the most manlike demon in the entire Assembly. At the end of his invocation, he waves a wand, and the Assembly comes to another bout of silence.

Then Honorable Chaxivil continues his speech:

“Now I call upon His Excellency, Right Honorable Bueranjie, the worthy president and *Margrave of Hell* and guardian of the processes and procedures of Hell who in all of his existence has never failed the Ruler and by whose great wisdom our kingdom continues to grow and expand. Your Excellency, please...”

What, this creature, president of Hell? inquires Brumalin from within.

Indeed, he can be. Just look at the creature. A disfigured beast having arms and legs at multiple angles, Bueranjie rises like a monstrosity of a devious moron. His movement is calamitous. His gestures are offensive at all levels. His mouth is

littered with tiny fires, and his tongue is a devouring knife. His feet are dazed with poisons. His skin is haunted with stories of wars, but his voice is a perfect eloquence, and no syllable from his mouth is missed. A patron of all knowledge, he is responsible for such theories as evolution and the big bang.

Legend in Hell has it that he possessed Carlos D. Irwin, master of evolutionary philosophies, to accomplish his evolutionary texts, and then he condemned him to Hell.

Bueranjie is guardian of all world religions, as well as the author of three greatest world holy texts except the Bible. For four centuries in a row, he had registered the largest number of entrants into Hell, and no one has ever beaten that record yet. He was voted, overwhelmingly, as president of Hell because of that record. He is heard making remarks that, “There is no weapon as lethal, yet simply smart as the power of letters.”

Honorable Chaxivil hands over a black book to the president, who motions to all the Assembly to stand, and looking toward the south, he shouts six times, “Dominus! Dominus! Dominus! Dominus! Dominus! Dominus!”

Then a strong wind blows across the Assembly. In it are voices and noises no one can interpret. The foundation of the Presidium is shaken, and the roof disappears. Then there are rumblings of the following:

You are in Eden, your garden. Every precious stone is yours, carnelian, chrysolite, and moonstone, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald; and the works of gold are your settings and engravings. On the day that you created yourself, you prepared them. You're the Anointed Cherub. You're on your venerated mountain. You walk among the stones of fire. You are blameless in all your ways

from the day that you created yourself. You have an abundance of trade, you are filled with mery, and violence is your way of punishing your Enemy, and all who sin against you are punished. Your heart is pure, your beauty is perfect to behold. You are wise and the epitome of all wisdom, and splendor governs your throne. Kings and lords of the earth worship you because of your righteousness, and your sanctuaries are hallowed. You're fire. You're the Great Judge, and all your judgments are fair. And all the children of men will bow and worship you forever.

Chants of “Hail Ruler! Hail Ruler! Hail Ruler! Hail Ruler!” follow and the whole Assembly bows flat on the floor.

It is the first time Brumalin has seen the floor beneath demonic backs. It is all a mixture of a substance he cannot identify, but it has a semblance of burnt mahogany with ashes. All the princes and principalities and generals roll in the ashes while others are cutting themselves and riveting through strange skirmishes. The noise and the actions mingle, and no one is now seated; everyone is up, and Brumalin does not see when the Ruler lands. He first sees his son, Satanael; and behind Satanael, in an elevated seat, he sees an old lady-like demon sit down rather lazily.

Satanael, the first son of Satan, a quintessential expert in the art of deception and lies, stands on his throne, and a vestry is brought to him. Pointing to the old lady demon, he salutes, and the demon salutes back, lazily.

“Before I introduce my father, who indeed needs no introduction, let me, on my father’s behalf, pay respect to the Great Leviathan. He is the one, as you all know, whom my father used to get us back the kingdom when he intelligently grabbed it back from the grip of Adam and Eve,” Satanael reminds the

Assembly.

I thought she is an old lady, reasons Brumalin.

Just before he could formulate another thought, what he thought was a lady rises up to the height of over thirty-four feet tall, a giant snake of gigantic proportions but with an impeccable smile, almost like a mockery. It bends sordidly, but then coils gracefully and kisses the hand of the Ruler.

It can be unpredictable, Brumalin thinks.

Then Leviathan dances back into a sizable form, shows off its painted lips, tweezed eyebrows, and camped loamy hair. It sneaks sleazily and struts rather casually into the back of the Ruler’s throne and copiously squeezes its tail into a trite position.

There is an uncommon allegiance upon it, Brumalin realizes. *No wonder it managed to trick Eve into eating from the Tree of Knowledge.*

Just then, Cayhim brings a goblet of burning water and presents it worshipfully before Leviathan, and takes a step backward, bowing before the High Throne, as they now call the throne where Satan is sitting. Leviathan in turn hands over the goblet to Baal. Cayhim himself is known to have miraculous powers and great understanding of various creatures such as birds, dogs, and bulls. He is the immediate guardian of all those who make sacrifices to Apollo and Athena, ancient Greece demons who are said to have been baptized by Leviathan.

Leviathan and Satanael together then lift the goblet and present it to Satan. He drinks from it. He then hands it back to Leviathan.

“At your worthy service now and forevermore, Oh, Most High Being,” Leviathan says adoringly.

As this ritual is being performed, which is basically a secret between Satan, Leviathan, and Satanael, all heads are bowed down, and soft classical music plays in the background. Brumalin

remembers a similar tune he heard at the Balmoral Castle in Scotland when he went to meet the Queen of England there for a briefing on the activities of IRA.

“So, Hell is always there on earth, and we didn’t realize it. It takes the good things of the earth and manipulates them.” He shakes his head.

Then Brumalin goes into a very deep self-analysis. He comes to terms with what is going on. He concedes to fate, but he has a clear perspective on things now. No spells on him, no magic playing tricks on him. He is now with a sound mind. He continues to feel extremely uncomfortable.

How long can a human remain in Hell? This place is only good for these creatures and their Ruler, he concludes. *How can...*, he starts another thought, but then cannot complete it because now Satan himself is speaking. Brumalin listens.

“I am now saying that the time is nearer than it was before. Our salvation draws near, and our time to rule all the marshes is here. I have only three works I want to develop with you. None of it is new. I have been telling you this for the last two thousand years now.

“First, when we arrested Him and detained Him, we inflicted high injury to his kingdom. He goes on writing books and lying to all the grasses, especially to those in the church that we have been defeated. Tell me, how can you say that you defeated someone who did not die? Did I die? Of course not. Did he die? Of course, yes. And many of you are witnesses to our conviction, and some of you even brought him terrible misery on the mound...”

As Lucifer speaks, Brumalin’s mind races far and far away. And he misses the other two points. He can now see Satan’s very well. He realizes why the demons of Hell are in a hurry to cast spells on those

they bring here on what they call initiations.

He realizes that it is due to the fact that if a normal human mind enters into the Presidium, it can decipher all the lies. It is obvious that these are doomed spirits, nothing is real, and nothing is truthful. The only thing they feed on is fear of Satan, who heaps one lie upon the other.

But there is still a problem. Once one enters Hell, the greatest torture is not the stages of suffering he passes through or the pain and anguish of lack of water and no peace. It is all these plus the pain of hopelessness. There is hopelessness that no exit exists.

Oh, my God, why? Why should I spend eternity in this hopeless place? Why should I go on like this? he sobs.

The demons nearby think that Brumalin is crying because he has been touched by the message from the Ruler. There is great honor in Hell for showing emotions in response to the messages of the Ruler. But Brumalin is not crying because of the sermon; he is, after all, a human soul, an uninitiated one for that matter. He has not yet taken the mark of the beast. And just when he reaches that thought, he hears Satan, still speaking.

“We are now embarking on the last stage of our purpose, namely, to introduce the direct mark of the kingdom to the grasses on earth. We did experiment on it for the last twenty to thirty years. We have started by creating a chip that will make it impossible to trade without one. Because most of our workers are now in governments, and especially in those nations they themselves call developed, we are going to make sure those who participate in banking, trade and commerce should bear the mark. It will start as a simple tool of simplified business transaction. It will then go to another level, whereby no one will buy or sell without a chip. Our transition is planned.

It will first be through the palm, then the forehead. Each barcoded mark will bear our number, 666, intricately woven within the system. From then on, we shall then insist that anyone without this technology cannot bank. As you know, this is happening in some nations, but at a very small scale.”

Brumalin now really feels like stomping out of here to go and warn the inhabitants of the earth. But he cannot because he is in Hell. The thought of being in Hell devastates him.

So, those preachers are telling the truth, he ponders. I had despised all those who went to church, and especially those who made a living by preaching; I thought it was a lazy gimmick to hide from engaging in real economic activities. I was wrong. I wish everyone on earth can come to Hell, even for a second, and see what horrible a place it is.

He is now looking at the devil himself, preaching. Brumalin impeaches his own thoughts. *I thought that this guy was just a phantom, an excuse for not indulging in life. Again, I was wrong. Satan exists, and he's a liar. I don't believe anything he is saying. If he were as powerful as God, why did he choose a terrible place like this?*

As he thinks on all these, he becomes even more desperate. His throat is dry. His mind is tired. His thoughts are betraying him. He can think. He can reason. He can remember everything he did and said on earth. But he can't do anything about it.

Does it mean that the only time one has a chance of escaping this place is before one comes here? he challenges his thinking.

He hears Satan speak, and it is not that Satan has not been talking all this while, but it is the fact that Brumalin has been absent-minded. Then Brumalin hears something that truly breaks his heart:

“Now, comrades in arms, and since you all know what we are up to, you all know who our Enemy is.

Let us make sure we get at him through these creatures he calls humans. They are the reason why we can't find peace and enjoy the earth. You know, brethren, when I led you as the Enemy's most trusted angel, and you know how jealous both Michael and Gabriel had become of me, I told you all that this Enemy was also planning to chase you from Heaven into these unproductive marshes.

“I dare you: do not allow any of those humans, whom we call grasses, to go to that Heaven, which is yours by right. I have just instructed Prince Dagon, our dear brother, the prince of the depths and guardian of Hell's swamps, to increase the torment of all humans who come here. Since the Enemy himself has rejected them, we should not spare even an ounce of compassion for these useless souls. They deserve our utmost wrath.

“And I instructed Dagon to engineer a fatal viral disease of cataclysmic deadliness to terrorize the world. I am reliably informed that it is called Covid-19 or coronavirus and that it's brutalizing industrialized and poor nations alike.

“Anyone whom you initiate from now onwards should be meted with the highest punishment, day and night. Torture them, beat them up, and inflict such torment that will be only equal to what we see our fallen brothers under the Dungeon go through for eternity. I hate the Enemy with perfect hatred, and I want you all to do the same. Love is weakness, and here in Hell, love is punished. Hate is your mantle.”

At this stage, there is a resounding standing ovation and cheers. The Assembly is lit up with unending chants of “Hail Ruler! Hail Lucifer! Hail Bright and Morning Star! Hail Ruler of Rulers!”

It hits Brumalin that all that he has gone through until now has been just a foretaste. He has come

here to Hell as a prisoner, not as a member as Cjaron and all these demons have been assuring him. He finally understands that what they call initiation here is, in fact, incarceration.

So, I could have been in a cell had it not been for the delay.

It bothers Brumalin as he thinks about it.

Poor me. So, I am bound to the fires of Hell! He is shaking within. Why didn't someone warn me? Why didn't I learn about this place while I was on earth? And the coronavirus thing, Oh my God!

Then he thinks about his estranged wife, Caroline, who had been concerned about his promiscuous life. But she had not been forthcoming; she could have spared him this flagellating existence. She only showed him that she could not live with a womanizer. She could have done more. He blames her.

“I now announce a New World Order, a new vision I have been crafting in the last century,” Satan begins.

A New World Order—where did I bear this phrase?

Brumelin remembers that he first heard about it during a wrestling match, and then he thought it was simply a bullish stance that professional wrestlers took in entertainment. But then he was introduced to it at the Freed Marions temple in Ankharud, where he attended a grand master's Invocacio.

Those high-level gatherings were instigated by Satan, Brumelin is thinking when his thought is interrupted by Satan's speech.

“As I was saying, I am bringing a New World Order, a world without sin, a sinless world.”

Brumelin senses that it is not only him who is surprised by this announcement. For the very first

time, he hears murmurs across the Presidium.

Hecate stands up and beckons to the Assembly to come to silence. The Assembly does. Satan continues.

“I am reserving my wrath because I am impressed by your impatience. I love impatient servants,” Satan assures everyone, and again continues his announcement.

“Yes, I am creating a *world without sin*—a world where sin is normal. No longer shall grasses fear to sin or be embarrassed by it, because sinning will be normal, and those who disregard it will be called losers, failures, the intolerant and violators of human rights.”

The Assembly rises up to an absolutely deafening ovation. There is no one seated, including Brumelin, lest he be punished for not doing so or expose himself to the demoniacs. Efforts by Hecate to silence the Assembly go unheeded.

Brumelin sees someone familiar: it is Pharas-Asmodeus. The president of sin is busily dancing with all his might. Swashes of “*Superbia* is the new normal,” “*Avaritia* is the new normal,” “*Luxuria* is the new normal,” “*Invidia* is the new normal,” “*Gula* is the new normal,” “*Ira* is the new normal” and “*Acedia* is the new normal,” flash repeatedly all around his antenna-like instrument.

Immediately, the Assembly calms down, and Satan continues with his message.

“Never again, never again shall it be a sin to steal, to commit fornication, to murder another, to speak evil of your neighbor, to lie to one another.

“Never again shall they say, ‘See, she walks nude or he talks callously, for they shall hold them in high esteem, as heroes, those who break up families and cause divisions and dissensions!’

“Never again shall they condemn laziness,

drunkenness, or say, ‘Marijuana is illegal, crack is unlawful, or any drugs for that matter. For everyone will *choose* what they want and do what they like, and all who try to stop them will be called naïve, *evil*, and not deserving of living!’

“Never again, never again shall there be only one religion above all—grasses shall be their own gods and shall worship anything they desire. For I, Lucifer, shall be in everything and through anything, and whoever worships anything, and everything shall worship me.

“Never again, and I say never again, shall there be another god besides me, for *blessed* shall be all who do evil and *doomed* shall be all who do righteousness! And the meaning of the two shall be interpreted scientifically, and morality shall have no place in my New World!”

Before he ends, the Ruler looks intently at his son, Satanael; beckons to him to stand up; and announces, “My son is ready, I am ready, the Great Wind is ready, and we are ready. We shall make the Enemy lose. We shall give him the last and terrible blow. Everything he has told the grasses is wrong.”

The audience stands to its feet and begins to pound heavily on all walls. There is commotion everywhere. Satan signals that all should be silent, and there was deathly silence at once.

“As I was saying,” Satan resumes, “when you go out into the earth, governments will begin to enact legislations that support this new idea, this new order. Laws will be passed that will legitimize sin, and statutes that proscribe decency will proselytize those which instill morality in people. Blessed are those who will tell others to do evil!”

Once again, chants resonate around the whole Assembly: “Hail Ruler! Hail Lucifer! Hail Bright and Morning Star! Hail Ruler of Rulers. Dust rises, along

with the sounds and the din from the mingling and dancing, the clapping of hands, the beating of drums, the whistling and claps of high-fives and frolicking that find their way into every crevice in the Presidium.

Brumelin remembers the Nine Circles of Hell he had read about in Dante’s *Inferno*. *How unreal at first, I thought.*

As Satan’s speech is coming to an end, the Grand Ruler of Hell begins to summon some demons to re-anoint them:

“Prince Cresiliad, you must go to earth to impart impurity and uncleanness.”

“You, Zandor, go and teach voodoo and witchcraft, and destroy marriages through the use of fake love potions.”

“Jezebeth, go make the humans angry. Paralyze them with weakness and let them be each other’s accusers.”

“Guaricana, blood. I want more blood. Go and kill and tempt more murderers.”

“Prince Merihimiad, don’t let the disasters in Africa recede, increase them. Plague the Indian Ocean with more tsunamis, and paralyze the Americas with tornados, hurricanes, and floods.”

“As I preached, Xaphan, I want you to make the fires of Hell hotter. Show no ounce of mercy.”

This charge winds the air out of Brumalin, and he begins to shiver feverishly. He now knows full well that his end, his miserable end, is just about to begin. And with this latest charge, he will be one of the first unfortunate souls in Hell to receive the wrath of Satan’s minions and lieutenants. He begins to cry silently. Meanwhile, Cjaron is keeping an eye on him to ensure that he does not disclose that he is uninitiated and, therefore, a breach of one of the most fundamental rules of Hell. Cjaron could be

exiled to the Abyss before his time.

“Over there, are you okay?” whispers Cjaron.

“I am keeping watch over him throughout,” Azozis-Azrael jumps in before Brumalin can answer.

Brumalin, without looking at either, just nods his head to indicate everything is in control. Meanwhile, the trio continues to listen to the Ruler. Any indication that someone is not paying attention or is talking while the Ruler speaks may attract serious repercussions.

Standing in the aisle just to the right of Brumalin, and one of the toughest ushers in Hell is Itzcolihqui. Itzcolihqui is not very difficult to locate. He is a devouring reddish-orange demon with twenty-five eyes dotted all over him. He can see in all directions and is trusted to keep order in Hell. In the cells where the tormented are kept, he elicits fear and trepidation. He is dubbed Destruction, although he is limited to Hell only. He was banished to the underworld where he devours souls.

A few meters to the left of Brumalin stands Inmaiad, a blue-and-red demon wearing a gray sash around his chest. He moves with a throng-threaded whip and is known to cause fettering injuries to both souls in Hell and people on earth using his whip and thorns. Once he is stationed in one spot, he rarely moves from there. Those close to him in the Assembly do not make even a whispering sound lest they incur his uncompromising wrath. He will report even the princes of Hell to the Ruler if they display unbecoming behavior. He is feared.

Aware of these two ushers on either side of him, Brumalin keeps to himself. His fate can be more catastrophic than that of Cjaron’s, Azozis-Azrael’s, or Apepiad’s. Brumalin is inside the Assembly uninitiated contrary to the rules of Hell, mostly

because Apepiad conspired with Cjaron and Azozis-Azrael for Cjaron not to support Belfegor against Apepiad on the Council. So far it is a neatly kept secret among them. Any revelation of the same detriments all of them involved.

Then Satan invites two demons to the podium.

“Mammon and Moloch, come over here,” he orders. “You two have a very specific mission. The USA and Israel consider themselves allies, and they are in league to try and destabilize my organized religions in the world.”

“I have always told you that war and politics are not the main harvest tools we have in the USA. Mammon, you’re well fitted there, and I have been receiving very good reports of your work among them. But I want you to do even more. Concentrate on making them greedy, gluttonous, and excessive on wealth. Yes, attack and cause great injustice in governments and among interest groups. But still prioritize those three: greed, gluttony, and wealth. Do you read me?”

“Yes, Grand Ruler, Ruler of Rulers,” Mammon responds, bowing his head.

“For you, Moloch, I can’t tell you anything new. You’re the best in that region and against my number one enemy country—Israel. You know that that country gives me sleepless nights. Any Jew still alive is menace to me, to all these gathered here and to our entire system. We don’t gain Jews on a daily basis here in Hell because they don’t need that Enemy Son’s approval. The Enemy simply translates them to Heaven. The best option we have is exterminating them. So far, we haven’t found a leader like my beloved Adolf Hitler, fortunately now locked up for severe punishment in Cell 741, as he learned rather too late that there is even greater penalty for serving me well on earth. This only

applies to the mortals.” Then the Ruler winks as if the mention of Hitler is a cancer to him.

“As I was saying, don’t spare even a single Jew. Cause severe civil wars with the surrounding neighbors near and far and allow the shedding of blood. Kill the Jewish children in war and let them be hated by all the peoples of the earth. For each surviving Jew is a dent to my purpose. Do you hear me, Moloch?”

“Yes, very clear my Grand Liege,” answers the demon who is a specialist in Judaism, and who appears to Brumalin as a lizard-type man. He is known for killing Jewish children. He has always succeeded in his missions. The only time he failed was when he could not kill the baby Jesus because the angel Michael had prevailed over him.

At this time, Brumalin is struck with fear, but he cannot avoid noticing that unlike all other demons, Satan is blunt. He does not mince words. His instructions are clear and to the point. He shows the demons how to win his wars. He hates the Jews and the Jewish nation, and he does not hide that fact.

Then Brumalin realizes that Satan’s voice, demeanor, and behavior are not very unfamiliar; this was what he was accustomed to hearing from the Boss, his colleagues, and from reading in the earthly media.

Could it be that Satan is so entrenched into our lives on earth that we don’t discriminate? This is the guy we hear on TV, watch in our movies in cinemas across the earth, and entertain through music and movie celebrities. His instructions are what we give in schools, colleges, and universities. His behavior is what we get from criminal groups and organized anarchists. His strategy is the one used by crooks and fraudsters. His behavior is akin to that of warmongers, prostitutes, and Casanovas. Brumalin thinks.

What, this is the guy we worship on earth without

knowing it. He breathes very deeply. “If I went to earth, I would spill my lungs out. I would warn all, none excepted, that there is not just a Hell but also Satan who is the causer of all the troubles, sicknesses, diseases, deaths, and pandemonium on earth. I...” again he breaks into silent sobs because he is realizing that it’s too late and that also has become torture in itself to him.

The Ruler of Hell, after successfully recommissioning Mammon and Moloch, now returns to his list:

“Eblisiarad, I am reassigning you to the Middle East to lend support to Moloch, go and cause despair, and included in your mission is Syria.”

“Ikwaokinyapippilele, and you, Sakarabru and Musomba, go back to Africa. So far, I am impressed with the three of you. Make them die in droves from Ebola, AIDS, migraines, malaria, and Covid-19. Devastate their bodies. When their bodies are done, they will be in no mood to like the Enemy. And continue to wreak poverty havoc. Deprive them of dignity. Bring such untold misery that they will continue to think that the Enemy is unfair to them. Kill them also in unending civil wars. Make their nights miserable through witchcraft. Receive their children in massive sacrifices. And cause them to be discriminated against on account of racism all over the world.”

“Leonard, Jahi, and Lilith, as for you three, I have been very much disappointed. Traditionally, sexual temptations have been my mainstay. I thought you would do a better job than Qadesh and Sebumeker are doing with impurity. I want you to bring more sexual hunger and looseness. Defile their bodies and make sex sell. I am assigning three more to your team: Kok-Lir, to prey on wandering men; Mullin, to induce sexual pleasure and seduce men

through magic and wet dreams; and Keron-Kenken, to cause massive miscarriages among women.”

Then the ruler barks, “Elathan, Kasdeya, come over here.”

The two subtle teenage-looking demons—a boy and a girl, respectively—quickly trot to the podium.

“Go to universities and learning institutions. Recruit more boys and girls. Infiltrate sororities and create mayhem among rival youth groups. Ingratiate them with expensive titivations of gold and silver, and present riches and sex as must-haves. I want them to go wild, and in the next Assembly, I want results to be reported. Do you understand the order?” Satan barks again.

“Indeed, as good as done, Most Worshipful,” they rejoin almost in unison.

“Ronwe, currently you command nineteen legions in Hell, but you are the most knowledgeable of all of my guardians. I am appointing you chief, and Tezcatlípoca, Ravana, Imhotep, Sefkhet-Abwy, Seshat, Mastema, and Oroan will join you. I want your team to manipulate science and thought, writing and literacy, and to dominate with your materials in libraries. Confuse measurements and distort belief systems. That’s an order.”

“Yes, Most Deserved Emeritus, all is taken,” the knowledge and science team reply.

Then the Ruler takes a step that almost throttles the throat of Brumalin. He pointed straight in the direction where Brumalin, Cjaron, Azosis-Azrael are seated. “You,” he calls out.

Itzcolihqui approaches and redirects, pointing at Brumalin. “Him?” he clarifies.

The Ruler hesitates and then responds, “No, that one. Isn’t that Cjaron, the Father of Time and Prime Bringer of Death?”

“Yes, it’s me, Your Worship.” Cjaron stomps to

his feet.

His heart is beating hysterically. The last time he was picked from the crowd, he was punished for messing up the Ides of March. And now he may face the worst discipline of his existence.

Ob, I am in big trouble, Cjaron convinces himself.

He rises to his feet, whimpering. Then he crawls on his knees toward the throne, almost pleading for mercy, which itself is an oxymoron, as mercy does not exist in Hell. Mercy and compassion are an affront to the order and authority of Hell.

“With immediate effect—in fact, right now,” begins the Ruler of Hell.

Cjaron coils studiously, and starts to beg for a little lenience: “Please—”

But he is interrupted: “You will command the gates of Hades in exchange with Ibwa. He will now be guardian of the Styx.”

“And with him I am bringing Irvene, Jilaiya, Karau, and Herensugue. They will hunt the expanse for wandering souls. I anticipate a lot of accidents and poisonings in the next session. Ibwa has been summoned, and straightaway, I am sending you to the gates of Hades to replace him. Take Azosis-Azrael with you. He will continue to deputize you. You two have worked fantastically together. This is clearly a promotion. Congratulations!”

The Assembly erupts in chants: “He deserves it. Ibwa has been cantankerous and lazy.”

Just then, Kobaliad, the official clown of Hell, appears. Legend has it that he was originally created as the angel of laughter but was banished from Heaven. He became the demon of mockery. He likes to make evil appear humorous and funny. Kobaliad escorts Cjaron; Nybras, another joker in Hell; and Azosis-Azrael outside the Presidium and out of the Assembly, all the time pouring on Cjaron

ulations of approval. And off the four go.

Meanwhile, Brumalin breathes a sigh of relief:

“That was so close,” he mutters to himself.

And now he remains alone. And the Assembly continues to its closing.

“Rimmon, come,” the Ruler coughs.

“At your service, Grand Liege,” Rimmon answers.

“You will be assigned to the Vatican City. Keep idol worship strong. You will be joined by Atum, Ba-Pef, Nergal, Opet, Damas, Iusaas, and Mut. This Egyptian contingent has been dealing with the papacy for generations, and it will guide you in your duties. Let Catholicism continue to grow in numbers but give them a little touch with the Enemy. We win each time they put their trust in liturgies and sacraments, and not in the Enemy. Inundate them with procedural complexities. Do you get me?”

They all respond in concert, “Well received.”

“As for you, Lima, Orusula, Olisha, Xa-Mul, and Tlacatecolotl, I am placing you under the order of Princess Proserpine, the Queen Mother to Baal. She will lead you into causing excruciating pains and causing slow death through the spread of cancer and all other communicable diseases. I want your group to intensify the practice of voodoo, the casting of spells, and the spread of black magic. Make shamans, medicine men and soothsayers, charmers, psychics and necromancers, and fortune-tellers increase in numbers and in power. And cause physical, mental, and great emotional pains and suffering.”

“Indeed, Your Most Worshipful Liege,” Proserpinad answers on behalf of the rest.

The Galatian-5–19–21-Rostarium

Then the Ruler continues, this time addressing the Assembly:

“Now, I want you next to get me correctly. The report made available to me by President Bueranje is very disturbing. You seem to be neglecting our tested weapons. Throughout my liegeship, these have been what has given us maximum profit and populated our Hell. I am going to ask my Son to be head of the Galatian-51921-Rostarium. My Son, Prince Satanael, will guide us from henceforth into cultivating the vices of prejudice, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like. He will do this on the daily basis as the End is near.

“The following generals will report to Prince Satanael on the Galatian-5–19–21-Rostarium: Pyro, Raum, Sonneillon, Succorbenoth, and Tando Ashanti. Shabriri will be secretary to Prince Satanael. Now, this will be the greatest team I have ever assembled, and hence the reason for appointing my own son as leader.

“We need to intensify our mission; the End comes quicker than we all think. And we need to deprive Heaven of souls. And I am also instructing all princes, principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness, from time to time, to receive reports from Secretary Shabriri on the activities of this group. Of course, all should be done with my son’s knowledge.”

The land of the underworld is more ruthless than the one of the mortals. On earth, humans can make mistakes and still may find penance and make amends, but not so in Hell.

Brumalin is in here, albeit uninitiated; and by Hell definition, he is still on the passage to be damned. Once the initiation has been performed, one is permanently locked up in what they call the Dorsal of Hell.

In it are cells where each soul is eternally locked awaiting eternal judgment before they could finally be emptied into the Abyss, or the Fatal Gehenna, the bottomless pit of furious fires.

However, those who displease the Ruler are condemned in advance into a place known as Hades, to which Cjaron has now been promoted to man its gates.

Oh, my God, I can know everything in the way they have been ordered. It is the reason why Satan insists souls are first initiated, Brumalin is thinking. But it is all useless now. Knowing is just more torture to me. Why isn't this knowledge readily available somewhere on earth...why...why...I...

Brumalin is so deeply entrenched in his thoughts that he does not hear when the Ruler is charging Pharas-Asmodeus to destroy prayer in the church.

All he hears is “Once this is done, we can work in peace and meet our targets. You know, General Pharas-Asmodeus, inflict serious lethargy on churches so that they cease praying. Let them be only comfortable with those lame prayers of grace. And as long as they recite the Lord’s Prayer without meaning what it says, it’s okay. You know that that prayer has more power than all other prayers when it is said with meaning. Do you get this?”

The demon who is nicknamed the President of Sin bows all the way to the floor and shouts, “Yes, sir! Yes, Master!”

But this does not supersede an earlier thought he has just been engrossed in. It was his observation after Satan gave a charge to his alleged son, Satanael.

“What I was saying was...” He quickly searches

his mind to continue the thought.

By now, Brumalin should be worried about what would become of him, but he cannot avoid noticing the level of distrust even with those who are closest to the Ruler, like his own purported son, Satanael. He seems to trust no one, and of course, the demons know but are powerless in his presence.

And Brumalin is still surprised that he cannot clearly describe the appearance of Satan in the Presidium. Satan seems to have assumed the appearance of the place, becoming the archetype of the qualities that he is dealing with at any point in time. *So, Brumalin wonders, is Satan this illusive even in the presence of his own demons?*

Satan continues, “I, as is custom here, just before we close this meeting, would like to call upon Lord Mekmoneh, the Treasurer of Hell, to give us a summation.”

And just then, there appears a smartly dressed half unicorn and half goat, in an extremely shiny silver gown with a spreadsheet of financial statements.

“Your Majesty, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, Grand Master of Masters, eternally powerful and beautiful, congratulations for addressing your servants,” Mekmoneh worships.

“I, manipulator of greed and strife, lover of money and wealth, have good news to report—that our coffers continue to swell. The last report remains unchanged, except that this year, we have added the IMF president to our donors list. With those remarks, I again, with great privilege, hand back to you, Most Worshipful Liege.”

Nabuius, the chief guardian of the gates of Hell, approaches the Ruler’s throne and bows six times and announces that the gates of Hell are again open for routine activities.

“And subject to the president’s offerings, Your Most Worshipful Liege, can dismiss your servants.”

President Bueranjie returns to the podium and motions to all the Assembly to stand; and then, looking toward the west, he shouts “Dominus!” six times.

A sharp wind shakes the foundation of the Presidium, and after a moment, the Ruler disappears.

All the demons begin to return to their stations in great hurry. But they break neither order nor rank. Their eyes blaze with fire; their mouths knuckle with grinding teeth. They do not look back as they leave the Presidium. All the attention is focused on reaching their stations.

The Assembly energizes these evil beasts, reasons Kirl, who at once realizes that upon their exit from the Presidium, he is no longer cloaked in the demon Brumalin’s masks.

Woe to the earth—for Satan in great wrath comes, Kirl mourns with great grief in his heart.

7 | Somewhere between Hell and Heaven

The spell of Pharas-Asmodeus has been lifted from him, and so is the prowling presence of the two demons of death, Cjaron and Azosis-Azrael, who have now been promoted to administer the details of the abodes of Hades. Apepiad knows the secret, but he is too busy patching up the remnants of the Presidium. Kirl remains a wandering soul in Hell—uninitiated, unmasked, and without a cell. As every demon relocates to its own station and the Presidium empties, Kirl must find a way to shelter himself. He has now learned what “initiation” entails. He knows he will be doomed to the Dorsal of Hell, to an eternal cell where there will be gnashing of teeth and perpetual punishment.

As he sits there, a thought comes into his mind: *If only I can get to the First Gate, I might have a chance.*

But how can I accomplish this? he doubts.

Kirl was very good in the game of disguises as a spy. He has staged some of the most delicate escapes in his job. In 1991, Kirl was stationed in Kazakhstan for his espionage work on behalf of a joint mission between Canada and the United States dubbed Operation Vibrancy, which was marshaled to free Kazakhstan from the USSR’s control. Kirl was there to support Zhumabai Abilmansur, whom he simply called ZA. ZA was the only candidate in that year’s elections who was advocating for market reform and privatization, fair and free elections, and democratic reforms. If elected president, he would help to strengthen relations between that country and the free world.

ZA won that election, but only to be deposed in 1995. In 1996, the Kazakh Patriotic Front (KPF), the party for which ZA was president, asked the Canadian government for Kirl's assistance in helping ZA escape from prison. Kirl was arrested by the Kazakh military junta, the People's Redemption Party (PRP), which was then in power. The PRP had intercepted intelligence regarding the arrival of Kirl. Kirl was placed in the same prison as ZA. The government moved its headquarters from Almaty to Astana in December 1998, and both ZA and Kirl were being moved to Astana when Kirl escaped.

Kirl built a head mask that resembled the warden. In anticipation of the removal from the Ularak Maximum Prison (UMP) in Almaty, where he was being held, to an unnamed new maximum-security prison in Astana, on the eve of the removal, Kirl sneaked out in open view disguised as Warden Karakul.

But his greatest challenge came when he reached the Fort Monstorpist, as they called it. It was erected during the Prussian War to derail any would-be escapee. A nearly-three-hundred-meter crevasse had been constructed, and it could be viewed from hidden cameras.

Kirl was aware of this challenge and must overcome it to escape. There was now only one guard remaining, the defeat of whom would guarantee him not only a safe passage but also the Name of Fame. The Name of Fame was a cryptic code employed by the secret agents, and it meant that an agent had put his own life at risk to secure a release either for himself or his nation's interest. It called for the highest honor and deference in the spy syndicate. Would he attempt it? If not that day, then when?

I can do this, he chided himself in order to

provoke the force in him. He had done this many time, but on less life-threatening missions.

This mission is lethal, he contemplated. *If I should be caught, there will be no mercy. Instant justice will be meted out to me.*

He squeezed himself toward the exit. So far, he had been very careful not for the guard to think of the otiosely lying cloth on the space between the gate and the prison as a person. He had been moving when the search lights turned the other way, and he stopped moving when they returned to his spot.

He was only thirty meters away from the gate and standing at attention was a military guard armed with a T68 SplitFire Dual Feed, capable of providing two different types of .68 calibers in his right hand and holding a Public Announcement (PA) gadget in his left hand.

Kirl should be very careful; any slight movement might lead to bullets flying in his direction and a trigger made on the PA, and this last action would alert all the guards across the precinct.

He was almost within reach, and the officer sensed his presence. In a split second, the guard would decide whether to unleash his weapon first or call into the PA system or both. Before he could make that instant decision, however, Kirl marked the delicate spot just behind the guard's ear, where good solid contact would guarantee a deathblow. He swung his right elbow as strongly and as precise as he could. And yes, he got his contact, and within a fraction of the second, the PA gadget was down on the floor, and the deadly weapon was now in Kirl's left hand.

The guard was now lying on the floor, flat and quiet.

Kirl smashed out urgently, hoping to meet something, whatsoever. He heard a crunch and

sensed the shock of exchange in his hand. The shockwave ran profusely into his right-side brain nerves. He felt like quitting, but his fighting instinct drove him on.

Why didn't I see this one coming? He struggled for breath.

He composed himself. At least this other guard did not have a PA gadget, and he was trying hard to get to the other comrade, who was lying low, unconscious, on the hard floor. Kirl knew that if that happened, his chance of getting out of there alive would be slim.

In a jujitsu stride, he flipped himself tightly and ratcheted his flinging palm in the face of the limping guard. He made him lose his grip on the weapon; it fell from his hurting fingers. Kirl brought the gun down with his entire force, keeping his eyes on the fingers of the hard-breathing guard, who, despite his face being covered in blood, had his instincts telling him the weapon was just near his right foot. Kirl hit the panting guard hard in the throat, quieting his gasping.

It was deathly silent.

“Is everything all right there?” announced the UMP pontoon commander who heard some noises earlier.

“*Saw bolñız*” Kirl responded with the only Kazakh jargon he had learned since his incarceration.

Later, he learned that it meant, “Good-bye,” or some sort of that.

The commander laughed and joked, “I hope you’re not sleeping yourself into forced retirement.”

Kirl stood up and shook off the dirt on his face. He disappeared into the dense forest at once.

This escape was dubbed the greatest escape in the history of Kazakhstan. As a result, Kirl reported

the atrocities of the PRP, which led to UN sanctions against Kazakhstan and the subsequent release of ZA from prison.

But this is a different type of a prison, Kirl thinks. On earth, humans don't have a hind sense; here, you're surrounded by evil spirits, and they see everything. How can I pull one out?

No sooner has Kirl finished thinking than he sees Adramehell and his retinue trekking back to the Wilderness. In the extreme excitement of the moment, and because Adramehell and his entourage had entertained Cjaron and Kirl before, there was no suspecting that Kirl was along—alone and uninitiated. As they begin to trek, Kirl realizes that the group does not use the long route used by Cjaron; that route passes by the four gates of Hell and avoids the northern side of the Solace of Abraham.

This route they are now using goes through the corridors of Hades and passes briskly through the northwest of the Solace of Abraham before it exits the Styx. It is faster but it is filled with extreme anguish and sorrow that most demons prefer to use the way of the four gates. Adramehell must reach his station quickly to plan the implementation of the mandates given by the Ruler at the Assembly. He decides to take the way of Hades.

It is not long before they begin making their way through a narrow strip of marshes astride Hades and the Abyss. It is the route where only two souls can fit at the time, but it will be rapid trekking thereafter. The trip through the territory of princes and princesses is very fast, and they quickly reach the banks of Hades, Cjaron's new headquarters.

Immediately, they see that the banner has changed, and Kirl and company can read, “Hades Welcomes Its New Patron, Cjaron, the Worthy Father of Time.”

Hmm...Hell does not waste time, thinks Kirl.

“He will have less work but intense anguish,” remarks Adramelehell to one of the members of his members.

Kirl will never forget what he is about to see next. As they negotiate a very stealthy corner of marshes and swamps, they begin to slip fast down into the place that is getting hotter and hotter. The experience of dryness begins to bother Kirl. Being the only human soul in the company, and the heat of Hades having been regular experiences of most demons, especially those who are sent here for several misbehaviors, it is definitely only Kirl who has to bear the greatest torture of Hades’ corridors.

Then it begins like the inner of the sun, yellow and orange, rays of unending coals burning in symmetry with one another, and Kirl can see the souls of both humans and demons squirming in excruciating pain, their mouths open like little chicks panting for water. On top of each soul are auras of the sins each is brought in here for: There is the seven most deadly sins, then all other sins unimaginable. The flames never burn the souls, only tortures them. Then Kirl sees rotten souls with worms, which is truly scary. The souls continue to be eaten up by worms that never die. It’s a continuous, ever-increasing morbid torture, unheard of, unimaginable.

And for the first time, Kirl hears a voice in the inside of Hades and where the voice is coming from, he can read on the big billboards, in tandem with what is happening, these words:

And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the

men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

And just above those words, Kirl sees *Isaiah 66:24* in big letters. Kirl notices that all the demons in entourage with Adramelehell have blocked their ears and shielded their eyes from seeing what is happening in Hades. They do this each time they pass by way of Hades. Most, almost 98 percent, of demons who have once used this route will never use it again. It torments their souls before they are finally thrown in there. Adramelehell, a hardened general, is using this route for the third time now.

“No wonder everyone fears this place. No wonder Cjaron had to risk having me attend the Presidium without being initiated,” Kirl cries uncontrollably but silently, without attracting the attention of the demons in whose company he has neatly disguised himself as one of them.

Of course, no one is looking and observing another; otherwise, Kirl can easily be spotted and taken back to Pharas-Asmodeus for incarceration pending initiation.

Just then, Kirl hears what he thinks is the greatest cry of anguish he has ever heard. It is a man—no, a king, with a scratched crown, crying iniquitously.

“Wha! I was smitten by the angel because I didn’t give God the glory...I was eaten up...and I am still being eaten of worms...crs...crs...crs...”

A man whose tag identifies him as King Herod is the one crying. Kirl can tell that the king is in great pain, which no words can express. And Kirl moves so quickly that his legs hurt – he wants so much to be “out of here” if not for a second only. But he cannot stop thinking that he, as well, will be thrown into the same place.

He can’t stop crying: “Oh...oh...my God, why

didn't I believe in God...why am I here..."

Kirl sobs nefariously as he runs through the narrow strip. Ironically, Kirl feels like he is being chased, but when he looks back, there is no one chasing him. The chase, nevertheless, continues, and he can hear waves of humming words ringing in his ears. "And if thy hand offends thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched."

He has never heard these words, but they sound familiar in view of the present experience.

The words do not stop; he continues to hear them: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched...and if thy foot offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched."

The soul of a man who knew how to escape danger, dodge calamities, and outsmart masterminds, is caught in a race for survival, a survival that he has no chance at.

The words get even louder in his ears, like the swarm of bees: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched...and if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than having two eyes to be cast into Hell fire."

Kirl stops, looks everywhere, but he cannot see anything. The narrow strip of marshes is getting narrower but becoming less hot as they move up slightly into the territory of Darkness. He can still hear the torturing words: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched..."

And he can, actually, see giant worms tormenting the lost souls in the fire.

There and then, just as they cross into the

territory of Darkness, Kirl can now see clearly, more, or less like seeing into the light from within the darkness. The strange giant worms that he thinks he sees are actually real. He thinks that these are unique worms because they are thriving in the fire of extremely hot temperatures. In fact, after passing through the narrow strip, Kirl smells as though he has been submerged in sulfur.

As Kirl looks intently from outside the boundary of Hades into the brimming fires, he can now see what looks like human skeletons, but not really dead humans, as they are very much alive in there. Now Kirl is truly disturbed.

What, humans rotting with worms coming out of them...skeletons but still alive? he wonders.

As he looks, he sees three men, and on their head badges, he can read their names: Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. He looks at them and sees that worms are crawling out of the bones of their skeletons. But they are not being harmed by the fire. Kirl can tell that they are both feeling the pains of fire and the effect of the worms, but they are not dying. And it is this last thought that is truly traumatizing Kirl.

"I would rather I just died than continue to suffer in there, in here." Kirl groans inside, but he notices that the members of the Adramelehell Company are gaining distance on him.

He is now torn in between; in one move, he wants to see everything happening in there. His inquisitive aspect is drawing him to that end. In another move, he knows he should not be distant from the company of the demons he has joined, lest he be isolated and discovered. But he cannot resist noticing how the worms are destroying the bodies.

"Oh, look, my goodness, those worms are coming in and out of their empty eye sockets, mouths, and ears..." He is terribly afraid now.

It is like everything happening to those poor souls in there is also happening to him.

As Kirl continues to look backward, to see more of Hades and those poor souls and demons suffering in there, he has forgotten that the others in his company are making headway. He looks ahead but cannot see anything. The darkness is so thick that he can barely see where he is stepping next. He has to choose to go back into Hades or to continue moving into darkness to an uncertain destination.

The darkness troubles him, but that is the only way to go. The darkness seems to be pulling him backward rather than pushing him forward. He struggles to step forward, and by this time, he is in great tears.

Have I now been arrested? he cries out within himself. *Stupid life, stupid people.*

These people always say, "Oh, so-and-so has died and has gone to Heaven." What Heaven. Everyone who ever died, they told me that they went to a good place. Or there is nothing after death, or it is over once your brain is disconnected from your functionality. How deceived. How blinded. How ignorant. Fatal ignorance!

Kirl is now panting so heavily that his breath is the only sound in the darkness. He can hear his own thoughts.

I am mad. I am crazy. Oh, my God, I am being driven crazy in here. Where am I? Kirl stumbles; he falls down and wakes up and continues into the prying darkness.

Fools, they always said there is no afterlife. They must come here and experience it for themselves. There are some that believe that once they die, they are done, there is no more remembering, no more existing, no more being aware of themselves, how deceived we have all been! he blames himself.

"Here I am—am I a lifeless corpse or brain-dead

phenomenon? This brain isn't dead at all. I wish it were, and I was no more—disappearing just like that into the nothing. No, what we call a nothing is a Hell, a Hades—what a place!" Kirl is now speaking louder and louder, and for a moment, this keeps him going, and he does not realize that it has bought him some time from the pain of thinking and feeling.

In Hell as in Hades, thoughts pain him even more than feelings.

Just then, and without warning, Kirl begins to fall and rise and fall and rise again. Suddenly, he falls and continues to go down. Just when he feels like hitting the floor of the gap, he realizes that he has been arrested into the nothing—nothing but what looks like springs with numerous hydrothermal vents.

There are strange noises and the sound of crying coming out of these vents. Kirl bows down and looks down, and what he sees next vituperates his thinking and breaks the balls out of him.

Kirl sees angels, really pretty angels; but these angels are each in a pit of darkness, in strong chains. The place, what Kirl is now calling the pit, is built in such a way that you can only see inside but those from inside cannot see you. It is also fashioned in such a way that once one enters, there is no way of coming out. It is a prison of exceptional architecture. Kirl has been to numerous prisons on earth, and even the worst of them all cannot compare to this pit, or pits as each angel is sequestered. On the top corner of each pit is a small banner: "The Angel Who Sinned."

What, there are angels who sin, and these are not like the demons? he cracks a rhetorical question. I am not even a demon, lest an angel. I am nothing in this place. I am just like firewood in this place."

And as soon as he falls into another seeming deep level down, Kirl sees another set of pits, and

he sees what looks like superhuman beings—big, strong giants of men. And Kirl notices that these superhuman beings are submerged in the burning waters, which are flooded to their brinks. They are both struggling to breathe while they agonize from the pains of the fires. It is agony at its worst.

Misery...misery...where do you end in this place?

Just then, a contingence of five demons falls into the same trap, and they stand up and beckon to each other to be completely quiet, and then they head northward. Kirl begins to follow these demons—not that he approves of where they are going but because he has no idea where he should go. The five demons have not seen Kirl, and he keeps lurking into their shadows.

Kirl overhears them, and he gets a glimpse of the place they are in, which is the roof of the Dungeon, where the angels who did not keep their station and the sons of the giants who invaded the world of Noah are held in chains.

“These have already been judged,” says Arensnuphis, an anthropomorphic demon, who is also acting like the leader of the group.

“It is the Dungeon of the Fallen, of a large iron-rusted prison,” Arensnuphis gloats.

It is clear to Kirl that this was not built by demonic hands. And the signage above it gives a perfect description: “A Place of No Life.”

“I dread the day that I will be cast into these dungeons,” says Khonsu, one of the five, known only as the God of the Moon.

“Me too,” concurs Aten, another one of the five, only known as the Sun Disk.

“I want to bring myriads of those grasses here before I can taste this wrath,” promises Fetket, another one of the five and the one who is known by his peers as the Sun God’s Butler.

“I hate this route, but it is the shortest,” Mehet-Weret, a cow-like demon seethes while looking upward; she never looked down into the dungeon, not even for a while.

As Kirl keeps looking downward and observing everything that is happening in the pits, he has not realized that they have reached a marshland, a valley of dryness. Kirl is then hit with insurmountable thirst. He can barely think, and he stumbles nonchalantly, all the time lurching into the swamps, trying not to lose sight of the five demons. He has now come to know them as the gods of Egypt. They meander through the dry valleys and emerge through an extremely terrible passage of what looks like rotting owls and vultures that leads them directly toward the end of the Styx, bypassing the Wilderness.

The passage is so long that the combined feeling informs Kirl that he is finally dead. But when he gets to the other end, he can see a place he recognizes.

“That place over there is where I saw that old man who called my name,” he comforts himself.

The Solace of Abraham, I remember, Kirl talks to himself.

He is trying to figure out what has just taken place, where he has been, and perhaps where he may be going, when a sense of hopelessness grips his mind and thoughts. The Solace of Abraham is not reachable—there is a chasm between that place and where he is, but he can see who and what is inside.

The old man, whom Kirl had seen on his passage to the Hoard of Hell, comes to the fringes of the Solace of Abraham and cries out, “My name is Fenner, Coveran Stephen Fenner. I am your father-in-law; both Caroline and Ravinah are my daughters – you married my two daughters,” the old man glows.

And before Kirl could process this latest thought, the old man conjectures, “You must have escaped from Hell, praise Jehovah. You must have...” And he goes on and on and on and on. Meanwhile, Kirl is left in a quandary—and is even more confused.

“But you must leave that place, the Limbo, at once, *Death* roams there, and once he captures you, there is no re-escaping,” the spirit of Father Fenner warns Kirl.

“But where should I go, can I come there?” the soul of Kirl solicits that of Father Fenner’s.

“No. Those, who are there, cannot come here, and those who are here cannot come there. There is a chasm between us,” responds the soul of Father Fenner, disappointing the soul of Kirl.

“But what shall I do?” Kirl begins to cry.

“Go back!” a thunderous voice echoes all over the expanse, and Kirl knows that it is not his father-in-law’s voice.

“Go back to the place where you felt like you were *dying*. Go to *Purgatoria*, for there the Savior re-entered the earth in the Resurrection, and there rest thy heart and mind pure in love,” the voice instructs.

Unbeknownst to Kirl, the place where he had felt like losing breath was not *Purgatoria* but *Delkanah*. The two places are close by each other. But the difference is that in *Purgatoria* there is life upward, while in *Delkanah*, life descends directly into the portals of Hell. The place of supreme emotions but also one of grand epiphany is associated with *Delkanah*. At *Delkanah*, the souls of unelected human beings put up a last but futile fight.

If Kirl’s soul should wonder at *Delkanah*, there will be no chance of going back to earth. The dilemma, too, is that many a soul may construe *Delkanah* to be a place of temporary relief and shun

Purgatoria, which is a place of rare but lasting relief. At *Delkanah*, the soul nearly recuperates and feels like gaining life, but it is only the beginning of a lonely advance into Hell, where souls are lost forever.

Kirl must fight the temptation to stay at *Delkanah*.

Without further questions, Kirl’s soul turns and wanders back into the darkness before him. When he reaches the place where he had initially felt like *dying*, the place he now knows is called *Purgatoria*, and for his venial sins not fully expiated before death, Kirl shows remorse, and with a somber attitude in love, in his suffering soul, he shouts out aloud what he has been failing to do in Hell: “Help me, please!”

8 | Near the Airspaces of Athens, Greece

“Who are you? Are you another of those aliens?” Kirl’s voice chocks him as he tries to return some composure. The hoopla around the divine being now standing, looking at him intently brings a relieving chill, but Kirl is still recovering from the brutal experience of Hell and does not want to believe he is now safe.

“Please, please, I have been through a lot already, why can’t you leave me alone!” he complains as he cries uncontrollably.

“Do not fear. My name is Angeliel, the Lord’s messenger of knowledge. I bring you good news, not fear,” the four-foot-nine, gorgeous, fairy-like-looking angelic being salutes Kirl.

Her delightful voice sends calm and harmonious warmth through Kirl that he cannot ignore. He feels his soul is at great peace, and immediately knows he is in good hands. For a while, Kirl simply does not know what is happening to him. After a temporary state of shock, he finds himself in the hands of Angeliel.

Tenderly, she cuddles him until he recovers his soul’s consciousness.

“Angeliel, you ...” As Kirl begins to put his words together, Kirl’s eyes falls on Angeliel’s figure.

He collapses. She holds his arm carefully and gently brings him up and comforts him, “I adjure you by the Highest, be strong.”

Immediately, strength comes upon Kirl, and he

stands up. Now he can see what made him collapse. It was Angeliel's beauty. Kirl has never seen a woman this pretty and graceful at the same time.

She looks like she is a mix of Filipino and African descent, although she comes out looking like a brownish tanned Caucasian. Her short blonde hair reach down to just where her dimples share the boundary with her ever-widening full lips. Her eyes change colors depending on her mood: Green when she laughs, blue when she is serious, brown when she narrates the mysteries, and yellowish-gray when she feels sad, especially when she talks about the deceptions of what she calls the Myth of Alienism.

And how does Kirl know about all these? Well, that too is a mystery because Kirl can now know exactly what she is thinking before she does say a word.

"It's okay. I advanced your cognition abilities in order to get down to what the Lord God commissioned me to do," she assures him.

"Am I safe now, ma'am? I mean, is Hell over for me?" Kirl asks.

The pretty angel simply nods and reassures Kirl that he is all right with her now. In another gesture, she beckons that they proceed through the way of the northeast. As they walk together, Kirl sighs deeply and lets it go. "Oh, my God, all along I thought it was only myths—mythologies of the people. Oh, my God!"

"What is it, son of man?" Angeliel asks, pretending she does not know what he means.

"Hell, I have all kinds of books, engaged in all philosophical thoughts since I was seventeen. None of them told me there is a real life after the graves."

"What does philosophy teach?" she teases him.

"Philosophy...philosophy is useless to me now," Kirl answers without thinking.

"Philosophy, like any body of knowledge, is innocuous. It is the use to which one puts it that makes it either good or bad," Angeliel corrects him.

Then cautiously, without intending to offend Angeliel, Kirl simply jerks his soul's upper lip.

"Why, I thought it was the love of wisdom for the mortals," she probes him.

"Oh, no. But..." Kirl stops, and quickly, Angeliel turns over to him.

"Hmm, you wanted to say something?" she asks.

"My impression was always that Satan existed only as a myth, a fake disguise of people's imagination. Is it too late? Is it too late for me now?" Kirl cries.

"No. But I will now tell you that all your learnings and studies have not been in vain. What you did not understand on earth and its significance to Hell, I will now explain. Others after me, will explain the spiritual significance," she says.

"I don't need any explanation. I want to run away forever from Hell. Please tell me you can help me," Kirl begs.

"You have already escaped. No one reaches where you have reached after Hell. Trust me, you're safe now," she reassures, again.

Then Angeliel waves a white wand at Kirl, and the escaped soul calms down.

They walk again for what seems to be a long walk. They say nothing to each other. They seem to be walking along a sea or an ocean, but Kirl cannot tell whether it is on earth or somewhere else.

"Ma'am, can I ask you something?" Kirl breaks the silence.

"Yes, indeed. Please go on."

"What is the world order?"

"Good question. Are you aware of the ancient civilizations to date?" she asks him.

“Oh, yes, I have studied Ancient Egypt, the Mayan, and—”

Before Kirl could end, Angeliel stops him. “End there. I am aware of the depth of your knowledge. Now the question is, what do they reveal about the order of the world? You know, don’t you?” she challenges him.

“Well, what I know is that ancient cultures have something to do with—”

“Demons, you mean,” she interrupts him.

“Well, I intended to say aliens, but now yes, demons,” he follows.

“Of course, the deceiver wants the humans to think that they are dealing with aliens. He’s a master of disguises,” she says.

“I saw that in Hell,” Kirl admits.

“I don’t mean to dispute anything you have learned so far. I want to illuminate you so you can understand, but look at 100 BC Egypt and the three pyramids there—what did you learn in astronomy?” Angeliel asks.

“So, you know I love or loved astronomy. They seem to line up so congruently with Orion,” Kirl answers.

“Very good. You learned your astronomy well. Look. Another angel will later tell you about Orion and the place she played in the earthly incarnation of our Lord. For now, it suffices to note that the universe has always declared the knowledge of God. Satan has worked very hard to manipulate science and has led humans into abusing the pure wisdom of God.

“From ancient times, talk about 3000 BC if you want to be recent, the earth has taught the people the special entrances to the worlds beyond earth.”

“Such as the Newgrange Passage Tomb in the Boyne Valley in Ireland built there some five

thousand years ago in the Boyne River Valley, the dawn of the winter solstice for seventeen minutes, you mean?” Kirl asks.

“Of course, commendable, and now you know why the Lord chose you to undertake this mission,” she confirms.

“Choose me...and which mission?” Kirl is surprised.

“As I was saying,” Angeliel, ignoring Kirl’s question, continues, “The earth is a beautiful place the Lord God made so that he would have fellowship with humankind. He designed certain spots for such purposes.”

“I know what you mean. The earth’s energy glides—the magnetic glides—I thought they were placed there by extraterrestrial forces in order to necessitate energy, navigation, and, recently, Unidentified Foreign Objects (UFOs),” Kirl jumps in with excitement.

“No, and yes. Which one do you want me to deal with first?” Angeliel asks.

“The second, I guess,” Kirl answers with a grin.

“Well, Kirl, the humans have surely made a leap in discovering the world and the universe around them. They have made discovered planes, and that these fly in straight lines. They have made connections of the Cygnus mysteries and that the Easter Islands, Trelleborg, Eskeholm, Apollo’s Delphi, the Vikings’ Fyrkat, and Egypt’s Giza were not only magnificent historical interest points, but that they could have something to do with the constellations.

“The humans have also made connections among places like Jerusalem and Cusco of the Inca Empire and various locations where the ancient-built churches that these could have been more than launching sites but gates to the other world as well.”

“Yes, these places had, and some still have, cosmic effect. But there are plenty of other places humans are yet to discover which harbor many unknown earth-shaking phenomenon—”

“Like Hell...?” Kirl interrupts.

“Like Hell, yes. But no because man is just too slow to discover his God-given earth. You see, Kirl, the human brain is built to tell the story. The concept of pareidolia—”

“Is that a form of apophenia?” Kirl again interrupts.

“I should say I am impressed with your knowledge of science and the world. But not really, though related. Pareidolia is considered a psychosomatic phenomenon involving the human brain. Through its vague and random stimulus, it tells so many true stories to the humans. But usually, the humans tend to ignore these. If they only perceive its significance, humans could have seen more and known more than what they know now.”

“Does that involve knowing about the invisible spiritual world as well?” Kirl asks.

“Yes. The Lord God has placed everything within the humans’ reach,” Angeliel states, matter-of-factly.

“You said everything is within reach for the humans, but why don’t we know Hell exists in definite terms, like the way we are sure seasons will change?” Kirl bombards Angeliel.

“How do the humans know seasons will change, Kirl?” Angeliel asks.

“Of course, it does. I guess through experience,” Kirl replies, but almost inaudibly.

“Experience. Well, the humans also experience death, don’t they?” Angeliel implores.

“I think so...but no one comes back to earth to narrate the experience of death. So, there is a

difference,” Kirl answers.

“Well reasoned, Kirl. But think about it. Humans have a definite knowledge that death exists and also the truth that it leads to some definitive end. Isn’t this the reason why they create cults?” Angeliel asks.

“Cults are fake, Angeliel. Hell, and death are real. I experienced them. But what I’m saying is, no one goes back to earth to retell the ordeal of Hell and death, or even of good encounters with beautiful angels, just like you,” Kirl hints.

“Of course. I hear you. But you agree that it is common knowledge that death exists, don’t you, Kirl?”

“Yes, I do. But I am not privy to the end result of that death. In that sense, I don’t have the complete experience of death because I can’t tell someone about it—on earth, that is.”

“You asked me about the order of the world?” asks Angeliel.

“Yes, I did.”

“The world is accessed not by reason of reason but faith. You see the difference between you and Caroline?”

“So, you know about Carol, of course you do. Anyways, the difference is that she is a woman, and I am a man,” Kirl answers.

“That is a fact, Kirl. The fundamental difference between you and Caroline as far as our current topic is concerned is that she believed, and you didn’t. You believed in science and knowledge. She has a simple trust in the unseen God. And now tell me, if both of you died, who would go to Heaven and who would to Hell?” Angeliel fixed her eyes on Kirl, her gaze telling him that she was asking a rhetorical question. Angeliel fixes her eyes on Kirl, her gaze telling him that she is asking a rhetorical question.

“I see. You have a point there. The order of

things is that reason has a way and so does faith, is that correct?" inquires Kirl.

"Yes. But even more. All humans are born with something called eternity in their hearts. They are adept at believing in a god or God..."

"Wait a minute, is that what scientists, not that I esteem them, have discovered as the God particle," Kirl intrudes Angeliel.

"Well, recently science has discovered the Big Brain Event, hasn't it, Kirl?" asks Angeliel.

"Oh, yes, that the progressive manipulation of our brain within the shortest period of time can't be because of Charles Darwin's evolution theory. Man is a creature of his own DNA. The Eve Model now is taken to supersede the natural selection model," Kirl narrates.

"Well said, Kirl," Angeliel nods.

"But something is still bothering me on that topic."

"I know," the angel replies, but Kirl is not paying attention to her response; and as though they read each other, right at the same time, they both say, "Bueranje!"

They both laugh. Looking at each other with smiles on their faces (and it is the first time Kirl has laughed since he ran away from the Dorsal of Hell).

"Who goes first?" they again say it at the same time and laugh.

"I guess I should return your real mind to you, I am sure you will understand me just fine," Angeliel suggests.

"I now understand why you introduced yourself as angel of knowledge. You can easily persuade someone to think just like you," Kirl praises Angeliel.

"Partly true. Here is my question: Why is knowledge so vital, so important to both the

temporal and the celestial worlds?"

"Hmm, I now know. I saw how it has elevated Bueranje to the presidency of Hell. It should be very important."

"Splendid...utterly" the good angel admires.

"I heard it in Hell that that disfigured beast with multiple arms and legs but speaks with perfect eloquence and minces no syllable from his mouth is patron of all knowledge, and that he is responsible for such theories as evolution and the Big Bang. What is, dichotomy-wise, the actual relationship between him and you?" Kirl asks.

"None, Kirl, none. It's like light and darkness, perhaps and, of course, the entire Hell system deals with lies," Angeliel reports, but Kirl does not seem to be satisfied.

"Look at the evolutionary theories. They have had great momentum, haven't they?" asks Kirl.

"False theories, in general, and that is Hell's last stronghold. Satan has tried to manipulate truth to advance his end."

"Manipulate, and I think volume counts to the system?" Kirl says, making a connection.

"Yes, of course, yes. And that observation is spot on. It's not that people can't read between falsehood and truth. It's only that they are bombarded with lies and mistruths on a constant basis that they no longer know what lies are and what truth is."

"...like infiltrating universities and knowledge parlors with youthful demons?" Kirl, remembering the charge Satan gave to some demons in Hell, makes a suggestion.

"That is nothing in comparison to manipulating substantive knowledge itself in order to engineer a mental regime that repels truth and knacks after falsehood," Angeliel submits.

"Interesting...good point," Kirl says.

“And in order to keep humanity at bay, all knowledge has been contained in the hands of a few clandestine institutions—”

And again, Angeliel is interrupted in midsentence. “Such as the Smithsonian Institute?” Kirl asks.

“In fact, no. Although to some extent, I tend to use most Smithsonian experts to counteract satanic hypotheses. Ruthless organizations, which are a menace to our mission on earth, are underground organizations that fund major scientific and mythological discoveries. These groups fund so many political campaigns and technological explorations. They are both good and bad. When science and technology are used properly, they glorify God and help humanity. But when they are in the hands of these evil genius organizations, they are weaponized towards mass spiritual destruction.

“If the Lord did not create the Bible, the source of truth and true knowledge, humanity would be in total darkness. Campaign after campaign has been marshalled to tarnish the efficacy of the Bible and wipe it out of the domain of mankind, but these have failed, partly because of my missions. I have, by the wisdom of God, managed to publish two Bibles for every invention the enemy advances.

“These evil genius institutions hate the fact that the Bible is the world’s best seller decade after decade. Well, the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of Satan.”

“Wow, this is incredible,” Kirl says, excited.

“And there is one vehicle they are using at astronomical frequency,” Angeliel suggests.

“And let me guess, the media?”

“Yes. That’s right. Most of the news you read, through electronic, social or print media, is bad news. It is even more—it is meant to glorify evil and

undermine truth and good. Those who challenge the truth and substitute its precepts with half-truths are celebrated. Those who preach against evil are ostracized. Human beings reach a stage where they think it is foolhardy to propagate the truth. They anchor for popular culture that stigmatizes God and elevates human creative prowess. They deny the publication of noble and enlightening books and will do everything to stock bookstores with pure lies and half-truths. They *break* bad news and *suppress* good news because bad news is marketable,” Angeliel asserts.

Kirl is immersed in deep thoughts. Connecting the revelations of Angeliel to the charge of the Ruler in Hell, Kirl is impressed at how God outsmarts his archenemy.

“I am speechless. I have to ponder through these. I love your explication. Thank you, ma’am,” Kirl congratulates the angel of knowledge.

“You’re welcome. But there is good news,” Angeliel begins. “However hard the evil system works; it can’t win over good.”

“I think one of the weaknesses of the evil system is that it fluctuates and never remains constant for long,” Kirl suggests.

“Correct. Take Evolution as one aspect. Now new scientific research is disputing the original hypothesis,” Angeliel reports.

“But I beg your pardon, and please bear with me on this one. How is it that every day on earth people are turning toward Hell and its lies rather than toward God and his truth?” Kirl inquires.

“That is not correct. Our power is present on earth. It encourages people’s proclivity toward truth,” Angeliel disagrees with Kirl.

“But how?” Kirl asks, still not making sense of this idea as he has seen millions of earthly

inhabitants without truth going for the fake and the half-truths.

“Well, simple people get it. Those who think they are complicated miss it,” Angeliel answers.

“How...how is that possible?” Kirl doubts.

“The answer is in your own household—that is, in your matrimonial home,” Angeliel teases Kirl.

“I am still not getting it. Can you be forthcoming?” Kirl begs.

Angeliel opens her mouth, and, looking intently into Kirl, she says, “Remember that even before these recent discoveries, as recent as 1987, people like Caroline had already believed in the Genesis creationist theory—that God made man, male and female, Adam and Eve. Without science, your wife knows that there is a Heaven and there is a Hell. You, with all knowledge and science almost missed it. You see, Kirl, the Serpent is a manipulator of simple knowledge.” Angeliel pauses and then whispers into Kirl ears, “What do you think of Prometheus?”

“I now put it to you that what Nature and the Universe have revealed to the unregenerate minds and to scientists, he has done so already to the meek and the believing; the One whose return they wait for is none other than the Lord. If you analyze science and Christianity critically, they have more in common.”

A tiny breeze oozes out and makes Kirl a little bit cold. Then the warmth of the sun rises with equivalent clarity and cheers. Kirl finds himself alone. A mighty whirlwind lifts him up and on the back of the wind he rides. For a while, he does not want to think either of Hell or of the encounter with Angeliel. He is having the greatest comfort ride of his life.

“In the midst of turmoil, someone still seems to

care,” Kirl reminisces.

He’s beginning to understand something called grace, but he has no word for it. To him, it is as though the more trouble he gets into, the stronger that grace gets. It is overwhelming, and even subduing.

Yeah, this thing is amazing, he ponders.

9 | Somewhere in Heaven

“I can’t look into his eyes, it’s too bright,” Kirl says as he falls prostrate down on the ground. It is an amazingly soothing presence. The sky around him opens wide and the winds and the sun’s rays come to a stop. The clouds bring in warmth that only he can appreciate; and having been in Hell for a prolonged period, this is not only bliss, but also a complete opposite experience.

“Who are you, Lord?” Kirl’s words simply come out, before he can even organize his thoughts. He does not have any more time to doubt.

“Whoever he is, he is the hope of all humanity,” he concludes.

“I am a bad person. Please, forgive me,” Kirl begs.

And still there is no word coming from the train of exceptional brightness. The throne rises in stages. At the foundation of the throne are seven candlesticks of absolute pure gold, each of the candlesticks lighting one after another in exceptional glorious rhythm and splendor. At the first step, the bottom stair, rumblings of jasper reverberate with comforting auras while on the second stair; they are like sardius in appearance. At this time, Kirl’s eyes are failing him. The higher the throne rises, the more glorious and, therefore, the more intense the brightness becomes.

“Dear Lord, help me. I feel like fainting,” he prays.

Still there is no answer.

But even the quietness of the heavens is

mesmerizing to Kirl. The silence is as brilliant as the place itself. Kirl's eyes are closed but he can see very clearly with his inner conscience. He's been to the Buckingham Palace in London, England, before, but in beauty, power, majesty, and splendor, it doesn't come even close.

Then he begins to see the third stair, and an energy from within him simply surfaces and carries his eyes a little bit up to see the third step rising up to the height of the throne. There on the third stair are the rumblings, the appearance of emeralds. Everything around seems to have life – even the pillars themselves.

“This is glorious, and the one who sits on this throne must be glorious,” Kirl promulgates, unaided, unconsciously.

At this time, although Kirl is overwhelmed, almost being swallowed up within by this glorious splendor, Kirl's keen and inquisitive mind informs him that the Creator must be here. He bows and now he is completely down on the floor. His eyes are gazed up toward the height of the ever-rising throne, but still closed. The glory is such that he cannot open his eyes, yet he can see.

“Worthy, worthy, worthy is he who sits on this throne,” Kirl hears himself saying, and he continues saying it, and on and on he goes.

The more he does so, saying, “Worthy, worthy, worthy, worthy...” the more he senses a feeling of unbelievable beauty. The sensation takes him to a blissful feeling; it is so gorgeous and glorious that he wants to remain right here, forever.

He feels like his soul will begin to dance, cheerfulness arrests his heart and mind, and sweet laughter permeates through his pores. He is drenched in swathing tears, tears of unspeakable joy.

“I want to be here forever, Lord, I want to stay

at your feet, O Lord God,” Kirl again and again keeps saying, effortlessly, with no motor-cognitive coordination, it is just happening.

He is so amazed that words simply flow from deep within him. He is no longer controlling what he must say; he simply knows what he needs to say.

From the fourth stair going upward, Kirl can see the feet of the one seated on the throne. Again, his eyes are still closed, but, amazingly, he can see.

What he sees is like pure brass; beauty is an understatement. They are so beautiful that Kirl again finds himself praying, “Oh, my, Lord, let me at your feet be, let me the end of your throne see.”

As he prays and continues to lay prostrate on the ground, his knees curl like a lamb's back.

Kirl begins to hear the sounds, perfectly coordinated and rising and falling like the waters of the Niagara Falls. As a child, and even as an adult, he had frequented the Niagara Casino many times. And while there at the Fallsview Hotel, he had had numerous chances of viewing the Niagara Falls at night. He thinks immediately of this, but what he saw at the Niagara was just a tiny foretaste of what he sees and hears now. What he then called, “The Balcony Glory,” pales in comparison to what he is just witnessing and experiencing.

And Kirl hears those sounds saying, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come.”

And they sustain this praise in increased beauty and glory. And before he can try to comprehend what the meaning of the chant is, his eyes rise and meet the fifth stair of the throne. He can now see girding the paps of the one sitting on the throne, pure white gown golden girdles.

Involuntarily, Kirl begins to utter the words of the mighty voices around him, “Holy, holy, holy, is

the Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come.”

And as he does this, all behind and around him, he sees a throng of pure and beautiful angels, gliding their wings in symphony of immaculate perfection. And they all bow and rise and continue to sing, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come.”

Special energy reaches Kirl, and his face is raised, and he can see the head and hair of the one who sits on the throne. His hair is as white as snow, and his eyes are like the flames of brightly burning fires. In his mouth, gracious and soothing, comes a sharp two-edged sword, and what now Kirl is about to see, changes his all being.

As the eyes of the one seated on the throne meets Kirl’s, Kirl faints, and then he wakes up again. He begins to cry with pyrrhic sentimentalities.

“I am unworthy, Lord, I am unworthy to look you in your eyes, please, cast me, Lord, cast me towards the doormat of your throne,” Kirl cries and begs.

“I am so sorry, Lord. Please, forgive me of all my sins. I doubted you, now I know you live, dear Lord, you’re truly there,” and Kirl cries, and cries, and cries, and cries.

Then the Lord rises from his throne, with stars in his hands and a rainbow waving in his presence, Kirl falls down as though dead. But the Lord extends his hand and touches him. When the Lord’s hand reaches Kirl, Kirl awakes. The first thing Kirl sees are the nail holes in the Lord’s hands, and Kirl immediately knows what they are.

As a little boy attending Catholic masses in Coopersville, Kirl was accustomed to seeing the crucifix hanging all over the church. He knew when he saw the nail holes that he was looking at Jesus

Christ. And what he is now seeing is the one who looks like a crystal sea, and for the first time, he is speaking: “I am the First and Last. I died and rose again. Go, but before you go, I will show you what you must see. I will grant you only fifteen more years before I call you again, and you will have another mission.”

What is the meaning of this? Kirl thinks. To Kirl, this experience, this gift of another chance even when he had messed up his life on earth, is amazing.

He remembers the lyrics he had heard once on earth, “Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me,” and he nods his unraveling mind in wonder.

10 | Around Ingersoll, Canada, Airspaces

Kirl awakes; it is now like he is dreaming, only that he is still in spirit form. He is now and again hovering around his body. Ravinah is still here by his body, in the intensive care unit where his body lies in coma.

Prince Michael

Just then, a man—no, an angel—appears. Kirl is at first afraid, it was here where two beings appeared to him and took him to Hell. Fear grips him.

“Do not be afraid. My name is Michael, God’s Warrior of War. Pay attention to what I will tell you,” the heavenly being says.

“The Lord preserved your life. He wanted you to be witness on earth to the severity of Hell. He is the one who caused Cjaron and Azosis-Azrael to mess up their schedule so that you could not be initiated,” Michael confers.

Kirl learns that all the time he was being taken from his body to the time they passed him through the four gates, to when he attended the Assembly at the Presidium, to when he escaped, “The Lord Jesus Christ was there with you, protecting your soul.”

“How?” Kirl inquires.

“Remember Apepiad?” Michael reminds.

“Yes, it was him who made me attend the Presidium, and it was him, I guess, who truly made me escape, because he forgot to take me with him,”

Kirl explains.

“No...,” Michael continues, “that was not Apepiad. That was the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, no demon in Hell fails to initiate a new arrival. All along, the Lord appeared as Apepiad and confused the program. You think Brumalin was absent by accident. I prevented him from attending the Assembly at the Lord’s command.”

“But the Lord...he came to those horrible chambers, how possible is that...and you...you can prevent those demons?” Kirl probes some more.

“You see, when you go to earth, go and read the book called the Bible. All these things are written in there,” Michael suggests.

“But...,” Kirl tries to argue, but hearing about going back to earth brings him mixed feelings. He would rather be in Heaven than go back to earth. Yet he would prefer going to earth instead of remaining in Hell, he reasons.

“I know you are trying to argue. Let me tell you this.”

Then Michael takes Kirl to the old times in the days of Job. Michael excuses himself and says, “You know, I am not allowed to tell you what is written in the Bible. That is the work of those the Lord has chosen to do so on earth. The instructions I have for you is twofold: To relate the significance of what you went through, and to prepare you to go back, safely.”

“I see.” Kirl says.

Michael explains that there was a time when Satan— “the one whom they call the Ruler in Hell”—used to attend their meetings. “That happened before the Lord incarnated,” Michael emphasizes.

“But wait a minute, what do you mean by that? Does it mean the *Ruler* now can’t do that?” Kirl asks.

“Stop calling him the Ruler. That is a bogus title he has given to himself. Rather, call him Satan, or the Deceiver or the Old Serpent or the Devil or the Chief Liar or the Accuser of the Brethren,” Michael tutors Kirl.

“You’re kidding me, accuser of...?” Kirl’s facial muscles become tauter.

“But you must learn one spiritual principle,” Michael invokes.

“Which is?” Kirl gazes intently at Michael, expecting an answer.

“That you can only win against Satan by opposing his accusations and lies with truth, bad with good,” the archangel responds.

“You should see—”

“You mean how Satan speaks evil of our God?” Michael seems to have read the incomplete statement from Kirl.

“Well, okay, yeah...how did you know I was about to say that?” Kirl is dumbfounded.

“Perhaps I should have told you how I settled a dispute with Satan over the body of Moses. But that will be for another time after I complete my mandate to you,” Michael suggests.

Kirl bows his head in agreement, although at the same time, he remains very curious, eager to know how the dispute over Moses’s body was settled. However, Michael does not seem interested in narrating that account. Instead, he picks up where he left off in the narration.

“It used to bother all of us, you see. I had put up a very strategic battle plan that ended in Satan and his soldiers being chased from Heaven. You see, Satan used to be my senior—in rank, that is. He was the most decorated of all of us. The Lord trusted him. But each time he gathered those who could listen, he was feeding them with lies about the Lord.

Through the eons, he managed to convince a third of them that he, then Lucifer, was as good as the Lord. They planned to overthrow the Throne of God Almighty.

“The Lord tasked me with battle, which was vicious and bloody. We managed to push the insurgence from the corridors of Heaven. They all ran to the earth, and as you may know, there the Lord had planted a garden, and man had just been created.

“Then the Lord made a decree that Satan should not live on earth, because it was created for man and his offspring. I delivered the decree to Satan, but he rebelled against it. The Lord then prepared a place called Hell for Satan and his angels; we call those angels who fell with Satan demons. These were once part of our team.”

At this time, Kirl is so interested in the story that he does not want to interrupt. He is simply nodding his head, encouraging Michael to continue narrating the story.

“But Satan was still very defiant. First, he caused man to disobey the Lord—”

“Is that the story of Adam and Eve?” Kirl interrupts.

“Yes, you’re right. Then, second, when man had sinned against God, Satan made these demons change into humans, and they corrupted the offspring of man.”

“Wait a minute. I remember when I attended the Presidium...” Kirl is trying to complete his question before he is interrupted as well.

“I know, the old serpent that you saw, Leviathan. Yes, that was the instrument Satan used to deceive man and cause him to disobey the Lord. You see, for every extreme evil event, Satan keeps one deadly demon on reserve. As you saw in Hell, the power

and machinations of Satan cannot be underestimated.”

“How did you know I wanted to ask that question?” Kirl inquires.

“The Lord told us that you are inquisitive, and that made you the best candidate to go back to earth and tell the story of Hell. Besides, my experience with humans across the expanse of time tells me so,” Michael says.

“Come on, wait a minute, you mean the Lord knew me before this?” Kirl insists.

“Of course, he knew you before you were even born,” Michael answers.

“But—”

“But ‘why did he allow me to continue the way I was living’—is that what you want to ask next, Kirl?” Michael anticipates.

“You read me again.” Kirl is impressed.

“That is the difference between humans and us angels. You see, you humans are superior to us, angels, because the Lord has adopted you all as his children. That is, from now onward, you should relate to the Lord. He is your Father,” Michael says, and Kirl can see that there is a tear in Michael’s eye.

“Did I do anything that upset you, sir?” Kirl implores.

“No, it’s...it’s only that sometimes I cry that the humans have not appreciated this. I can do anything to become a child of the Lord. It is the highest honor one can ever receive. You see, I am so powerful in war, and much more powerful than any human being or human brains put together. But I am limited. I am only the Lord’s servant. You—you’re a child of God. And that is priceless!” Michael illuminates.

There follows a gap of silence. Michael does not say another word. Kirl does not ask another

question. Kirl is now pondering this, and it surprises him that even in Heaven they are aware of an important fact. He starts to think so seriously about it. It perplexes him that man is honored above angels.

“How can that be?” he ponders.

He is so immersed in his own thoughts, especially when he sees Michael crying, that it hit him like a bomb. He remembers that he was in Hell, and that even in such circumstances, the Lord was still with him.

“He truly loves me,” Kirl realizes.

After another long silence, Michael resumes, “You saw the Dungeon. And you saw those demons in chains. And you also saw those giants in chains. They really angered the Lord.

After Satan had tempted Adam and Eve, he went ahead and ordered those demons, not only to desecrate God’s creation, but to turn into men and have sexual relations with the daughters of men. Those born of this abomination are the ones you saw in there as giants. And those demons in chains, I personally arrested them and imprisoned them there. They are just awaiting the Abyss.

“After the Flood of Noah, the Lord commanded Satan that he should not roam the earth at will. So, Satan developed ruthless tactics. He began to lurk in the shadows of darkness, and you saw where he has stationed his demons. Cjaron passed you there.

And talking about Cjaron, they call him now as Father Time. He used to be Hell’s toughest demon. He caused a lot of deaths.”

“And he was disgraced because of the Ides of March?” Kirl jumps in.

“Disgraced, yes, but the Ides of March, no! You see, Cjaron used to be known as Death. Sometimes he was called Satan’s twin brother. Between the two

of them—maybe three if you include Leviathan—the world as the Lord God created it had been changed drastically. But now Satan hates Cjaron so much that he can vomit him.

Of course, he uses him when it is convenient, like if he wants to do something and wants to blame someone else. However, if you consider all things being equal, Satan sees Cjaron as the biggest threat to his own satanic rule. On earth, he now occupies what are known as the heavenlies, and there he organizes his so-called army of demons to wreak havoc on mankind.

“Satan started to become comfortable after the Fall of Man, that even after being banished into Hell, he continued to frequent Heaven to listen to the LORD address us. You remember the story of Job?” Michael asks.

“No, I have no idea, sorry.”

“As I was saying, one day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan also came among them. At that time, he preyed upon anyone who tried to be righteous before the Lord. Job was exceptional, and Satan asked the Lord that he should go and tempt Job.

The Lord allowed it but commanded Satan not to kill Job. Job lost his family because of Satan’s wrath. The next time you come, we shall show you Job’s family, who died, and those the Lord provided to him after the temptation.

“Anyway, what I am saying is that Satan had become so comfortable that it began to bother most of us in Heaven. We began to feel as if we won the battle against Satan in vain. Satan began to come and go as he pleased.

He began to establish command posts almost everywhere. At some point, I felt as if he was winning against the Lord. I for one began to

sympathize with man. I thought that man was the most miserable creature the Lord God had ever made. But what all of us did not know was that the Lord had a *plan*.”

“A plan?” Kirl is surprised.

Then Michael kneels down and begins to give a doxology of praise:

Oh, the sum of his wisdom, how mysterious his dealings both among men and before angels. I praise Thee, Almighty Lord for your great power and infinite wisdom.

“I always praise the Lord when I think about the Grand Victory of Calvary,” Michael comes back to the story.

“Does that have to do with the Calvarine story I heard while in Hell?” asks Kirl.

“Partly. You see, almost two thousand years ago in the land now known as the Holy Land, our Lord grew up there just like a good and perfect human being. But we all knew here that he was God. Those were the thirty-three years I will never forget.” Michael pauses.

“Why?” inquires Kirl.

“Because our Lord did what we knew he is capable of doing, but we couldn’t just come to terms that he did it. He became a man and walked the dirty terrain of the earth. What I am telling you is true, and I have seen, been involved in, and been affected by it.

“First, when Jesus was a baby, as you heard in Hell, King Herod, the father and—you saw the son in Hell, didn’t you? Yes, that is the man who wanted to kill Baby Jesus.

My counterpart, Gabriel, knew about this ploy, and he alerted me. So, we saved the baby. He took

them to Egypt until, you know, Herod died. Baby Jesus came back. He did not go to Bethlehem, although he was born there. He decided to stay in Nazareth. That is where, for that period, our efforts were concentrated.”

“Wait...wait a minute, now it makes a bit of sense,” Kirl suggests.

“What makes sense?” asks Michael.

“I had a book on earth called *The Marriage of Anthropology and Forensics: How It Helped to Solve the Herodias Riddle* by Rover Faucette. I bought one for Carol, and I kept a copy for myself. I read a similar story there,” Kirl remembers.

“I know about that book. Do you dispute, like the book, that Herod did not murder the children?” Michael puts it to Kirl.

“Well, that is what anthropology says. I remember reading, and the argument put forward is that the story is not covered in the book—I mean, the Bible. Only Mathew mentions it, and only briefly, I read.”

“The Bible does not want to make Herod the hero,” Michael begins. “I can tell you that between 22 and 12 BC, Herod did things that are abominable before God, but nothing could compare with what he did to those innocent children.”

“What are those things?” Kirl inquires.

Michael pauses for a while and reluctantly elucidates the Herodias saga.

“Herod, the son, grew up reading about the triumphs of Pompey, of Julius Caesar and other Roman heroes. When his father died, he wanted to please—in fact, to pattern his rule upon the Caesars. But he had one handicap: he was a Jew. He decided he would be the greatest king in Israel instead. He called himself King of the Jews. He exiled his first wife and his son in order to marry a very beautiful

Jewish princess—”

“Wait a minute, it sounds like a fairy tale. Why are you telling me all this? I am kind of thinking...what do you mean he exiled his wife and child?” Kirl interrupts.

Michael, as his tendency, ignores the immaterial questions and continues:

“The princess’s name was Mariamne I. She married Herod as his second wife. She was of exceptional beauty that Herod feared she would marry another man. After his mission to marry a Jewish princess and consolidate his rule as King of the Jews, he did not see any need for Mariamne I, although she had given him five children. He accused her of adultery and at the blackmailed testimony of Mariamne’s mother, Alexandra, who had arranged for her betrothal to Herod in 41 BC, Mariamne was executed. Herod was playing hard Roman politics.”

“Wait again - you mean this guy murdered his own wife - after murdering, *technically*, his first wife and firstborn son?” Kirl is bemused.

“Basically, yes,” answers Michael, and then immediately continues his narrative:

“But Herod was becoming more and more insecure. He built two strongholds, palaces, he called them. One was at Herodias and another at Messada. He feared the Jews would rise against him and depose him since their continued distaste for his rule was becoming evident to all. The Jews hoped for a true King of the Jews, the Messiah. And Herod knew it.

“Then Herod tried to buy Jewish loyalty by building them a magnificent temple in Jerusalem. Over eighteen thousand workers were employed to complete the work. But he did all this for political reasons. The people still hated him.”

“You mean even after he builds them a magnificent temple?” Kirl interrupts.

Michael nods his head in agreement with and in answer to Kirl’s question. Then he continues:

“They called him a half-Jew, and he did not like that. But remember, he murdered his wife. The apparitions of his wife kept confusing him. He became clinically insane. Alexandra declared herself queen in his place. Herod murdered her, too.”

“And this is the third person he has murdered?” Kirl cannot just control himself, and he does not mind interrupting again.

Michael nods, smiles and pats Kirl’s back. Then he continues to narrate.

“Herod became mad, after the defeat of Mark Antony by Octavian, who became the next Caesar; and to appease the new Caesar, Herod built an aqueduct city and named it Caesarea after Octavian. He even built a temple for the worship of Emperor Augustus Caesar in there. The Jews were enraged and called it immoral.

“But Herod’s madness did not end there. He killed his brother, fearing that he would topple him. I know you want to...yes, that was the fourth murder.

“When Herod was sixty-five years old, his two sons decided to overpower him, and he executed them openly. And it was the same period that Baby Jesus was born. The Magi from the East reported to Herod that the King of the Jews had been born.”

“Don’t say it—Herod felt challenged, the thing he had feared all along, right?” asks Kirl.

“Yes, that’s right.” answers Michael.

“I understand. If he has just murdered his own two children—” Kirl begins...

This time it is Michael who interrupts Kirl. “You get it. He would murder Baby Jesus, too, since the

distinguished wise men called Jesus, King of the Jews.”

“Indeed” — Kirl smiles — “so even angels are inquisitive.”

“He executed his murderous mission with surgical precision. All the children between the ages of zero and two were butchered,” Michael begins. “Just so he could get at Baby Jesus.”

“It should have been a bloody massacre?” Kirl recoils.

“Bloody, yes. A massacre, I don’t think so,” responds Michael.

“Why do you say so?” asks Kirl.

“Because at this time, Bethlehem had a very small population—between 300 to 3,000 habitants. There were on average between seven to ten babies born per two years. Herod killed between seven and ten children who were born in that period.”

“I see. Still, it was a ruthless massacre relative to the population at the time?” Kirl redirects Michael.

“I didn’t look at it that way. I guess, yes,” Michael agrees.

“Herod was a very evil man?” Kirl seems to suggest in a rhetorical question.

“Kirl, don’t forget that it was not Herod who desired the death of Jesus,” Michael begins.

“It was Satan,” they both say it at the same time, and then wink at each other.

“You read my mind,” Michael says, and he and Kirl both ponder for a while what they have just discussed and discovered. Then Michael resumes.

“You must remember that while humans saw the Lord Jesus as only a baby, here we worshipped him and protected him as our Lord God. The escape of the baby Lord Jesus to Egypt always scares me.”

“You’re losing me,” Kirl backtracks. “You mean to indicate that Baby Jesus had all the attributes of

God even as a human on earth? And *what of that being scared by the escape?*”

“That’s exactly what I am saying, and even more. You remember I told you about the presence of Satan at our meetings with the Lord? Well, Satan got it all wrong. Yes, he had legally gotten dominion of the earth from Adam and Eve. Yes, he was, as far as divine order was concerned, god on earth. And you see, he used this to his own advantage, as we all suspected.

He began to plan a New World Order—where he would be king on earth as the Lord is in Heaven. He did not want any righteous person to live on earth. He wanted to corrupt morals, taint hearts, and have all human souls be destroyed with him. I watched daily to see what the Lord God would do about it. Nothing, at first, seemed to be happening; Satan became more and more powerful—”

“Thanks for that story,” Kirl interrupts Michael, and then reminds him, “But you still didn’t answer my question.”

As Kirl makes that last interruption, Michael takes him by the light of the moon and by the sun’s route, unknowable to Kirl, they find themselves on top of a Dungeon in Hades.

Kirl is thinking, *We are here again—only this time, I am above the pain and misery.*

“Yes, you are here again, and what do you see?” Michael asks.

“I see sin walls all around Hell and Hades,” Kirl answers.

“You have seen well,” endorses Michael.

They hover around in a systematic circle, and Kirl is surprised by what he sees next. Like a large moving picture, he is brought back in time—to be exact, two thousand years ago in time.

“Look there. There is Satan again, with Jesus.

Just the two of them!” Kirl shouts in great surprise.

“Yes, I brought you here to see for yourself,” Michael answers.

“And look, it’s you there with myriads of an army. What are you doing, sir?” Kirl asks.

“Pay attention to what is going on, and we shall talk about it soon,” Michael instructs Kirl, and they both watch as the events unfold.

What Kirl sees next is fascinating. Kirl sees Jesus praying in the mountain late in the evening. A voice comes from the skies:

“Son, you face him tomorrow morning.”

“Yes, Father, so be it. To prepare for what lays ahead, I am declaring a forty-day fast. All I ask is your strength and wisdom,” Jesus replies to the Voice.

“I will withdraw the angelic ministrations on the last day of your fasting, my Son, but my Spirit will be with you,” the Voice assures Jesus.

The next thing Kirl sees is Jesus being taken into the wilderness by the Spirit for a test. Satan is ready to give it. As he promised the Voice, Jesus prepares for the test by fasting forty days and forty nights.

At the end of fasting, Kirl observes that Jesus is tired, weak, and extremely frail. He is very hungry.

Then Satan takes advantage of this weakness and approaches him.

“Since you are God’s Son, speak the word that will turn these stones into loaves of bread,” Satan tempts him.

Jesus answers, “It takes more than bread to stay alive. It takes a steady stream of words from God’s mouth.”

Then Satan takes Jesus for the second test to the Holy City. He seats him on top of the Temple and says, “Since you are God’s Son, jump. He has placed you in the care of angels. They will catch you

so that you won’t so much as stub your toe on a stone.”

Jesus counters, “Don’t you dare test the Lord your God.”

Then Satan takes Jesus to the peak of a huge mountain. He gestures to Jesus, pointing out all the earth’s kingdoms, how glorious they all are, and orders Jesus, “They’re yours—just get down on your knees and worship me.”

As weak as Jesus is, he does not bulge. He looks Satan in the eye; Satan turns to avoid him.

“Back off, Fallen Angel! It is written, ‘Worship and serve the Lord your God, and only him.’”

Immediately, Kirl sees the angels, led by Michael, coming and Satan fleeing. Satan is not happy at all. The angels begin to take care of Jesus’s needs.

There is a long silence after the events Kirl has just seen. Michael can tell that something is troubling his inquisitive new interlocutor.

“You know what,” Kirl begins, “I don’t get it.”

“You mean why we left him alone with his archenemy?” Michael asks.

“That, yes, and more—I mean, Satan taking it for granted that the entire world is his, and demanding worship, sounds like what I heard in Hell.” Kirl sizes Michael up.

“I want you to know this: Satan, as we all expected, did not change his MO. He simply came directly at the Lord rather than sending his evil genius, Leviathan, the way he did with Adam and Eve in Eden.”

“I know he saw this as a great opportunity to finish what he had started in the Garden of Eden.”

“If I may ask, what did he start in Eden, sir?” Kirl inquires.

“You will read more about it in the Bible on earth. But suffice to mention that Satan got his

power by theft, but it was lawful because man succumbed to temptation and bequeathed their world power to Satan. The Lord God had ordered Adam and Eve not to disobey him, but with instigation from Satan, they disobeyed him and began to die, and the world became the devil's."

"I see...so Satan tempted Adam to have sex with Eve, *to bite the apple*, as it were, is that so, sir?" Kirl asks.

"No. No. No. That is not it at all. That has been Satan's way of justifying his evil actions and accusing God of not being righteous. How could a man commit fornication with his own wife? Satan wanted from Adam and Eve exactly what he wanted from the Lord Jesus in the wilderness."

"You mean power, worship, and human adulation?" Kirl chimes in.

"Yes, and more. One of my fears as we stood by watching the temptation of the Lord Jesus was that what happened in Eden would be repeated. If this happened, our war with evil would take on a different trajectory, and the destiny of humankind would forever be lost. But we were confident."

"How? Why were you confident?" Kirl asks.

"Well, partly because of the way the Lord Jesus lived and made choices as a boy," Michael answers.

"What, you mean Jesus the boy had to face temptations, too?" Kirl asks.

"Oh, yes. He learned to pray and read the scrolls just like any other child. He completely forgo all of his divine attributes. He humbled himself. From time to time, he encountered difficult times. He was particularly sentient to Roman rule and the way women were treated in his day."

"Wait. Wait a minute, sir. Do you mean Jesus hated the Romans?" Kirl asks.

"He didn't hate the Romans. He hated the whole

idea of an empire. To him, it was inherently unjust, and it lorded over the weak and vulnerable. But he was wise. He avoided taking on any fights against Satan, and we guaranteed that.

One reason was that, and as you have read before, there is no mention of Jesus anywhere in Roman literature until his three-year ministry. He did this to avoid aborting his mission on earth. He had to die at some point to redeem humanity, but it had to come at the right time."

"Even so, Rome would still be involved in Jewish affairs—I mean, Judea was under Roman rule," Kirl, remembering his history, grills Michael.

"So long as issues remained religious, Rome did not mind. But the Lord Jesus was seen as a rebel. He was feared. Rome was of the view that if the Lord had not been killed, the Jews would have rebelled against Roman rule. Rome killed the Lord," Michael states in a categorical fashion.

"I see. And about the idea of women?" Kirl reminds Michael.

"Yes, regarding that, Jesus thought that women were treated poorly in the world. But you must know that women were an integral part of the Lord's salvation plan.

In Eden, the Lord God warned Satan that the woman would restore humanity's relationship with God, the same way she lost it. The exact phrase the Lord God used was '*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*'"

"So, women have, historically, been abused because of Satan's enmity against them?" Kirl seeks clarification.

"Partly. But overall, Satan, since that caveat, has been very arrogant against women. Of course, one did give birth to the Savior," Michael notes.

“You mean Mary. And what about the rumor that the other Mary was the wife of Jesus on earth?”

“Again, you’re mistaken, Kirl. That’s another of Satan’s conspiracy theories. The Lord Jesus did not marry. He loved Mary Magdalene, yes, but just as he loved all other women. He kissed Mary Magdalene, yes, just as he did children. In fact, he smooched them—not sexual kissing, as these liars would have the humans believe. Mary Magdalene was not his trophy or the Holy Grail, as the charlatans claim.

Remember, there are other Marys in the Bible who deserve humanity’s gratitude. One of them is Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus and wife of Joseph. And the other is, of course, Mary Magdalene. The Lord’s promise of salvation was fulfilled through Mary, his mother. But also note that Mary Magdalene was, so to speak, the first promulgator of Christianity. Not only did she stand with the Lord Jesus throughout his passion when all his disciples fled, she also is the one who washed and buried the body of the Lord Jesus. She is, more importantly, the first witness of the resurrection of the Lord. As you will learn later on when you return to earth, without the resurrection, there would be no Christianity.”

“Thank you, sir. I now understand. But please elaborate on the ‘crushing your head, and striking of his heel,’” Kirl puts Michael to the memory.

“It’s a metaphor. What do you know about the death of Achilles?” Michael teases Kirl.

“Well, he’s shot with an arrow at his weakest point—his heel—by Paris,” answers Kirl.

“What happens, who wins the Trojan War?”

“But that is only mythology, sir. Do you mean to suggest that the events surrounding Troy, in fact, happened? I thought that Homer’s *Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are only brilliant works of fiction?”

“You have answered correctly. But as you know, the Lord Jesus used parables and figures of speech many times in his discourses on spiritual matters.”

“I see. Now I know. Just like Achilles was semi-divine, the result of the union between a mortal, Peleus, and an Immortal, Thetis, the story of Jesus is analogous? It makes a lot of sense now,” Kirl determines.

“Except, Kirl, the Lord Jesus was both divine and human. And more, what happens when Odysseus visits Troy?” Michael asks.

“You mean the argument between Agamemnon and Achilles, sir?” Kirl, seeming confused by the order of events, asks Michael.

“No. That happened earlier. I mean when Odysseus meets the shade of Achilles at the entrance to the Underworld.”

“Okay, I remember now. Odysseus reports that all aspects of the Trojan War and its aftermath had been the work of Zeus, and that Achilles’ name had been honored on earth,” Kirl says with great cheerfulness.

“Now, what is the implication of the Trojan War—winners and losers?” Michael tests Kirl.

“Well, all I know is that the Trojans win the battle, but the Achaeans the war,” Kirl states.

“You have said it well. Now, not that the story of the Trojan War has any significance to what I am talking about, but it is usually helpful for the humans to understand things when you bring in the familiar. If there is any moral didactics to this, it is that Achilles is a type of the Christ. The heel of Achilles is truck, but he wins the war.”

“Interesting comparison, sir,” Kirl admits.

“And about women, Satan now fears women more than men.”

“But why is it so?”

“What do you think?” Michael stares intently upon Kirl as if to suggest to him the answer.

“Okay, all right, I can try. I guess Satan understood that his defeat would somehow come through women, is that correct?”

“It did. The woman delivered Satan’s worst nemesis—”

And before Michael completes his thought Kirl, does so: “Jesus, isn’t it? Jesus?”

“That’s right. Then the woman was the first to discern the death of the Lord and truly understand why the Lord came to earth, can you tell?” Michael puts Kirl to the test.

“I have no idea, sir.”

“Remember Mary Magdalene? Well, she was the first to recognize that the Lord would die. She anointed the Lord’s body. In fact, when all the men ran away after the Lord’s death, it—”

“Was Mary who stood ground and embalmed the body of Jesus, isn’t that so?”

“That’s true again. And as I said, it is Mary who announced the resurrection to the cowering disciples. But another woman Satan fears the most even now had emerged. Do you know who she is, Kirl?” Michael asks.

“Let me think. Is it Mary, Jesus’s mother?”

“No. It is the *Church*. You see, the Lord’s church is the only legitimate force on earth Satan cannot stand. It crushes the Gates of Hell perpetually.”

“Wow, that’s fantastic, I like this,” Kirl is jubilant.

“Indeed. The Church is the Body of Christ. Christ is incomplete without it. As the head dominates evil forces in the heavenlies, so does his body on earth. We, the good angels, now depend upon the Church to defeat evil. When the Church binds or loosens anything on earth, we fulfill the

mandate. You heard about the *Gapers* in Hell? Well, even Hell fears a praying church. We love churches that pray. They make our job easier.”

“So, what Hell fears most is the Church, not you guys?” asks Kirl.

“What Hell fears is the Lord and the Church connected to him. Pay attention to the scene where a disciple cuts off a soldier’s ear in Gethsemane. The Lord alludes to the fact that if he had come to command battalions, he would have prayed to God, and the Father would have unleashed twelve legions of us to destroy Satan’s regiment. But he didn’t because he came to die for the humans.”

“So, with respect to the Church, what you have is delegated authority?” Kirl asks.

“Pretty much so.”

“And just for my information, why do you refer to the Church as a woman?” Kirl asks.

“It is the Bride of Christ; does that answer your query, Kirl?” Michael asks.

“Yes, sir. And—” Kirl wants to say more, but he is interrupted.

“Leave your next set of questions to after the next scene. And the rest—how the heel was struck and how the head of Satan was crushed, and continues to be crushed by the church, will be made clear after the unfolding of events that follow.”

Then Kirl finds himself among the throng of thousands and thousands of people gathered in Jerusalem. They are all trying to find a strategic place where they could see all that is happening around them.

And then Kirl sees legions upon legions of demons. He does not see anyone like them in Hell. They infiltrate all the streets of Jerusalem. They hold strong whips and are callously vicious. They are all wearing unicorn masks and have bloody intentions.

Then Kirl sees Jesus, a weary and worn-out man. He is in the middle of over one hundred demons, a militia of merciless and devious beings, and they all hold their places intact. Jesus is semi-naked with wounds all around his body, and he could barely see. He stumbles as he carries a huge, rugged beam on his frail shoulders. Although Kirl can see human Roman-like soldiers around Jesus, no, Jesus is surrounded by a myriad of demons. Kirl cannot number them; by a quick glance, Kirl sees that there could be at least a thousand demons for every human being present.

The human element has now completely disappeared; and Kirl only sees the presence of demons. Jerusalem is under siege. Darkness has come on all the earth, and it is during this time that Kirl sees what is referred to as the deadly Egyptian centurion, a contingent of one hundred deadly demons, dubbed the Commandos of Hell.

They include, in alphabetical order: Aken, Aker, Am-Heh, Ament, Ammit, Amun and Amun, Anat, Andjety, Anqet, and Anubis. Others are Anuke, Anuket, Apep, Arensnuphis, As, Ashtraron, Auf, Baal, Babi and Banebdjetet. Then there is Bast, Bat, Bennu, Bes, Dedwen, Denwen, Ennead, Geb, Gengen Wer and Hapi. The other ten include Hathor, Hatmehyt, Haurun, Heh and Hauhet, Heqet, Heret-Kau, Heryshef, Hesel, Hetepes-Sekhus and Hike. There is also Hu, Iabet, Ihy, Kabechet, Kek and Kauket, Khenmu, Kherty, Kephri, Maat and Mafdet. The other deadly demons are Mahaf, Mahes, Mandulis, Mehen, Menhit, Mertseger, Meskhenet, Mihos, Min and Montu. There are these others as well: Nefertem, Nehebka, Nekhbet, Neith, Nephthys, Nun and Naunet, Nut, the Ogdoad and Pakhet. Others are Panebtawy, Peteese, Ptah, Renenutet, Reshep, Sah and Sopdet,

Satet, Satis, Sekhmet and Sepa. Serapis, Serqet, Shay, Shesmetet, Shesmu, Shu, Sia, Sobek, Sopedu, Ta-Bitjet and Tasenetnofret are also present. The last ten are Taweret, Tayet, Tefnut, Tatenen, Thoth, Wadj Wer, Wadjet, Weneg, Wosret, Yah and Yamm.

“What is happening here?” inquires Kirl.

Michael invites Kirl to observe all he can and instruct him to tell him only of matters he is allowed to tell. Kirl must know what is happening and report it to the brethren when he is taken back to earth, albeit for fifteen years only, allegedly.

Michael raises his voice. “The only thing I want to explain is the Egyptian demons, and why Satan used them to crucify and kill the Lord.”

“You know of the story of Moses and the Pharaoh, don’t you, Kirl?” Michael asks.

Before Kirl can answer, Michael continues, “The Lord dealt Satan an embarrassing blow then, and all the magic of Pharaoh in which Satan trusted were brought to naught. Satan kept an eternal grudge against the Lord henceforth. I can pretty much say that after Egypt, Satan more or less shifted his capital from Hell to Egypt and began to assemble what he thought would be an undefeated cohort of demonic covens. They numbered in thousands upon thousands. The one hundred you have seen in this showcase at Jerusalem are the crème de la crème!”

“Has Satan’s HQ always been Egypt? Sorry for interrupting, and what is the connection with the dispute you settled over Moses’ body?” Kirl asks.

“HQ—not always, until now. And also, when our Lord Jesus was a baby, somehow, we hoodwinked Satan,” Michael laughs.

“What happened?” asks Kirl. “And you didn’t answer me on Moses’ body, sir.”

“I will answer the last question first, albeit

briefly. You should understand that other than the Lord Jesus, there was no human being the Lord God used so strongly to inflict damage to both the pride and character of Satan.”

“How?” Kirl asks.

“Moses made Satan’s life and plan miserable. For the first time since his rebellion, Satan had met a man who was meek, obedient to God, and mighty in deeds. Satan began to fear for his own future. You see, I defeated him, but I was under the authority of the Almighty God, and I am a fellow angel as he is. But Moses, although he was under the authority of God, he was *a* human, and that troubled Satan.”

“What...if I...I’m getting you correctly...”

“Save your breath, Kirl” Michael interrupts Kirl. “I must finish the story I began earlier, of the legion of Egypt. If need be, I shall explain the accusation saga later.”

“I see. All right,” Kirl gives in.

Michael picks up from where he ended before he was interrupted.

“Well, after learning that our Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, Satan’s battalions moved to Israel, leaving Egypt completely deserted. And the Lord God told me, ‘Michael, take the baby to Egypt.’ And I said, ‘I will, my God and my Lord.’ But on the inside of me, I was wondering because I knew that it was Satan’s HQ. But I did it in obedience.”

“And what followed?” Kirl asks, paying close attention.

“Well, I took the baby Lord there, and as the Lord God had commanded, the baby was safe there until Herod died. I can tell you that I had never been on guard as at that time in Egypt. Knowing that the baby Lord was in Egypt brought me some concern from time to time. But the Lord God’s word is

steadfast and trustworthy.”

As Kirl ponders on these things, Michael waves his wand, and they again come to Jerusalem. Here, the saga that Michael had begun showing Kirl continues to unfold. Now it has reached almost to its climax. Kirl notices that Jesus is about to be finally crucified.

“Who is that ugly demon?” Kirl tiptoes to have a clear view of the subject demon he is asking Michael about. The ugly being, over twenty-four feet tall, about three thousand pounds in weight, with eleven serpentine heads and four hands, its pale grayish maroon color disfiguring corrosively into its dark belly, which carries large sponges of flickering sjamboks.

It’s very clear to Kirl that the humans are not privy to the spiritual drama unfolding before them at Calvary. Kirl can see the demonic beasts are hovering Jesus, but he doubts if the humans can see the same.

“Do the humans see these—I mean these ugly beasts?” inquires Kirl as he stoops down to gaze at what looks like a special key in a glassy casket protruding under the throat of the giant beast.

“His name is Detharator. They call him the Opener of the Ways.

He, on behalf of Satan, holds the key to Hell. Satan trusts him; he was the first convert Lucifer deceived before the Battle. No, you are right: the humans cannot see what is happening here because they are limited.

“You must understand the secret of...,” Michael begins but then suddenly stops.

“You stopped talking?” asks Kirl.

“The Lord God has not instructed me to tell you this.”

“But...” Kirl starts, “but you’ve already told and

showed me things.”

“Indeed, and I guess it will not hurt. But I will leave you awhile and let you watch by yourself. Then I will return,” says the archangel.

It is at Golgotha because Kirl can read it in his mind. Kirl has realized that his mind is more alive now that he is dead than when he was alive on earth. He can see and understand things more clearly now.

The Roman soldiers bring a man Kirl can barely recognize – bloody and miserable is the only thing he can see. After some time, he thinks he knows who the tortured person is.

“It is Jesus,” he says.

Just then, soldiers strip the Lord completely naked. Some soldiers begin to joke about the Lord’s phallus. Another one takes a sjambok and hits the Lord on the very essence of life. By this time, Kirl can feel the pain as if it is being done to him. The Lord winces and bends over in excruciating pain.

Then they throw the Lord to the ground on his back, with his arms outstretched along the crossbeam. They nail his hands to the crossbeam. After they nail the Lord to the crossbeam, they hoist him up so that the crossbeam is attached to the upright beam.

They then nail the Lord’s feet, one on top of the other, to the upright beam with another iron spike.

Jutting out from the upright beam is a small sedile on which they have the Lord straddle to absorb some of the weight of his body.

Just then, one soldier cries out, “A bottle of gall!”

And immediately, another soldier brings it. Takes it and gives it to the Lord, “Take this, deceiver. It will numb your pain,” he mocks.

The Lord refuses the drink.

At this time, Kirl is trying to understand why he, the Lord, has refused the drink. “And can’t they just

kill him privately in their barracks, why such public humiliation?”

“It will deaden his pain. Please take it, Lord,” Kirl utters a silent prayer.

But the Lord does not take it, and what Kirl sees is a great darkness coming upon the earth. Sins and all evils of men come pouring upon the Lord, who stays on the cross in agony.

And then Kirl is utterly shocked.

In the heavens, the lights go off, literally. Devils from everywhere begin to invade Golgotha. The situation is injurious to behold. Kirl is now shivering in dreadful fear.

“God has just turned his back against Jesus,” he reasons.

“But why?” he ponders even further.

And no one needs now narrate to Kirl what he is seeing, and he is not surprised when Jesus, in deep anguish, cries, “*My Father, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*”

And after about three hours of utter darkness, Kirl still does not understand what is going on in the dark. He is still thinking about why God has forsaken Jesus when Michael thumps him on the shoulder and whispers, “...because God cannot look upon sin. The Lord has now become a sin offering and all the sins of the world are upon him.”

“Thank you for explaining, sir,” Kirl is grateful.

Michael disappears.

Then what he now can see is that all the demons in the universe have been summoned and they cause the world to completely go dark.

Then the Lord emerges from the obscurity. There is a small smile on his face. And as Satan advances and commands that Jesus should be taken to the deepest part of Hell, the heavens open again. The Lord looks up as they take his soul to the

darkest part of Hell, and just before he is completely ejected from his body, he lets out a declaration: *"It is finished!"*

"What? What is finished?" Kirl, with tears in his eyes, soliloquizes.

After a while, Michael reappears; and for a long while, they just stand there, saying nothing.

"Because the will of the Father has been done, that is why," Michael explains.

"What are you talking about, sir?"

"You asked about the meaning of 'It is finished,' didn't you?" Michael reminds him.

"O-h-yes. O-kay, t-hanks," Kirl chokes, and a tear falls from his eye.

"You're familiar with the story of Moses' miracles before Pharaoh in Egypt, aren't you?"

"A little bit."

"Moses performed ten miracles there."

"Hmm..." Kirl nods.

"And do you know the greatest miracle Moses performed in Egypt?"

"Could it be the one when the firstborns of Egypt were killed?"

"No, although, of course, that was very significant."

"So, which was the greatest?" Kirl wants to know.

"Moses' miracles in Egypt are striking of the waters into blood, the frogs, the turning of dust into lice, a swarm of flies, death of livestock, boils, the rain of hail and thunder and fire, locusts, darkness that could be felt, and the death of all the firstborns of Egypt."

"I am inquisitive—which of these is the greatest?" Kirl asks.

"I am coming to that," Michael represses the growing impatience brewing inside of Kirl. "Can

you notice something in these miracles?"

"Not really, except that they are all exceptional miracles."

"What about the order in which they occurred?"

"Let's see, I think I see something."

"What is it?"

"It's the deaths, isn't it? The death of animals is on the fifth day. The death of firstborns is on the tenth. That's significant, isn't it?"

"I agree. That is significant. But it's not the answer I am looking for."

"Could it be that there is blood shed on the first and last days of the miracles?"

"That is very perceptive. But no, that is not the answer I want."

"Let me guess one more time."

"Go ahead."

"I think it is the connection between water in the first miracle and again water in the seventh?"

"Let me tell you, since we need to complete your tour of the crucifixion scene soon. And I want you not to forget this. It's in the third miracle—"

"You mean the lice?" Kirl interrupts.

"Yes. But not in the lice *per se* as in what Moses demonstrated. Moses demonstrated that only God could create life. Satan's magicians could not do that. Pharaoh's magicians could replicate every miracle Moses performed except the third one. And note that Egypt has been Satan's toughest turf. Death, yes—this Satan can do. But life, he cannot. All Satan does is kill! Only our Lord Jesus Christ brings life."

"Interesting...why didn't I see that?" Kirl is enchanted.

"It's a revelation."

"A true one...I saw in Hell, too, that all the demons were preoccupied with was death, death,

death. It's true, no one talks about life there," Kirl says, making the connection.

"You've remembered and observed well," compliments Michael.

"Thank you, sir."

"You're most welcome. When you return to earth, read the Bible. Read Ezekiel chapter 37. The Lord God says that will be your name henceforth."

"You mean my new name will be Ezekiel?" Kirl asks.

"Yes," answers Michael.

Another moment of silence follows.

"For me," Michael begins, "what I have failed to understand up to now is the humility of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"How?" asks Kirl.

"I didn't show you the scene where Judas Iscariot betrays the Lord, but it is telling."

"Why do you say so," Kirl follows up, trying to sustain the story.

"Well, the Lord Jesus Christ is God, and he has been so since the foundation of life. In Heaven, he is the very glory of the godhead." Michael pauses to catch his breath.

"Can I interrupt you?" Kirl asks.

"What is it?"

"What is the godhead? You just said something to that effect just now, and what is the *foundation of life* that you referred to?"

"Well, God is three in one: The Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ is called the Son, again, because of his humility in taking the form of humanness even when he is God," Michael elucidates.

"Why did he have to do so? You mean the one I saw on the Throne is the one Christians on earth call Jesus Christ of the Bible?" Kirl, knows that it is true,

but he wants to squeeze everything he can from the archangel.

"Yes, and even more. On earth, he sank so low that he allowed his disciple, Judas, to sell him for thirty pieces of silver—a slave's price—can you believe it?" Michael leaps to his feet as he makes this point. Kirl notices that it defiles all the reason Michael is capable of.

"I see, what is the significance of this?" asks Kirl.

"It is not just significance—it vituperates sense and reason. He who made all and has all the glory, chooses to be a slave of all—and I mean, a real human slave, sold at a slave's worth. Can you believe it!" Michael bows his head.

"Why couldn't he just remain in Heaven?" Kirl is also getting jittery; he has begun to think for the Lord.

"It's Satan, Kirl. It's Satan. Satan had taken what made God happy. He had stolen man from God and the Lord needed man back so that man could worship the Living God. That's why the Lord Jesus Christ sank low, and to the lowest of his creation, as you shall see, in order to redeem mankind," Michael keeps on talking, without looking at Kirl or paying attention to his reaction.

"I see...I see...so it's Satan...hey!" Kirl stifles his own head and almost asphyxiates himself.

"And, the foundation of life...it's the Lord Jesus, he's the *foundation of life* and *the life*," Michael says.

Kirl tries to make sense of what he has just seen and heard. And now Kirl makes even a vivid connection after they return to the scene of Jesus's crucifixion. As he observes what is obtaining, he is shocked at what is happening.

"Think about it." Michael wipes his tears.

It's not Pontius Pilate. It's not Caesar. It's not really the Jews and their religious leaders—it's Satan

who *killed* Jesus! All the people can see is the soldiers, and nothing more than that.

Kirl is taken aback.

“You said—,” he says, but he’s intercepted before he has the opportunity to end his question. “That it was Rome that killed the Lord—yes, I did. You see, it was really the devil who killed him using—,”

And Michael is also interrupted before he completes the sentence. “The Romans as instruments—isn’t that so clear now?”

“Yes, Kirl, you got it very well.”

“What did you mean by ‘before the Battle’? Remember what you said before we divagated to the miracle story in Egypt?” Kirl reminds Michael.

“It’s the battle in Heaven to get Satan and his demons out. We won that battle, of course. And as I told you, Satan and his demons went to roam the earth until the Lord designated them to Hell.”

“You see, when I had life in me, these things read like fiction,” Kirl cogitates.

“To so many people, they still do, Kirl. And again, all these are contained in the Bible,” Michael directs.

“You seem to suggest that everything happening here is already written about in the Bible?” Kirl asks.

“Yes. Everything,” Michael answers, matter-of-factly.

“And the fact that Hell is real?” Kirl intones.

“Oh, yes. The Lord told a direct story concerning Hell, and it is there in the Bible. It relates to a poor man called Lazarus, who ate the morsels that fell from the rich man’s table. Both died: the former is carried by angels, and the latter is buried. The rich man finds himself in Hell, but Lazarus is in Abraham’s bosom. When the rich man looks up and sees Lazarus, he cries and begs him for some

water...”

“You’re making these things up. You know I saw Abraham’s Solace, don’t you?” Kirl cuts Michael off.

“No, I am not making anything up. Everything the Lord says in the Bible is true, and it shall come to pass, however surreal it may sound.”

Kirl expresses shock. He does not seem to understand that the book he despised on earth holds so many truths about life and death, Hell and Heaven. He bites his lips in self-pity and revulsion against his lack of belief when he was alive on earth.

Looking straight at him, Michael directs, “I am sure you now understand that it is not the Lord’s intention that humans should go to Hell. People should know this truth because it is always available to them.”

“Yeah...yes,” Kirl says.

“Why?” Michael inquires.

“It’s there. It has always been there. The Bible. It has always been New York’s bestseller. In fact, bestseller extraordinaire.” Kirl now gets it.

“Indeed!” Michael concurs.

As they speak, Michael waves some sort of a wand to take Kirl to the next set of events that will forever change the way Kirl has so far viewed the afterlife.

At Calvary, just before Jesus gives up his spirit, a Roman soldier with a long spear pierces Jesus’s side. Immediately, water and blood ooze out of Jesus’s body.

“Do you understand that scene?” Michael engages Kirl.

“No, sir,” Kirl answers. “What is the significance, sir?”

“Water and blood is the combination that makes up human life. The Lord Jesus has just paid for sin with his life, and Satan hasn’t gotten it yet.” There

was such energy and excitement Kirl hears Michael salute.

“What...what do you mean, sir?” Kirl is intoxicated with this moment.

But Michael is not answering Kirl’s queries anymore. Instead, Michael bursts into another doxology:

*Oh, the wisdom of the Godhead,
How unfathomable his Word
Who’d know by the essence of passing fame,
His vanity from whom he receives blame,
That the one who demands his death,
Is he who bands him his breath
For his sufferings are but brief
Yet everlasting is his life
And the power humans now have
Is gathered up into a river of love.*

Kirl bows in silence as he awaits the archangel to end his adulations. But Kirl will not wait any longer because Michael speaks immediately.

“In Eden, man sinned, and by that act sold his birthright of life to Satan. By the letter of the law, ‘A soul which sins shall die,’ and Satan understood that, and it has been Satan’s strength ever since.”

“And Satan understood another principle.”

“And what is that principle, sir?”

“That if he, Satan, was to lose his authority over man, it must be through a man. Remember that matters of life and death only relate to humanity. We angels don’t die. We can be destroyed in the lake of fire, but we don’t die. And the Lord God Almighty cannot, by divine justice, abrogate this fundamental divine order.”

“I thought that there is no one greater than the Lord God. Why should he bother not to abrogate

his own orders?” Kirl asks.

“That is another principle. The Lord swears by himself, and he does not change. But that you will learn on earth by reading the Bible.”

“I see.” Kirl is in deep reflection.

“As I was saying, Satan can’t see that with what he has just done, he has engineered his own defeat.”

At this time, Kirl interrupts: “But how...how has Satan engineered his own defeat, sir?”

“You see, the Lord God warned Satan, when he and Leviathan plotted and managed the Fall.”

“And what was the warning?” Kirl is quick to ask.

“He was warned that his downfall would come through a seed, the seed of a woman.”

“What is a seed of a woman?” Kirl asks again.

“Perhaps I can answer it this way: You recall we talked about me and Satan arguing about the body of Moses?”

“Yes, indeed, and...,” Kirl begins, but Michael does not let him finish.

“Well, for a long time, no one knew what that statement meant. Satan thought Moses was that seed of a woman.”

“Could that be the reason why he disputed over his body?” Kirl asks.

“You may say so, but he gave two reasons. I was commissioned to bury the body of Moses.”

“An angel burying the body of a human, why?” Kirl wants to know.

“It was the Lord’s will, Kirl. Always do his will, not your own. As I was saying, Satan opposed me to bury the body of Moses, claiming that he, Satan, is the Lord of matter, and hence that the body rightfully belonged to him. But I rejoined, ‘Satan, the Lord rebukes you, for it was the Lord’s Spirit that created the world and all mankind.’”

As the two meditate on what has been discussed, Michael beckons to Kirl and says, “Can I ask you something?”

“Yes, you may, sir.”

“I am wondering if you know about a mystery that surrounds the deaths of Moses and Elijah on earth.”

“I have no idea, sir, if I may be educated by your illuminated mind, please?”

“I have heard men and women preach that Elijah did not die, and that he was raptured into heaven by a chariot of fire in a whirlwind. Similarly, people preach that I took Moses to heaven.”

“Is that so? I mean, didn’t Elijah die, and did you take Moses straight into heaven?” Kirl asks.

“I will put it this way,” begins Michael. “The Lord Jesus himself answered this question when he said, ‘No man has ascended up to heaven except He that came down from heaven.’”

“I see,” Kirl says, beginning to understand. “So only Jesus alone has been able to exit earth right into heaven?”

“You said it right,” rejoins Michael.

“But what of those people who eulogize for the dead that they go to heaven?”

“I think it is a misunderstanding. Where did you see your father-in-law—was it in Heaven?” Michael examines Kirl.

“No, sir. It was in the Solace of Abraham.”

“The Bosom of Abraham—that is the official designation of that place. And as you saw, it is not in Heaven. And another thing to consider is what is written in Hebrews 9:27: ‘It is appointed unto man to die *once*, and after that comes judgment,’” Michael elucidates.

“Let me try to understand you, sir. Do you mean that every person will die once?”

“Yes. No human being can come to Heaven without dying first. But hear me correctly: death does not send one straight to Heaven. Those who die in Christ first go to the Bosom of Abraham, awaiting their judgment for rewards in peace. The unrighteous go straight to...”

“Hell. Now I know,” Kirl completes Michael’s thought.

Michael then offers Kirl something to do: “I received instructions through Prince Gabriel that when you get back to earth, you should go and consider all the available renditions of Hebrews 11:5. Help the people of God to understand what it means.”

“Yes, sir, I will dutifully oblige.” Kirl salutes.

Then in a flash of a second, Kirl’s spiritual eyes are opened, and he can clearly see the various renditions of Hebrews 11:5. They all seem to point to the fact that Enoch did not die.

New International Version: “By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death.”

New Living Translation: “It was by faith that Enoch was taken up to heaven without dying.”

English Standard Version: “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death.”

New American Standard Bible: “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death.”

King James Bible: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.”

Holman Christian Standard Bible: “By faith Enoch was taken away so he did not experience death.”

International Standard Version: “By faith Enoch was taken away without experiencing death.”

NET Bible: “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he did not see death.”

Aramaic Bible in Plain English: “By faith, Enoch was transported away, and he did not taste death.”

GOD’S WORD® Translation: “Faith enabled Enoch to be taken instead of dying.”

Jubilee Bible 2000: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.”

King James 2000 Bible: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.”

American King James Version: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.”

American Standard Version: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.”

Douay-Rheims Bible: “By faith Henoch was translated, that he should not see death.”

Darby Bible Translation: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.”

English Revised Version: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.”

Webster’s Bible Translation: “By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.”

Weymouth New Testament Bible: “Through faith Enoch was taken from the earth so that he did not see death.”

World English Bible: “By faith, Enoch was taken away, so that he wouldn’t see death.”

Young’s Literal Translation: “By faith Enoch was translated – not to see death.”

“But, sir, all these clearly state that Enoch did not die. I am now confused?” Kirl expresses his astonishment at the revealed versions.

“Well, that is the point. As I said, you will gain better understanding once you return to earth. The starting point is where I told you what the Lord himself said—”

Kirl interrupts, “That no one has been to Heaven except he who came from there?”

“Yes. And, indeed, the words of the Lord do not

lie. The Lord wants you to gain complete understanding of these matters. Pay particular attention to one particular translation, the *King James Bible*, for that is much closer to the original translation. As well, note that there are two types of deaths: the first death, when one dies physically; and second death, when the souls of all the unrighteous shall be thrown into the lake of fire. Does Hebrews 11:5 make reference to the first or the second death, or to both? Seek the Lord’s wisdom when you return to earth,” Michael says.

Kirl smiles. He cannot explain how, although he never read the Bible on earth that much, but he is now able to see what is written in it. *How is this so?* he asks himself.

“The Lord Jesus died. He arose, alive. Then he did not die again. But in that resurrected body ascended to Heaven, could it be that he and only he did that, and no one else, not even Enoch, has ever been to that place?” Kirl ponders hard.

“I know what you’re thinking, Kirl. That’s the beginning of receiving revelation from God’s word. When you return to earth, allow the Holy Spirit to bring understanding to the Scriptures,” Michael counsels Kirl.

“I will, and thank you for your counsel, sir,” Kirl responds.

Jesus Christ, the soul of Kirl is thinking. *He was born of Virgin Mary, a woman, and by that act, again, he fulfilled the requirement of being a true and full human being. Remember, if Satan was going to fall, he should fall at the hand of man, and Jesus was a man.* Kirl recites word for word what he believes Michael had explained.

It both fascinates and intrigues Kirl how the Lord played Satan like a poker game. *Espionage, spying. Secrecy! This is what we learned in SISC. This is what I was trained to do—to outthink your opponent, to out-*

strategize your rival, and to outdo another's intelligence. God, this God, is a mastermind extraordinaire! Kirl ponders hard on these things.

Kirl is so imbued in his own thoughts that he behaves as if Michael is not in sight. He begins to get excited. A sheer thought that God works in the same way the secret agents work, albeit for holy missions, enchants him.

“In there, the Ruler plots and strategizes all the time, of course, for the defeat of the Kingdom of God. They are engaged in secret missions. But God, too, is engaged in the same, and he wins big—awesome.” Kirl jumps up and down and beats his chest hard. *Yes, I think there is a purpose in spying.*

While Kirl is busily exploring his mental faculties, Michael is standing aloof, allowing Kirl to exercise all the freedom available to him. Michael feels a sense of achievement. He has been at odds, trying to ascertain whether this son of man has understood all the intricacies of the spiritual world. Now he thinks Kirl is getting it.

Michael then turns to the subject he has been gingerly perusing through and decides to add more meat to it.

“As I started to say, Satan, in a hurry to gain power, obliterates Jesus as a threat to his dominion on earth. He imprisons Jesus forever in Hades. In fact, when an opportunity is provided, which, again, in God's infinite wisdom, was hidden from Satan, he did, indeed, attack Jesus; crucify him, as you will see; and then kill him.

“When that happens—I mean, if Satan should kill Jesus, he, Satan, would have just done what he wouldn't have done had he known.”

“But...” Kirl is thinking and asking at the same time, “I thought that killing Jesus is defeating Jesus. Then Satan would win.”

“Wrong. Remember two things: The seed of a woman, and, ‘A soul which sins shall die.’ Here comes Jesus, seed of a woman. And here is Jesus, again, water and blood oozing out of his body—a true man. He dies. Therefore, a man sinned. A man has died. One man for all! And Satan doesn't get it. Satan thought all men would die, and he held that for his advantage. But one man with pure, sinless blood has died. Here is another truth. Satan is and was supposed to kill sinful men. He will kill a sinless man, and by that act, both commit murder and punish man for his disobedience. If Jesus is resurrected, man is free, new, and as if he never sinned. But that pure person will only be identified through Jesus Christ, who did pay the penalty of that sin.

“Remember that death only has power over man once. You cannot die twice, except, when the unregenerated dead are thrown into the lake of fire after the Final Judgment. However, death has no dominion over someone who has already died. It doesn't have the same power over someone who rises from the dead, either. Death has no power over the Risen Lord and upon those who die in him, because through him—”

“They have died once, I know,” Kirl completes Michael's sentence.

“I see. You got it, son of man?”

“Yes, sir,” Kirl nods, and immediately, for the very first time, he kneels down and begins to worship Jesus:

*O Lord, my God, how merciful your love
O Lord, my God, how glorious up above
O Lord, my mind dearly thanks Thee
O my God, my eyes are open, and I see!*

Kirl sees a great darkness come upon the earth. No, it is not darkness; it is the entire compendium of sins—great and small. And it weighs heavily upon Jesus, and Kirl can hear Jesus cry out: *“My Father, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

The darkness of sin weight completely engulfs Jesus, and he becomes sin – taking every sin of all humankind in himself. And as this happens, the inhabitants of Hell shout in great ovation: “Now the Ruler has dealt you a dearth blow – you have been condemned to Hell forever, and as the Ruler has said and now we believe, you have come under our dominion of sin.”

As this scene unfolds, Michael asks Kirl, “Do you understand what is happening here?”

“No, I don’t – if you may explain to me, sir?” supplicates Kirl.

“You remember what the walls of Hell are made up of?” asks Michael.

“Oh...okay...now I see the connection. So, when all the sins of the world come upon Jesus, he becomes one with Hell...”

And as Kirl is explicating the conundrum, Michael finishes for him: “And therefore, he is automatically attracted to Hell!”

“Okay, I now understand,” Kirl surrenders.

“This is why people need to fear to die in sin. It is attracted to Hell, and those who have not repented simply find themselves in Hell. When you go to earth, teach God’s people to learn to confess their sins immediately. The Holy Spirit shows them they have sinned.”

“Thank you, sir, I will remember that,” Kirl promises.

“But continue looking to see that the end of this story is beautiful. Who would have known what the Lord God was doing, see what unfolds,” instructs

Michael the Archangel, and Kirl continues to observe.

Kirl sees that Jesus awakes into the hands of the same demons, this time on the other side of life—in Hell.

All the four Gates of Hell open. They pass him in chains as prisoner of Hell.

Chants of “You thought you could win,” “You continued to torment us day and night,” and “Now your Father has forsaken you” echoes the voices of demons throughout Hell.

“You now believe what I told you on Temptation Mountain—that you were not the Son of God—don’t you? God has forsaken you, the same way he forsook me. Aren’t we equal now?” Satan reprimands and torments Jesus with mockery.

But Jesus does not answer.

“Answer me. Now you admit that you are just a mere human being?” Satan shouts at Jesus.

“You yourself has said, ‘Yes, I am a man, and on men’s behalf, I have brought you all the sins, and with them evidence of the payments—death of the flesh and blood. Now man will be free,” answers Jesus.

“You are forgetting one thing, poor Jesus. You are now in Hell, and no one escapes from here,” Satan mocks.

“I will return to earth shortly, with human wounds—evidence of the pain and death suffered for sin. Then I will ascend to my Father to present the sacrifice of pure blood for the propitiation of men’s sins. You didn’t see it coming, Satan. I am the people’s substitute,” Jesus says.

At this stage, fear comes upon Satan. He begins to realize that he has been advancing his own defeat. Now the only seeming possibility is having Jesus kept permanently in Hell “so that he does not rise

and fulfill the atonement process.”

He commands all the mightiest of Hell to lock Jesus up so that he does not escape.

Satan knows that he has only one chance—the nemesis of Jesus: *Death*. The only one who can keep Jesus locked up for good, the only one who has jaws strong enough and a sting sharp enough to do so is Death.

“Death, now I adjure you by all the hope we have built for generations and by the essence of our war, the very core of our mandate: sting him the deepest, and never ever should he ever defeat you!” roars Satan, and his voice can be heard reverberating across Hell and Hades.

“At your command, Most Powerful. Count it done!” Death shouts back at Satan.

Kirl does not see Death but only hears his voice—a voice of excruciating pain and fear. Kirl almost falls to the ground.

Kirl is surprised that Satan himself is now at the center of the charge—flogging Jesus and leading the way. The mockery Kirl saw the Roman cohort subject Jesus to on the cross is now nothing. Jesus is taken to the Presidium, and here he is ruthlessly mocked, tortured, and ridiculed.

There is a sense of jubilation. Million upon millions of Hell’s demons congratulate the Ruler: “We bow, we bow before you Greater Lucifer, Bringer of Spoils,” they keep repeating.

“You have permanently won the Kingdom and defeated his only begotten Son. You have saved us from his threats and have made him a shame to all mankind. Hail Ruler. Hail our God.”

“So, Jesus went through what I went through—of course at a smaller scale for me,” Kirl ponders.

As Kirl is busily thinking that there is nothing that Jesus has not experienced, both on earth and in

Hell, Michael taps him on the back and says, “Don’t miss what happens next.”

Then Jesus’s soul is transferred into the dungeons of Hades, and there Jesus remains in pain, anguish, torture, and the massacre from the worms of Hades. He agonizes in the infernos of Hades until it happens.

Then a light splits Hell and Hades. Everyone falls to the ground. The Gates of Hell and Hades open. The gate of the Dungeon where Jesus is imprisoned opens, too. A voice echoes from the heavens:

Rejoice in Your heart, O Ancient of Days! For Your flesh will dwell securely. The Lord has not abandoned You forever. He will not leave Your soul among the dead, either. He will not allow You, O Holy One, to rot in the grave. He has now made known to You the path of life; in Jehovah’s presence, You will have the fullness of joy; in Yabweb’s right hand, there are pleasures forever awaiting Your triumph!

Jesus walks out of the prison, a man: a man in Hell walks free. In his mouth is the sword, and in his side and hands the wounds of Calvary. As all Hell freezes, he walks right into the Presidium, where all the demons are gathered. All fall to the ground, and no one talks.

“I am Jesus, the son of Mary, an offspring of Adam and Eve, Son of David, and I have come to get back my dominion, which you stole from man,” Jesus orders. The entire Presidium has fallen to the ground, and Satan is down on his knees crying.

“Here it is, my Lord. Here it is. Are you going to throw me into the lake of fire before my time?” Satan asks, still on his knees and bowing before Jesus.

Kirl realizes that Satan has not lifted his head to look Jesus in his eyes. Apart from Satan begging for lenience, everyone is silent in the Presidium and outside, and Kirl can hear every syllable in the conversation between Satan and Jesus. It is the most humiliating sight Kirl has ever seen. This is the same place where a few days he saw the devils performing their deceptive ceremonies. This is the same place in which the Ruler was glorified and worshipped. Now Kirl understands what he suspected all along. He suspected that Satan is a master deceiver. Satan lets everyone think he is God, and that the true God is the problem.

“But how does Satan continue to deceive these demons even when they have witnessed that Jesus has power over them and that Satan himself worships Jesus.” Kirl is troubled.

“I know you have a lot of questions on your mind but keep those to yourself. I want you to see what is going on here. When you return to earth, go, and read the Bible, it has everything you need to know about the character of Satan and why he continues to deceive not only his demons but humanity as well,” Michael instructs.

As Michael is directing, Kirl sees the devil handing over a shiny golden key to Jesus with great trembling.

“A symbol of earthly authority,” Michael whispers to Kirl.

“Here, here it is,” Satan begins. “I have given back what I stole from Adam and Eve. Can you leave me now, Lord,” Satan begs, still looking down, genuflecting on the floor.

“I have paid for the sin of mankind. See, here is my blood, which you shed—for there is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood. All that mankind did by disobeying me and my

Father, I have forgiven them. Here I have redeemed humankind from your power. The earth now belongs again to mankind. You are no longer in control of human affairs on earth. Man is,” the Lord decrees.

“Indeed, my Lord,” answers Satan, with tears rolling from his eyes, still not looking at Jesus.

Then the Lord Jesus steps on Satan’s head and walks majestically out of the Presidium and off to the portals of the earth. He is still alone. Hell, and Hades remain silent; no one dares to speak. What was a glorious cerebration two days ago has turned into gloom, a horrible humiliation. The pomp and splendor, the festivities and celebrations cease, and in their place are shame and defeat. Jesus has emerged the hero of life and death.

“You are Lord over us all; you have defeated us forever,” a unified voice emerges.

It recoils spontaneously, convulsing hot coals of a remnant of the Hades’ embers. It elongates upwards like a whirlwind, carrying with it the essence of pain, repugnance, and suffering. It rises again, reddish-gray, and some patches of dull white. All Kirl can see is a large head with one shiny eye, and a mouth with what looks like a million millipedes astride its gums. The tongue seems to consist of 741 snake heads. It is a vicious, terrifying-looking black serpent with fiery eyes.

The quintessential of Hell’s insurmountable cyclopean monster raves in uncontrollable anguish, stretching as far as Kirl’s eyes can follow. It comes charging at Jesus with great fury. The fin-like hairs on its body, which are in themselves lethal monsters with biting daggers, screech disturbingly, releasing poisonous bullets at the speed of light.

This beast is a ruthless and efficient killer.

It opens its mouth wide, ready to swallow Jesus;

and its tongue, which resembles an elephant's trunk and suggests fear and danger advances toward Jesus. Kirl fears that the end of Jesus is come. He begins to cry—so hopelessly hard that he falls down to the ground as though dead. Michael wakes him up.

“I don't want you to miss this.” Michael waves another wand, and strength comes to Kirl's soul.

And Kirl continues to look. Then out of the nothing, Jesus approaches the terrible monster, looks it in the eye, and shout “Death! Death! Death!” three times.

A two-edged sword comes out of the Lord's mouth, and like David approaching Goliath, Jesus swings himself like a spear, and in a split second, he thumps the tongue of the monster and cuts across its heart with one breath. It tries to stand its ground; then it squeaks into another loud voice, and down it collapses to the ground.

It is finished!

In a juxtaposed scene Kirl sees the Temple curtain torn in two from top to bottom.

Why? Kirl ponders.

Then the Heavens open, and out of the clouds come myriad angels dressed in pure white gowns, and singing,

Death is swallowed up in victory.

O Death, where is your victory?

O Death, where is your sting?

“The monster is called Death; it was Satan's last line of defense. With its destruction, it now means that humans need not fear anything if they have the Lord Jesus in them,” explains Michael to Kirl, who at this time is inexorably mystified.

With Death and Satan completely defeated and immobilized, Jesus grabs the key from the throat of

Detharator and starts to open the prison gates of Hell one by one, emptying every cell and releasing all the souls who are held in them.

They all gather together, both great and small, and they all praise the conquering King:

Worthy. Worthy. Worthy.

*For you have conquered Death and its dictator
and have given us total freedom.*

Worthy. Worthy. Worthy.

“You will go straight to my Father by way of earth. I will join you all after fifty days. I must commission my disciples for the Great Harvest first,” the Lord Jesus orders all the liberated souls.

Just as the Lord ends his charge to the freed souls, Kirl sees them all going out of the graves, whether they died at sea or on land, and they all rise from their tombs and ascend to Heaven. As they trek into Heaven, an angel appears with a golden trumpet and announces,

Here comes a throng of those

who have been rescued from the pain and chain of Hell.

They will forever be with God.

Another angel appears and announces:

Happy, happy is everyone

who has been rescued in this way,

for they shall no longer be found sick or in pain.

The third angel appears and announces:

The Dispensation of Ignorance is passed away,

behold here begins the Dispensation of Grace!

Michael waves the wand, and Kirl finds himself outside his body, hovering around it at Ingersoll.

“So, Heaven is real. Jesus is real. And Hell, and Satan are real, too.” Kirl is perspiring wretchedly.

And that last announcement—the Dispensation of Grace—what does it mean? he asks himself.

In a flash, Kirl’s inner eyes start to open. He understands why he went to Hell and still came back. It is all grace.

So, that’s why I am still here. That thing called grace – all my sins it has erased? he continues to ask himself.

At one of the funerals he had attended in disguise after killing a Cabinet Minister in Central African Republic, Kirl had head the song, “Amazing Grace.” It had been sung by a young and upcoming soloist. He remembers she was introduced by the name of Ngwenya. It had moved the entire stadium full of people who had gathered to mourn Kelvin Makwabi. The song was so moving that the president of the Central African Republic cried publicly. Kirl had then mocked in his heart, *What’s amazing about being murdered?*

Now, speaking to himself, Kirl thinks, *here, my mind can remember everything I have ever heard someone say and everything I have ever read; it’s remarkable.*

And now, he is able to see. It is not just amazing; it is astonishing to realize. It is beyond any human imagination.

How did I escape from that inevitable jail? How am I here? I, the least deserved, why am I being given this holy mission? This grace is truly amazing, it has found me, too, he ponders.

“Why is the Lord showing me all—,” Kirl starts to ask, but he is interrupted when he sees Ravinah changing the position of his—Kirl’s—comatose body. Just then, the praying sisters from the Last Saints Church, led by Sister Jane, come to the Devil’s Handbag, and begin to pray over his comatose body.

“Please, give Sister Ravinah strength, dear Lord, so that she can bear the difficult times she is in,” they pray.

These women, Kirl is thinking, *They have neither been to Hell nor through what I have been through, and yet, they believe as if they have seen everything.*

Then it hits Kirl. “Faith,” he mumbles to himself. Kirl realizes that grace works with faith.

It’s better to have faith and believe than to go through Hell. Kirl is in deep thoughts. *No-one should wait to go through my experience because they may never have another chance.*

It bothers Kirl that like him, many humans wait to have concrete evidence of the after-life before they can believe. He was so cruel and arrogant to Caroline that he now sees the futility of it all.

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As they pray, Michael again appears, and with him another angel.

“This is Raphael. He will be your guide from now on. If you have any question regarding Heaven and Hell, he will help you answer those questions. I must be going now. My mission with you is completed,” instructs Michael, and without further ado, Michael disappears.

Raphael

“Come. As the Prince Michael introduced, I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints and enter into the presence of the glory of the Holy One. I must show you this. And you saw those women praying with Ravinah. God did not answer their prayers. Otherwise, you would be awake by now.”

“Why...why?” inquires Kirl.

“This is what I must now show you. You see, they see you as dead. The sisters have not even a tiny bit of faith. As far as they are concerned, you are dead. Did you hear their prayer? They didn’t pray for you. They prayed for strength for Ravinah, and God answered them—for Ravinah. They had faith,” Raphael educates him.

Then Raphael takes Kirl to a local church. It is Sunday morning in a town Kirl cannot recognize. The congregants are gathered. As new visitors, both poorly dressed and looking dingily kempt, the

ushers of the church welcome Raphael and Kirl. Kirl and Raphael are taken to the back of the church and offered the seats. This is the last time anyone speaks to them. The only thing they see is an offering basket passing by, and they are required to drop any offering in it.

Raphael says nothing. The next Sunday, Raphael and Kirl return to the same church. This time they are dressed as very rich people. They come driving a BMW SUV, and immediately the ushers welcome them with lots of attention. They are given the front seats and the VIP treatment at the end of the service.

“What did you see in these two encounters?” Raphael asks.

“It’s obvious, isn’t it? That the Church treats the poor with indifference and treats the rich with dignity. Is that what you want me to see?” Kirl induces.

“Yes. Let us go,” Raphael commands.

As they fly, Raphael takes the chance to explain a few things “which your brothers and sisters on earth will expand on when you return.”

“You see,” Raphael starts, “you should not forget that the power of the Lord Jesus Christ is superior to that of Satan,” he reasserts, checks his wand and realizes that they should complete this mission well before the end of the service to the meeting they are flying.

But Kirl is already into the story, and when Raphael seems as though he is not continuing the story anymore, Kirl interjects, “Please, go on, sir.”

This is the first time Kirl has realized just how dependent angels are. He has realized that however powerful they may look, they are all subjects of the Lord God alone, whom Kirl thinks, *is worthy to be worshipped*.

“Kirl, what you saw in Heaven is the Throne of

Christ. He is elevated above all, including above Hell, above Satan, above rulers, authorities, dominions, and powers. I mean, far above all these, you see.” Raphael is now looking east as they fly across an expanse of neglected cities with no humans in them.

But Kirl is utterly shocked when as they fly across, he can now see the city clearly after they have passed it. The city is called Sodom and Gomorrah—the City of Sin.

Kirl wants to ask for explanation, but Raphael does not seem interested. Rather, Raphael continues to explain what he has just started.

“Christ is not only far above, but he is also far above even names that will ever be named. You see, there is power in a name, which is why on earth, certain names automatically have access to wealth and power. But certain other names are powerful because Satan sanctions them and uses that to control governments, businesses, and associations on earth. Our Lord Jesus Christ is far above all those names.

“Hell, Hades and the seas all submit to our Lord God and His Son Jesus Christ,” Raphael concludes, but no sooner has he paused to catch the next breath than Kirl asks for clarifications.

“You mentioned seas, what about seas? This is confusing now.”

“No, Kirl, you don’t need to be confused. Things will become clear soon. But I will tell you this: what you saw in Hell and Hades is just a foretaste of what more there is.”

“The devil, or Satan, now has some power over humans, but that will be stripped away when he is arrested,” Raphael states.

“Look, sir, if I were the Lord God, I would arrest that monster right away, you get me? You read me!”

Kirl reels with anger.

“You should not judge Satan as a monster or use any derogatory language to describe him. Even Michael, one of the mightiest of the angels and the one who delegated you to me, did not dare accuse the devil of blasphemy but simply said, ‘The Lord rebukes you!’”

“Why? Why, sir? I saw him in Hell. He’s a monster, isn’t that the right description of him?”

“That could be. But in spiritual economics, the power to cast out demons and defeat Satan is only found in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And remember, your weapons are love, righteousness, holiness, truth, faith, and the like. If you confront Satan with rude language or bad motives, he—”

But Raphael does not finish the sentence, because Kirl immediately finishes for him: “Will win, I know that.”

“So, as I was saying, and in answer to your question,” Raphael continues, “about the seas—and I should add, the power to arrest Satan—well, you see, the sea holds secrets. When you go back to earth, read Revelations 20, but I can start for you. Satan and his demons, including Satanael, whom you saw in Hell and who will indwell be the Antichrist, and Leviathan as well, who will indwell come as the Beast in the end, have all been judged. There remains no further judgment for them. They already know their fates—the Abyss or the lake of fire, which will serve as their final prison—they know that. There is no redemption for them; they are doomed to eternal destruction.

“But humans, who are only victims of Satan’s rebellion, have plenty of chances to be saved now.

“You see, the Lord Jesus Christ is so patient that he can postpone someone’s death until they repent and come to him. And also remember that he died

for them. But don’t forget this: when someone dies, that chance to be saved ceases, and each of these souls will enter the afterlife in various ways. Some will die on land and be buried; others will perish in the seas and will remain there. Now here is the distinction: those who believed in Jesus Christ, the Lord, and were saved, are gathered to the solaces of the faithful. You saw one called the Solace of Abraham, didn’t you?”

Raphael asks a rhetorical question and continues to narrate.

“In these solaces, they have hope and do praise the Lord and exist in divine peace. But after a while, when the Great White Throne Judgment takes place, they will be brought to receive rewards, and each one of these will have their names already written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. Remember this Book only began to be kept after the ascension of the Lord, so it contains the names of those who confess to the Lord and accept him as their personal Lord and Savior.”

“But, sir, if I may ask, and I apologize for doing so, what about those whose names will not be found written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? Where are they now, and where are they going after judgment?” Kirl barricades Raphael with a missive of an objective question.

Raphael does not answer; he only says, “If their names are not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, it means they are doomed.”

“But how can one’s name be written in *this* book? Again, I am sorry for asking,” Kirl apologizes.

“They simply must believe in Jesus Christ and accept his death. Simple as that! The ministers of truth on earth have this entire message. You will need to go ask them when you return,” Raphael replies.

Then Raphael does what is contrary to what he has just a while ago portrayed as naivete to Kirl's questionings.

"Let me tell you that you don't need to be deceived by what you saw in Hell. Yes, adults who are going to Hell are many, but there are more babies, and those who die premature and those who have not developed their minds sufficiently enough to be held accountable to their sins, who are entering Heaven every day. I just thought you should know."

"Wow, I never thought of it that way!" Kirl exclaims.

There is now no further exchange of words and questions. Time seems to pass very quickly. In his mind, Kirl is thinking of babies, and as he does that, he laughs. "I thought they are forgotten. I was wrong."

Kirl contemplates how, if Raphael can give him just another chance, he can ask in what state of mind, if any, those babies, and those with undeveloped minds relate to God.

"There are no children, no marriages in Heaven. All will be *like* our Lord Jesus Christ—that is the simple answer to your thoughts, Kirl," Raphael answers.

But Kirl is not surprised that Raphael picks up his mind and understands his thoughts, *It's the Lord who just told him*, Kirl comforts himself.

Raphael opens his mouth. "You know, that is all I know. Perhaps you will ask the Lord's ministers on earth who have a better revelation of things because our God, the *Holy Spirit*, helps them."

"The Holy Spirit—God—what are you talking about now?" Even as Kirl takes his chances and inquires, he is still not very clear on the dead who will be judged "according to their deeds." But he now knows that Raphael is limited. He resolves to

understand such matters immediately when he goes back to earth.

"Who can I ask about these things on earth, sir?" Kirl asks.

"Good question, Kirl. First, you must read the Bible by yourself, daily praying that the Holy Spirit can open your understanding, because he is the author. Last, after praying, select a church and a pastor who will begin to mentor you into a mature Christian.," Raphael answers.

"I am sorry. I wanted to ask another question, but I will ask, I guess, a pastor on earth—but just this one, if I may: so that Bible I always neglected, is that powerful?"

"Yes," Raphael answers with finality.

Kirl knows now from this moment that his goal on earth will be to study the Bible and read it "like crazy."

But Kirl is not worried about knowing more about Hell, Hades, and Death; he saw all these with his naked eyes. However, he is being bothered by the fact that when someone dies, they cannot be saved if they were not saved at that point. He begins to get extremely nervous.

But if they cannot choose the Lord Jesus Christ after they are dead, how many people like me go to Hell as I saw, he questions his mind. And what about me now—what if for some reason I don't make it to earth again, won't I be lost forever?

"The Lord is sending me a message, Kirl. The Lord wants you to know that you will go back to earth and bear witness for this very purpose. And that you should not worry—worry is not of the Lord.," Raphael reports.

Kirl is very relieved to hear that. He calms down and simply ponders the rest of the questions in his mind, coming, rather, to a pyrrhic conclusion: "The

Lord knows all things.”

Raphael and Kirl have been traveling for some two thousand and fifty miles, and they now come to a wonderful cathedral. It has just been completed, and its magnificence has reached Heaven. Parked outside the cathedral are over five hundred motor vehicles. Inside the cathedral are chandeliers of exceptional cost and beauty. Inscribed on the front patio is “Jesus is Lord.” The bishop of the Church, a fifty-eight-year-old man of medium build and wearing a navy-blue tuxedo emerges from the inner chambers.

“Halleluiah, God is good!” he greets the congregation.

Raphael and Kirl stay there for the entire duration of the service, which takes roughly an hour and a half. Then it comes time for tithes and offerings. The wife of the bishop stands up and begins to exalt the congregation.

“Anyone who does not give tithe is a thief, halleluiah, and it’s not me who wrote that. Malachi did. Amen!” she lauds.

The bishop preaches, and it is a sound speech with extensive standing ovations. The people in this church are happy, and with the blessings of technology, the church is reaching many people across the country. Kirl, who had never entered an evangelical church before, is surprised that such churches exist.

But Kirl is disturbed when he sees the Ruler of Hell seated in the manse of the church. Because Kirl is disguised as a member of the church, he can see all that is happening without disturbance.

“Look in the corner, what do you see?” Raphael

whispers into Kirl’s ears.

“I see a man dressed in a gray suit.”

“Look again, now.” Raphael waves his wand.

And Kirl cannot believe his eyes. The person who gave the announcements in church and is dressed well and seated in the corner is, in fact, Satanael—Satan’s only Son.

“No, this can’t be.” Kirl scratches his eyes repeatedly.

“This can’t be, Raphael. This is not Satanael. It can’t be,” Kirl denies.

“I brought you here so that you can see for yourself. This is Satan’s church, and there are many like this across the nations of the world,” Raphael discloses, and as he does so, Kirl notices that the prince’s countenance falls.

They leave the cathedral, and no words are uttered between the two of them. Kirl is deeply disturbed. He cannot believe what he has just seen. As they fly all over the earth, Kirl is passed through [he sees palaces, presidential parlors, and hotel rooms] palaces, presidential parlors, and hotel rooms. He sees demons one upon another seated as rulers, prime ministers, presidents, senators, and so many more. Kirl is deeply surprised that the earth is infiltrated with demons who look like normal humans going about the normal affairs of the humans.

Kirl turns to Raphael. “If I may ask another question, sir? Why did God allow Satan or his son in the cathedral?”

“Again, good question, Kirl,” Raphael states, and then gives an oration:

“I want you to know that there is a difference between *The Church*, the Body of Christ, and *church*, individual congregations. The Church is a mystery, even to us in the heavenlies. We wonder so often

how the Lord God has set it above all else, that in rank, the Church is just at the same level as the Throne of Grace itself. When the Lord resurrected from the dead, he set up the Church, first through the apostles who walked the earth with him, and thereafter, with those who began to believe the gospel. Today, the Church has grown, and it is the Lord's Body—and this is where the mystery lies.

“The Lord feels the pains, joys, struggles, and experiences of the Church. If you are to be powerful in God, you must be a faithful member of the Church, the Body of Christ. And if you should do warfare with Satan, it is only through the Church that victory is sure. Satan himself doesn't understand it. He thinks he has the power, but when he attends Church, he becomes powerless and even more frustrated because when the Church prays, praises the Lord or worships, the devil and his demons are paralyzed and are cast out.

“Because the Church is the Body of Christ, and Christ is the Head, submission to a Church is submission to God. Bear in mind that individual pastors will be weak, and even sinful at times, but they operate under the umbrella of the Head. For that reason, operating within the Church's power guarantees one spiritual potency and victory. You can be on your own for a while, without a *church*, as long as you continue to be faithful to prayer, to holy living, and to the celebration of the virtues of love and so on, but do not be alone to fight Satan.

“Be careful. Some churches are simply hordes of demons.”

Kirl is speechless. He tries to ask a follow-up question on whether there are, then, false, and right churches, false and true preachers, and so on, but the details Raphael has just narrated overwhelm him.

So, Satan can remain that comfortable in the Church, but he is powerless? I guess he goes there to gather his next strategies on how to destroy individual believers, Kirl ponders.

Then Kirl wonders if believers should pray when they gather to worship the Lord God that Satan, or his demons, should not come near their tents of meetings or cathedrals.

“I know how Satan's minions manage to report to the Presidium on the happenstances of the Church on earth,” Kirl sighs, but it is not a sigh of relief. He is concerned, and he wants to revisit this issue at some point.

“I brought you to this church for another reason,” Raphael informs him, but without giving the impression it is important.

Kirl, by this time, has come to know the angel a little bit better.

“And that reason is...” implores Kirl, and as he has become accustomed to Raphael, he understands that the angel may sound disinterested in what he is about to say, but the lesson is divine and important.

“I would rather Chief Prince Gabriel illustrated this, but the prince has been tasked with another mission. I will explain.

“In the Old Testament, the Lord God selected the Levites to receive tithes. I want to tell you something about tithes.” Raphael pauses for a good while and then resumes his explanation.

“The tithes—” Raphael is just about to begin when Kirl interrupts him.

“What is a tithe?” Kirl asks, interrupting Raphael.

“Well, it was initially a tenth,” Raphael answers.

“A tenth of what?” Kirl, again wanting to know more, asks the angel.

“It can be a tenth of anything. But there is a history to it. Before the Lord Jesus Christ died and

rose again, and therefore initiated a New Covenant. The Lord God, as I said, chose the Levites as priests. In the New Covenant, what people call the New Testament, there is a change of the priesthood from the Levites to our Lord Jesus Christ. The old Levitical priesthood has given way to the new and permanent priesthood—that of the Lord Jesus Christ. That Old Covenant the Lord God made with Moses on behalf of the Hebrews is no longer in force.”

Kirl is shaking his head hard now and implores, “Was it some form of a tax?”

“You may say so. But I know the next question forming in your mind: What about tithing, did it end with the New Covenant?”

“Well,” Raphael begins, but Kirl again interrupts him.

“You’ve lost me. Why would God end an old priesthood and bring in his Son as Priest?” asks Kirl.

“Remember that the Lord God chose the Jews as an example of what he ultimately wanted the order of things to be. He wanted a perfect and permanent covenant with his people. But the strongest of any covenant in the Jewish culture was cemented by blood. The purest blood is required for the strongest covenant—I mean one that cannot be broken. For the old priests, there was only the blood of animals, but this was not adequate. Routinely, a priest entered into the Tabernacle that Moses built and offered up sacrifices on behalf of the people. But again, these rituals were not permanent and could not redeem people.”

“General, what do these rituals have to do with tithing then? And with Satan?” Kirl asks, interested only in knowing the connection of the present topic with what he saw in Hell.

Raphael continues his narrative as though he has

not heard Kirl’s question regarding tithing: “Just like for the sacrifices. And do not forget the connection to Satan here—for if Satan did not deceive Adam and Eve and steal their earthly right, there was never going to be any need of a sacrifice. The Lord God set up the covenant and sacrificing structures all in the quest to bring the human race back into fellowship with the Almighty God.”

“And you mean—” Kirl stops, sensing that Raphael intends to continue.

“Anyway, coming to the line of inquiry I developed with you earlier (that is, regarding the New Covenant) the Lord God now, through the death and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ—that blood was and is the purest, without blemish or fault—instituted a new and lasting covenant with the people, and may I emphasize, all the peoples of the earth, and not only the Jews. In this New Covenant, the old is superseded by the new, and is obsolete.”

“I think I am beginning to understand. But, if I may, sir, general, does the term *covenant* have the same meaning as *will*? I mean that legal document one writes in the event of death?” Kirl inquires, this time with a serious comportment.

“Oh yes. Excellent question! You know that a will is useless.” And before Raphael can finish the sentence, Kirl responds, “The testator dies.”

“I am talking to an expert here,” Raphael jokes. And this is the only time Kirl has seen Raphael smile.

“So what you are saying is that the Lord Jesus Christ wrote a *will*, and that *will* became effective after he died, right?”

“Yes.”

“But . . .” Kirl stammers.

“But what? Continue,” Raphael comes to Kirl’s

help.

“But if the testator dies, I understand the *will* becomes effective. But in our case, the testator also rose again. My question is, does the testator reclaim his possession upon resurrecting?” Kirl thumps Raphael with a big one.

“What is bequeathed is bequeathed. The testator cannot reclaim what he gave by way of a *will*. But look at it this way: if there should be conflict as to what the testator meant in the will, who would be better served—the one whose testator is dead or the other whose testator actually rose again?” Raphael handles Kirl with a good one.

“Wow, this is brilliant. I get you. It means that if Satan should bring doubts as to whether the Lord’s death accomplished anything for human beings, the Lord exists to confirm it did,” Kirl rejoins with cheerfulness.

“You got it right,” answers Raphael. Then he continues, “I need to complete explaining the reason why I raised the question of tithing.”

“Oh, yes, I wanted to remind you of that as well,” Kirl says.

“Do you recall how the bishop’s wife framed her exaltation during offering time?” Raphael asks Kirl.

“What is exaltation?” Kirl asks, expressing deep obliviousness to this issue.

“Well, and sorry about that. I took it for granted that you knew what I meant. It is the short version of preaching, but this time you are doing it with the aim of elevating someone’s faith or attempting to get them to do something for God,” Raphael says, trying as best as he can to answer Kirl’s question.

“I get it,” responds Kirl, very thankfully. Then he adds, “Now I remember what she said. She said that ‘Anyone who does not give tithe is a thief.’ I think that’s what she said, do you agree, sir?” Kirl directs

the question at Raphael.

“You said it well, and that is what I needed to continue explaining. You know, when the Lord Jesus Christ brought a New Covenant, the old one came to an end.”

“You mean that if people don’t give tithes, they are not thieves as she puts it?”

“If they were under the Old Testament, yes—and only if they were required to do so.”

“That Church will be broke if people don’t tithe,” Kirl reasons with Raphael with a hue of joke to his comment.

“I know. But think about it this way: what if people give more than a tenth of what they earn, wouldn’t that make the church better?” Raphael asks Kirl, matter-of-factly.

“I see. You mean that people can give more than ten percent?” Kirl is beginning to like this exchange.

“And as cheerfully as they want to give it. They can give 100 percent if they are willing to,” says Raphael.

“But why are churches still preaching tithing?” Kirl asks.

“Simple. Or maybe for three reasons: First, ignorance. People don’t want to appreciate the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross—he ended all the old practices with their regulations. He perfected them in himself. Remember that when you accept Christ, he lives in you.”

“Wait a minute, you are telling me that the Lord Jesus Christ lives in people?” Kirl glances from left to right and to left again, as though there is something chasing him.

“I see you’re excited now. The simple answer, again, is yes.”

“Before I forget, what is the second reason, sir?” Kirl reminds Raphael.

“Well, now you can guess, can’t you,” Raphael tests Kirl.

“I should guess it is lack of faith.” Kirl looks away from Raphael, as if to say that his response is impetuous.

“You’re actually right. And I should add, a lack of spirituality. People want to find a logical explanation for tithe, or perhaps try to—” Raphael is about to make a point when Kirl interjects, “Why can’t they make 100 percent instead of resting on ten percent?”

“Well, that is the point, isn’t it?” Raphael agrees.

Kirl does not want to ask Raphael to give the third reason; he now believes he knows what it is.

I will preach to the world about this point should I be granted a chance, Kirl promises himself.

“Don’t be that quick. The main reason why tithing should not indict people is that it was terminated by the Dispensation of Grace. There is a statement in the New Testament in which Paul informs of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though through rich became poor so that the humans through his poverty might be made rich.”

“Interesting...so tithing is not—”

“A grace thing, no. It is a law thing. The Lord Jesus referenced it in his life, but it was before he set up a new Dispensation of Grace,” Raphael completes.

“So, if I am getting you correctly, tithing is not legit.”

“No. Like all things that began with the old, they have been fulfilled in the *new*—Christ Jesus himself!” Raphael says.

“Should I return, will it be okay for me to collect tithes, then?” Kirl asks.

“Yes, indeed, you may. But understand it is not mandatory, and it must be sutured with an ontology

of grace. And for practical reasons.”

“What practical reasons?” Kirl asks as urgently as his next breath.

“For administering the day-to-day necessities of the Church, perhaps, but it must be contained within the meaning of grace. And again, those who don’t give tithe have not sinned. It will, for example, be foolishness to pay tithe to the Church when your family does not have food. In the Dispensation of Grace, tithing is now a matter of heart, not of law,” Raphael tells Kirl.

“I see, and thank you, General.”

“Hey, Kirl, I see you’re now addressing me as General. Any special significance?” Raphael says with a smirk.

“Never mind, sir,” Kirl says.

Raphael summons his wand, and they fly away toward the east. Kirl continues to ponder through the questions of tithes and of sacrifices and of covenants. But all along, his mind is still trying to come to terms with the fact that he is a spirit.

Raphael makes a conjecture that will leave Kirl distraught for the rest of the orientation. “You saw the bloodthirsty demons of Hell, didn’t you?”

“Yes, I did,” answers Kirl.

Raphael waves his wand, and Kirl is brought to a secluded mansion. Inside is a man imbibing what looks like red wine, the type that is dry and, by Kirl’s estimate, could even have between 25 and 40 percent alcohol content.

“You see that young man?” Raphael points to an athletically built man in his late twenties, or perhaps early thirties.

Wearing only extended underwear, he is lying relaxed on a Mopani-dusted bed, puffing on a pipe. Beside him, a woman lies naked, covered only by a thin layer of a piece of cloth. She is facing the other

side. When Kirl looks closely, he can see that he has just seen that face in Hell.

“Wait a minute. This is Furvur, Cjaron, Azosis-Azrael, and I met her at the second gate,” Kirl remembers.

“And what is she doing pretending to be a human, a pretty lady?” Kirl follows up.

“It’s pretty obvious, isn’t it.”

“But the real reason I brought you here is to see another scene.”

Then Raphael waves his wand again, and Kirl and Raphael find themselves before a sizable congregation in a small town of a country he cannot recognize. Standing in front of the church preaching is the man he has just been shown having coitus with Furvur. He’s on fire, and a large crowd of people is listening. As he preaches, miracles are happening, and many people are being delivered.

“In this region, this young man had brought the demonic system virtually to a standstill,” remarks Raphael.

“But what happened?” inquires Kirl. And by this time, tears begin to drip from his brows.

“This is what the Lord wants me to tell you. That it is not the fault of that young man that he is at the entrance of Hell. He loves the Lord. But the Lord God is concerned that a lot of his dedicated children are fast ending up like that young man.

“You see, Kirl, when you go to earth, teach this to pastors and teachers, and evangelists and preachers: That the more they bring havoc to the kingdom of evil through powerful preaching, the more they need the covering of prayer through their congregation. But not only that, that young man used to be under a very good gospel minister in a large church, which sent him there to oversee a relatively smaller church. But the main church

neglected him. Because he was walking in power and miracles, the senior man started to become jealousy of the younger man and stopped praying for him.

“As a result of prayerlessness, the demons of Hell found a chance to bring in Madam Furvur herself. Satan wanted this man removed from the earth immediately, but the Lord God has not determined that yet. The Lord God told me to tell you that that young man still has work for the Kingdom of Heaven.”

“But why didn’t Furvur just kill him?” Kirl wants to know.

“Well, I want you to see,” Raphael motions and then wands off his stick, and Kirl is teleported to another town.

Here Kirl sees a gentlewoman; he thinks she could be in her early sixties. What Kirl sees, incredibly, soothes his soul. Despite the fact that the younger man had been disowned by the mother church in the big town where this old lady once attended, the old lady refused to celebrate with everyone the downfall of this young pastor. She relocated to another city and began to intercede for him. Every time Satan and Furvur have wanted to kill the young pastor, the prayers of this old lady have acted as a shield and protected the young pastor.

Then Raphael says in a somber voice, “When you go to earth, please, the Lord God instructs, find this young man. Pray with him and destroy the horde of Furvur over him. The women he sleeps with are all demons; he does not see. But they can’t touch his soul because the Lord God has not allowed it. Big preachers on earth are becoming too puffed up, loving influence over ministry, and are neglecting those under them to fall into the wrath of Satan. God will hold these senior ministers accountable.”

Kirl just nods and continues to pore over this.

“So, it’s true. Spiritual warfare is here,” he ruminates.

“Tomorrow, I will take you to Shawar.”

“What is Shawar?” asks Kirl.

At this time, as told by Raphael, Kirl is thinking hard about the place that is expected to be the last place of tour. Raphael does not elaborate, and as the next day approaches, he and Kirl embark on the journey toward Shawar.

As they pass through a grayish orange expanse, completely deserted and devoid of any soul or sign of life, Kirl summons all the strength he has and, gazing at Raphael, he asks, “Excuse me, sir, you know what surprises me? I always thought that the Lord Jesus Christ was a Jew, but when I saw him, he is none of that.”

“Is that a question?” Raphael wants clarification.

“Yes,,” answers Kirl.

“I will answer you this way. It’s a very famous story in Heaven. We tell it to all newcomers. It goes like this:

*Once when it had finally been established
For the Lord’s mission to be accomplished,
That He must go to earth and die,
Word leaked, and in Heaven, it went by
That He, the Lord, who had no form,
No flesh and nowhere to come from,
Must take on the core of human nature
And depart to prepare a place and a future
That the host of elders and of angels alike
In great dismay, anguish, and deep spike
Began to speak of whose flesh He would be
And it was rumored, men would Him see
Not as an angel, bright and with finless wings
Or a Cherubim, or combiner of created things*

*But as a servant, and for that matter a Jew
For all the worlds would but for a select few
Had known of the despisement, and of suffering
That being a Jew would make Him a sin offering
And we knew that Humility had become a Person
For the Lord God Himself, had become Reason.
A Jew He grew to be, for all, He was brought low
So that in Him, all should gain all and more.”*

“I get it,” reflects Kirl, and then he makes a remark: “I didn’t know Jews were a despised people.”

“Even Satan was shocked, and so were we. Because at that time, it would be with great humility that the Lord God would choose to be found to be a Jew,” explains Raphael.

“So the Lord Jesus coming as a Jew was not an advantage to the Jews?” asks Kirl.

“No, not at all. Haven’t you seen that of all the peoples of the world the Jews have suffered the worst since creation? It is a pain they were chosen to carry for the whole world. All humanity should be thankful to the Jews,” Raphael declares.

“I see. It makes sense now,” Kirl admits.

They have now come almost to the end of the expanse. The colors of the passage begin to turn green and red, and they finally can see a swarm of people like that of bees. Kirl can see that these are all recently dead people. He observes that no matter how great these souls seem to have been on earth, each is like another here. They are all waiting for something or wanting to enter into something.

Plaques salute them. On one it is written, “Narrow and Unpopular Way.” On the other, is written, “Wide and Popular Way.” Kirl does not understand what all this means.

And besides, he is reluctant to ask Raphael,

thinking, *He will be tired of my inquest.*

They come to a place with gravel pathways—one way leads to the left, and the other leads to the right. As they come near, Kirl asks, “This place is familiar, don’t I know it?”

“Yes, you do. It’s at the back of the Solace of Abraham. You remember where you met that old man?” Raphael clarifies.

“Yes, I do. And who is that old man, by the way?”

“I want you to keep quiet and observe. This is your last tour!” Raphael orders.

As they sit there, Raphael waves his wand three times, and Kirl sees that that place is populated by souls. Kirl is amazed that hundreds of thousands of people are dying every day. They all take the same route when they die until they reach this place. It takes some the same day to reach this place after death; it takes others months before they can reach here. Before they come to this place, their souls wander about in a place called Limbo. Most of the people come to this place; some do not. Those who do not come to this place are the ones who were not in tune with their Creator, as made obvious by what they did on earth.

Kirl sees that the paths part after the Gate—hundreds of thousands of souls go on the left side and are taken across the Styx by designated demons. These go to Hell.

“They are usually those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life,” Raphael elucidates.

A few follow the path on the right, and these go into the Solace of Abraham. They will eventually enter Heaven. But what shocks Kirl is the sheer number of multitudes who are going to Hell every day. He can count one here, two there, of all those

going to the Solace of Abraham.

At this time, Kirl, who a few seconds ago had started thinking and being distracted by the revelation of who the old man is—in fact, his two women’s father—is now totally furious.

“How can multitudes be going to that horrible place every day? Is there no one who should warn these people of Hell? Why should it be like this? Why should it be, Raphael?” Kirl begins to cry.

Meanwhile, Raphael is quiet and allows Kirl to cry until Kirl is calm again.

“That’s why the Lord is sending you back to earth. There are now only very few preaching the truth. Most are in it out of greed,” Raphael warns, and he then sighs in an aside and turns and holds Kirl tight and whispers, “Please, Kirl. Please, don’t become like the rest. Go and preach the truth.”

Kirl looks around intently. It is obvious that the gates are jammed. But it is very clear to this other group of souls who are heavily protesting. He feels as though he is in a maze of unending din; from time to time, the winds blow towards his direction, and he can hear the protests.

“No, not me. Do you know who I am?” a deflated soul wearing soiled garments at the back of which is written, “Homosexuality Is Not What Brings Him to Hell; Unbelief Does” reasons with the angel manning the gates to the Solace of Abraham.

“Sorry, sir, your name is not in the Book of Life. We have searched from front to back,” the angel whose tag reads “Registrar” says.

“Please, check again. I founded the first Equal Rights Church in New York City with twenty-seven branches across the globe. I provided an acceptance platform for all who are marginalized. I brought them to the truth of diversity.” The man’s soul is

beginning to grow hoarse.

“There is nothing I can do for you now, sir. Your time is up.” The Registrar waves his white regalia, and a strong force overpowers the protesting self-styled clergyman.

He is instantly thrown onto the wide road that leads to Hell.

Kirl watches the soul of the unbelieving man who happened to be a homosexual wrestling with an invisible force. But the force is too strong for the desperate soul, and Kirl can feel the prick into his own soul as he relives the moment when he was dragged across the horrible Styx by Cjaron.

And now from a distance, Kirl can barely hear the faint sound of the man’s soul.

It is over.

It is finished.

Meanwhile, other souls carry on with similar protestations.

“Now, I don’t understand this,” Kirl starts to speak.

“This man did so much for God, and he’s let down. Is it because he was *gay*?”

“No. The answer is on his back as you saw,” Raphael rejoins.

“*Unbelief*, why should that transpose to oblivion all the good works he had done, sir?” Kirl asks with a hint of antipathy in his voice.

“People do many things for themselves in the name of God, Kirl, but God doesn’t approve of such,” Raphael quickly responds.

“But...huh,” Kirl stammers.

“What is it you want to say?” Raphael intones.

“I mean, if he was *straight* and did what he did for God, wouldn’t he have gone to the Right?” Kirl asks boldly.

“Everyone who believes is saved, Kirl—straight

or gay!”

Raphael answers and gives no further indication he wants to entertain another query on this subject.

Kirl recapitulates. They move on.

Kirl then starts to put two and two together.

He remembers seeing Satan and his son in the cathedral. He remembers the other *church* totally taken by greed for money. Kirl is now realizing why it is very easy for the souls to trek into Hell in such numbers. For the first time, Kirl starts to feel a burden for the souls. He now realizes that buildings, however remarkable and magnificent, do not necessarily mean that God is there. They are only mortar and brick. The glory of the Church is in saved people, people who are rescued from the tragedy of Hell.

If only I can go back to earth, I’ll leave no stone unturned. I will reveal the truth, I will preach grace, he thinks.

“Yes. Now you’re ready, but should it be so?” Raphael mimes in an aside, in an almost inaudible voice.

“What? What do you mean, sir?”

“Well, it would have been better if you had reached this conclusion without being here first.”

“Why, sir?”

“Because, for the mortals, it is better to believe than to see.” Raphael breathes deeply, and then vanishes.

12 | Somewhere between Heaven and Earth

“ Wait, wait a minute. I still have one more question. Please wait!” Kirl says, struggling to get Raphael back. The angel of information has already gone; his mission is accomplished. But Kirl is still disturbed. He has seen the glory of God and the power of the Heavenly Kingdom. Yet he cannot comprehend why Satan should continue to terrorize God’s people even with such power and splendor of the glory of God.

Malaikiel

The winds blow strong, and the expanse around him begins to change from the serene greenish veneer to a brownish aura. In his heart of hearts, Kirl knows that it is not yet over. He needs answers if he has to be a true witness to the truth on earth. That is, if he gets the rare chance to return to earth.

Just after the wind has stopped blowing, Kirl sees a being with the form of a man. It has four faces and four wings with straight calf-like feet. The feet spark like brass. It has human hands under its wings; the wings themselves are joined to one another. And the being moves toward Kirl in a straight, unbending way in a straight way, unbending, and daring. As this being approaches and comes out of the gathering clouds, Kirl can clearly see its four faces: the first face is that of a man; the second face is of a lion; the third is that of an ox; and the fourth is exactly like

that of an eagle. As it flies coming in a straight line, it stretches two wings upward while the other two cover its body.

It lands close by Kirl like a helicopter. Heat and fire accompany its every movement. It is now here, right where Kirl is, and Kirl can see that it has eyes all over its body. Kirl bows down and begins to worship.

“Rise up. Do not worship me. Worship the Lord God, and him only shall you serve,” the creature speaks.

Kirl is suddenly infused with strength and energy. He gets up and positions himself to ask a question.

“I know you want to know who I am. My name is Malaikiel. I am God’s messenger,” the creature introduces himself. “I serve under Prince Michael and Grand Duke Raphael, and I have come to answer your questions.”

Malaikiel does not allow Kirl to speak a single word. In fact, Kirl is still trying to recover from what has just happened and is not yet ready to ask another question. Malaikiel narrates:

“Satan’s greatest weapon is his ability to disguise himself as the angel of light. I will explain. We, all angels, and Satan, are created beings. The Lord God made us all. We were in Eden, the Garden of God. A similar name was given to the garden the Lord God planted for Adam and Eve on earth.

“We are not gods. We cannot stand in the place of God. But we did so for Lucifer, for so Satan was called, whose name also meant the ‘Bright and Morning Star’—titles so analogous and similar to the one accorded to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the True Shining Star—and for which and to whom we all gave respect on account of the fact that the Lord God had trusted him with us and the sanctity of worship. Little did we know that the Grand Angel

had begun a journey toward self-destruction. For, for his grandeur and splendor, and on account of his beauty and seniority, he allowed pride to germinate in his heart.

“The Lord God is long-suffering and patient, and he tolerated Lucifer for some time, but Lucifer, who took the patience of the Lord as weakness, plotted how he should overthrow the Throne of God Almighty and then impose himself as God.

“For a long time, the mercies of the Lord prevailed, and the Lord warned Lucifer of his impending damnation if he would not repent and walk in a way worthy of his position. Nay, to naught the warnings of the Lord fell upon the ears of Lucifer, who went ahead and began to incite a third of the angels into mutiny and convinced them that the Lord meant nothing good for them. He corrupted the minds of those who rebelled alongside him.

“The Lord Jesus Christ for years spelled out the demise of those who willingly and with malice plot against the Holy One. Upon such rebuke, Lucifer kept an eternal grudge against his Lord and God and went ahead and assembled a third and blasphemed the Holy Throne of God.

“‘I am God,’ he began. ‘And I am ascending to the Throne of God, and all angels should worship me!’ At which stage the Lord God, by the hand of Prince Michael, stripped the fallen angels of their glory and whence they became the very opposite of beauty and glory. These now exist in eternal ugliness, in weakness greater than vanity and in perpetual reserve for final destruction in the lake of fire.

“The Lord God, in a vow given to the angels, would not raise even a finger against Lucifer but, rather, swore, ‘By the hand of an angel shall the

angel who sins perish.’ Thus Prince Michael banished Satan and all the angels who sinned from Heaven forever.

“You, son of man, shall go back to earth and give the full counsel of God, and preach that this Satan is no longer any stronger than the weakest angel or anything more beautiful than the ugliest demonacala. Satan prowls like a roaring lion. He’s not a lion. He appears like an angel of light. He’s the very quintessence of darkness.

“As of the question as to why the Lord God has tolerated Satan to rebel against him for so long a time, this I will answer in this way: Humanity has yet to understand that Satan has been given such a shorter time for his final demise than was given to him before he was evacuated from Heaven. It is only over six thousand years since Satan rebelled against the Lord. From the promise of redemption from the Fall, it took only four thousand years before the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it took the Lord God over four hundred thousand years from the time Lucifer planned rebellion to the time he was defeated in battle to evacuate him and his demons from Heaven. Thus, the Lord’s concern and love for mankind have been greater, and his swiftness in saving mankind from his sins due to the Fall attest to this fact.

“Although the Lord has not told us, we know because of the swiftness it took the Lord to send the Lord Jesus Christ to earth to rescue mankind, that the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be but only very, very nearby. Do you now understand? “Yes, sir,” Kirl answers.

“Now go and tell your brothers and sisters on earth all that Prince Michael and Grand Duke Raphael told you. Go and recount what you saw of Hell, and also of Heaven.”

Kirl is very impressed, but also flabbergasted. In all his life, he believed that Satan, Hell, and even Heaven, were only figments in the imaginations of the weak-minded. Part of the reason he married Caroline was because he thought that he could control her. To him, committed Christian believers were weak, easily deceived, and they lacked basic intelligence.

Losers, I called them losers; I heaped derogatory insults on them as losers, Kirl thinks.

And then the all-eyes creature disappears.

13 | Outskirts of Heaven

““And who are you?” Kirl asks with a sense of relief. At last, here is a man, or a figure with the impression of a man, standing before him.

Gabriel

“I am Gabriel. The Lord Jesus whom you saw and worshipped has sent me to explain the Doctrine of Grace and the Mystery of Valhalla.”

Kirl is absolutely elated. This man has something welcoming about him. He is not human, but he has all the attributes of humanity.

“Gabriel, eh—are you a man?” Kirl imposes himself resolutely.

“I am a Cherub and I belong to an ascension order,” Gabriel replies.

“You’ve lost me, and just what is a Cherub, sir?” Kirl persists.

“Don’t call me sir. Call me Gabriel. Cherubim are one of the highest orders of celestial beings, having three pairs of wings, as opposed to Seraphim, who have six pairs of wings. They are mighty in war and power. They guard the interests of the Lord. One has been placed to guard the Tree of Life in Eden, and two overshadow the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle of our Lord,” Gabriel explains.

“Interesting. Honestly, I have no idea what you mean, but anyways, what about the Seraphim?” Kirl asks.

“Kirl, you can’t take everything in at this time. I didn’t come to explain the mystery of angels. That will be made clear to you on earth. However, I will answer you, albeit briefly. Christian angelology ranks from Ha Kodesh, also known as the holy living ones, and they dwell in the presence of God perpetually, to Ishim, or menlike angels who are on earthly missions more frequently. In between are Ophanim. We sometimes call them wheels, Erelim, or the brave ones, for they and those of the powers and principalities aid Prince Michael in spiritual battles. Next are the Hashmallim (they glow); the Seraphim, whom I have mentioned, and they burn like fire; Malakim, or messengers, and you have met one, Malaikiel, already; Elohim and Bene Elohim, and these godly beings and their sons, respectively; as well as Ophanim and Cherubim.”

“That is incredible, Gabriel. But you and Michael seem to hold special places—General Michael kept mentioning you all the time. How is it that?” Kirl poses.

“Son of man, I will not be your interlocutor. My mission is simple and brief. As Prince Raphael hinted, I was on another mission, but the Lord’s wisdom led me toward you.”

“I know. But don’t I have a little chance to know?” Kirl hints.

“Of course, you do, but everything has its own place. Just know that each of the ten angelic ranks I have mentioned has an archangel over them. I am responsible for Cherubim, Prince Michael for Bene Elohim, and Prince Raphael for Malakim. Prince Michael leads all the contingents of angelic order commonly referred to as the Sons of God,” Gabriel explains.

“Isn’t that inherent in Bene Elohim, or sons of God?” Kirl clarifies.

“Yes, but this has to be distinguished from the saints who are considered true children of God. All who believe in the Lord Jesus are adopted into the Father’s family as children.”

“I understand, and I beg your indulgence, if only for this once, Gabriel—who is responsible for the other ranks?” Kirl inquires.

“Metatron, Raziel, Tzaphkiel, Tzadkiel, Khamael, Uriel, and Sandalphon—these are archangels over the rest other than Bene Elohim, Cherubim and Malakim, respectively.”

“And who among the archangels is the greatest, if I may ask?” Kirl suddenly feels embarrassed for asking.

“None. Lucifer used to be. Not really the greatest, but sort of the leader. But since his fall, we have conducted affairs mutually exclusive of each other. We all do our biddings in accordance with the plan, will, and desire of the Lord,” Gabriel answers.

“Thank you...and just before you elaborate on Valhalla, it should make you pretty proud to be an angel. It is evident?” Kirl says.

“Oh no, son of man. Let me tell you something you should never forget,” Gabriel starts. “Angels are only trivially superior. We are less, on three fundamental levels. One, we don’t have faith. We see everything we carry on, except one.”

“Which one?”

“Well, for example, we don’t really know when exactly the Lord Jesus will return to earth for the second time, but we believe it is soon. And second, as I began to say, we serve God’s children.”

“Interesting. You just said you *believe!*” Kirl probes.

“I used the word *believe* generally, to mean we take the Lord at his word. It is not the same as the saving faith that the humans have been privileged to

have,” Gabriel corrects him.

“So then, what is faith?” Kirl wants to know.

“I will explain it this way: you need a campus to navigate an atrocious sea, and you consult the campus. It tells you to go east, and you do. You believe that if you go east according to the direction suggested by the campus, you will arrive at your destination. You believe when the Lord says, ‘Hear my words and do them.’ And if you do so, you have faith.” Gabriel’s voice echoes in the expanse they are traveling in.

“Wow, that’s a very good analogy. But I don’t *see* the Lord. I *see* the campus.” Kirl redirects.

“You don’t *see* the destination, but you *believe* the campus!” Gabriel clarifies.

“I get you now very clearly. And what is the third level?” Kirl asks.

“The saints will judge angels, that’s the third,” Gabriel responds. “And,” he adds, “we mediate in communicative affairs between God and the saints, as well as report and bring answers to prayers to God and from the humans, respectively. I have an added responsibility.”

“Which is?” Kirl prompts.

“Bringing revelations of God to the saints as messengers and responding to various crises confronting the saints.”

“And since we are on this point, Most Patient Gabriel, please indulge me with an occasion to elaborate on this wise: Tell me, when were angels born?” Kirl probes.

“Again, I wouldn’t have responded had you not mistaken birth from creation. Angels don’t have birthdays. Angels were created by the Lord on the first day of creation,” Gabriel sums up.

“Well, that brings up an interesting issue.”

“What is it, Kirl?” intrudes Gabriel.

“Well, if the angels were created on the first day of creation, and Satan, as you said, is an angel, then Satan is not really invincible, and not that old, correct?”

“Yes. Only the Lord God is eternal and everlasting. You deduced right. And remember that man was created on the last day of creation, and of all that the Lord created, it is only of man the Lord said, ‘Let us make man in our own image and likeness.’ Man is the essence of God’s creation, and the most beloved,” Gabriel recounts.

“Just there, sir. And again, I beg your pardon, who is *us* in that statement?” Kirl quickly picks up the nod.

Gabriel laughs and then motions to Kirl, “Please don’t fall into the controversy some espouse.”

“What is the controversy?”

“That somehow the devil existed as God’s rival before Creation,” Gabriel begins. “And somehow this brother Spirit of God is equal to God. You know, these theories are propagated by these so-called New Age *brotherhoods*. I am telling you the truth; the devil was created just like us and has never existed independent of God.”

“Then who is the *us*?” Kirl reiterates his earlier question.

“It’s God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

“The Holy Spirit the same as the great spirit of Mormonism?” Kirl conducts a post-mortem.

“Not at all. You see, God is a trinity—the three exist in One. You see One, you see all the others. Don’t be fooled ever again. The devil is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, uncreated, the self-existing and All-Sufficient God. The devil—or Satan or Lucifer, as he used to be—is a created being, once a good angel and has no existence of his own apart

from God's. He did not hover over creation. He was created by God. Do you understand now, Kirl?"

"Yes, sir. But I am still languishing with some unanswered queries welling in my soul. My Lord, could you explain to me how the angels are organized?" Kirl demands.

"That being the territory of Phanuel, one of the four princes of angels, I will, but only briskly give an answer to that inquiry. And please, don't refer to me as 'my Lord.' That is reserved for the Lord God alone," Gabriel instructs.

"Who is this Phanuel, and who are the other three princes of angels, dear Gabriel?" Kirl probes further.

"I am one of them. The others are princes Michael and Raphael. There are three others who from time to time join our ranks. These are Uriel, who governs the worlds and who transported both Enoch and Moses through heavenlies to the abode of the dead, for these two were *translated*; Raguel, who governs the world of the luminaries; and Remiel, who is set over those who rise from the dead."

"Thank you, *sir*. If you may at least indulge me with only this pleasure to refer to you so, for your graces and rank. That is so telling. And the organization of angelic order, as you promised—or should I say, as I asked?"

"Well, there are—if you like seven heavens, the first two being the abode of birds and galaxies. The seventh is the Throne of God. As for the third to the sixth heavens, these are occupied by different classes of angels."

"What does the third heaven contain?" Kirl asks.

"The third heaven contains the powers of the hosts who are assigned the task of bringing punishment on Beelzebub and his hosts on the Day

of Judgment."

"And what of the fourth heaven, my Lord?" Kirl continues to probe.

"In the fourth are found two classes of angels—those called Thrones, and those called Authorities. These offer praises to God continually."

"And the fifth?"

"Yes, the fifth heaven is inhabited by those angels who answer to the angels of the presence."

"What are the angels of the presence, Prince Gabriel?" Kirl asks despite indications from Gabriel that he feels is uncomfortable being referred to as Lord.

"Well, first, the angels of the fifth heaven do relay human responses to God through the angels of the presence. And the angels of the presence, therefore, are those who stand in the great glory of God, and these do manage the prayers of the saints in the presence of God. Does this answer your question?"

"Yes, thank you."

Then Kirl reminds Gabriel of his mission as hinted at the beginning of their meeting. Kirk, of course, has never heard about Valhalla before, and he is keen on knowing what it is.

"Sir, you said you want to tell me about the Mystery of Valhalla, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did," the Chief Messenger answers very politely.

"Just before you detail about thus, do you mind, and briefly, telling me the number of angels there are?"

"Absolutely. Now the numbers of angels are in myriads. They outnumber the mortals by exponentials in ratio. Do you know, Kirl, that angels are so many in number that they write down in books the deeds of human beings from their time of

birth to when they die?”

And, moreover, one of us manages the Book of Life in which those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are written. All whose names are not written in this Book will not enter into everlasting life. I adjure you, son of man, by the Living God, do not ask me any more questions incidental to angels as my time with you nears the end. Please, I pray to you, let me fulfill the mission for which I appeared to you?”

“Indeed, yes.” Kirl is rueful.

And without wasting a second, Gabriel beckons Kirl to follow him. “Come and lend yourself good listening ears and good seeing eyes.”

As Kirl wonders what the meaning of the conundrum is, he suddenly senses a great rift off of his soul, and he cannot believe what he is looking at.

“It is Nelson Mandela,” Kirl shouts. “I know him. I once shook his hand in Pretoria after his inauguration as the first black president of South Africa.”

It is perturbing even to the daring Kirl. Why the rumpus? It is a great commotion. Three giant angels are hiding the soul of Mandela, who on earth is also known as Madiba. Myriads of demons are lined up attempting to grab hold of the soul of the freedom fighting icon. But they cannot do so because he is kept under a sealed guard.

Just before Kirl exclaims, Gabriel tells him, “Yes, it is Prince Michael at the center of the guard. That is the reason he left you. He was summoned to escort the earth’s hero of forgiveness. I then came to complete what he had started with you.”

“What...I thought that all politicians are liars—the likes of Hitler and Stalin. Then you’re saying Badima is a hero of forgiveness, how can that be?” Kirl insists.

“You must know.” And Gabriel narrates the essence of the Nelson Mandela saga and of the efficacy of Valhalla.

The Valhalla Myth

The Era of Triumphs, as they called it, was the period between the end of the Dispensation of Law and the beginning of the Dispensation of Grace. And there being no official way of directing the author of things towards sanctity and harmony, the Lord of Hosts left things to chance redemption. Hence, those who found extraordinary, created things and phenomenon could worship those things and attribute to them the qualities that are quintessentially God’s. The divine aura preserved its patience until the time of the announcement and the revelation of the finality of ages—the Incarnation of the Christ.

This kind of arrangement was known to spirits and angels. The Dark World, in order to captivate a valence of sort, and to encourage mass murders and deaths, an easy passage into Hell, did fashion a stratagem to woo many souls into Gabanna. In the epoch of war and military prowess, it would only be the promise of continued prominence that should be efficacious. Thus, the Dark World promised warriors and rulers Valhalla, a place of continued prominence. Because in earthly military formations, valor and rank are distinguishable, many generals of grand armies feared to lose their earthly statuses in the afterlife. In order to compensate for that thought, Hell designed a plan. The plan involved promising heroes and heroines a status of power in the afterlife. To do so, the legend taught, they must die honorably, fear no death, and be guardians of the passage into the over

five hundred doors.

To appease the so-called gods, who were, in fact, demons, the mortals were inspired to imbibe lots of alcohol, and this was meant to prepare their souls for the grand entrance into Valhalla. Up till now, some cults still pour libation to the gods—as a myth of Valhalla itself entails that there are endless vats of mead.

Odin, the demoniac guardian of Valhalla—and posing on earth as Master of the Sword in various mythologies and tales—tends to describe or give the impression that Valhalla is, in fact, real, and that in appearance it resembles the shining golden heavens. Indeed, the truth is, Valhalla neither exists as a rising peaceful resort nor is it a refuge for valiant soldiers and brave warriors who have died in combat.

Valhalla is an annex of Hell, and for once, the myth is true—and the truth is in the truth that it is true that true soldiers and warriors die and reach Valhalla, but only as desperate and suffering souls who day and night gnash their teeth in the expanding flames. They are forced to provide apparition-like appearances to the unregenerated minds and to continue to act as shields of wrath. In one respect, this annex comprises the souls of those people on earth who have attained godlike status in what they did, said, wrote, and sung. And this is their type of hypnotic punishments, for their own works and words come back and haunt them perpetually in Hell.

Satan rejoices in tormenting these poor souls who served him so amicably on earth that he postpones their initiation into Hell, and there they exist as if they would inherit the earth with him. As such, the greedy and power-hungry, and all those who were of gigantic wealth and valor on earth, prefer to call their own ends as delirious and gainful. Alas, when they reach there, they are locked up in the never-ending

performance of the menial and suggestions of ways of continued rule of darkness on earth. However hard they may try, no one has ever escaped from Valhalla—the things that made them powerful on earth, sex, money, political power, and stardom are now the instruments of torture the evil one uses against them, bringing them to the lowest ebb possible, the feeling that ingratiates Satan against his own future peril.

So as you well saw, the soul of Mandela is being protected by Prince Michael. Mandela started badly, believing more in animistic creations and the ancestors of his fathers than in the One and Only True God. But his experience had brought him to the penance that saves. He had a large heart when given the opportunity to avenge those who hated his race and imprisoned him. He chose to forgive them. One of the principles of heavenly bliss states, “Those who forgive others shall themselves be forgiven.”

Thus, there is no preference, no advantage in the afterlife. Politicians are as human as the governed. Each is repaid according to what they did in the stations in which they served on earth. The other principle of heavenly bliss states, “Whatever you do, in whatever station, do it all as unto the Lord.”

There is no excuse when each soul that sins dies. It shall perish, no matter what position it had on earth. Similarly, each soul that shall put its trust in the Christ of God, it shall live. And that is the hallmark of grace.

“This reminds me of something I read in Greek mythology, but before that, let me thank you for narrating the myth of Valhalla.”

“You mean Elysium, don’t you?” Gabriel

inquires.

“Yes, I do...” *And just how did he know I was... never mind.*

“Just like now, the ancient tried to attach so many myths to the afterlife. They had theories and mythologies for things that they did not understand, Kirl,” Gabriel explains.

“So, Elysium is just like Valhalla, only that one is fictitious and the other is real?”

Gabriel further explains, “Not really. The Elysian fields were conceived by certain Greek philosophical sects and cults as where their heroes were received, sort of a corollary, just like Valhalla. The belief was that the righteous and the heroic would remain there after death. These were thought of as inheriting a blessed and happy life while at the same time indulging in whatever employment they had enjoyed in life. It’s just what it is, Kirl—a myth.”

“So Homer and Hesiod...,” Kirl begins, but Gabriel completes his thought.

“And yes, even Pindar, were simply mythologists—that’s who they were. They did not have a complete picture of the truth. Now you do.”

“Thank you, sir. Now I understand. So now, what is grace?” Kirl inquires.

Without using words, Gabriel gestures to a sign that shows Kirl that God imputes rightness on people without them doing anything to deserve it. He shows him that it is not in strict codes of men and hilarious feats of achievements and piety that people can find peace for their souls and eternal rest. He showed him that even the vilest soul can be saved by a simple faith in Christ Jesus.

“It is not in being sinless,” Gabriel starts. “It is in being repentant. Those who teach that you must give money, fast, and beat yourself and do so many other things to be saved are deceivers who are

themselves deceived.”

“So, that is grace?” Kirl asks again.

“You saw the Passion of the Christ. You saw the Way of the Cross. You saw the Impiety of Hell. You saw the Peril of Unbelief. It takes only faith to escape all that,” the archangel preaches.

“What is the—”

“Passion...of...and etcetera, please save your breath. Round everything to the suffering, pain, death, and resurrection of our Lord and God. Yes, he did all for you and all humanity. It is a gift, and everyone who believes in him is saved.”

“You mean saved from Hell?” Kirl asks.

“Yes,” Gabriel answers.

“I beg your pardon. I will not have you be my interlocutor, as you stated, but bear with me just this once: You mean that even the vilest sinner he will save?” Kirl inquires.

“There is no degree of sin before the Lord. All have sinned. And all need the Lord’s pardon. He will save all and everyone who asks him. Thousands enter Heaven who confess Christ on their deathbeds.”

“So, grace extends to people like Hitler, rulers of North Korea, and the like?” Kirl is squirming as he asks.

“Let me clear a misconception you may have,” the angel, an expert at grace, says.

“Know that there is no politics with God. You mentioned the leaders of North Korea because on earth they told you to believe that they are evil. Let us take Hitler, too, as an example. Do you think that if a few seconds before his death he had confessed the Lord Jesus Christ he wouldn’t have been saved? But also remember, if the leaders of North Korea cannot be saved, so shouldn’t be the monarchy of England, should they? Nay, but God is merciful. He

will not judge people because of the faults of their fathers or mothers. Grace is personal.”

Kirl coils his faculties in silence as he ponders the words of Gabriel. What keep him thinking constantly is the idea of grace. It keeps confounding logic. He is, however, left with one or two more queries. But he seems to know the answer to the second one.

So, the Republicans and Conservatives are not going to Heaven ahead of the Democrats and Liberals. So, political divisions are not matters of faith, but only of ideology. I never knew. So, it is only those who put their trust in Christ, irrespective of the party they belong to, who will meet God, Kirl contemplates.

He begins to understand that even those who claim to believe in certain social agendas are only as good as their personal and individual faiths in Christ. Even having predisposition toward marriage as between a man and a woman or believing in abortion or not cannot save anybody, but only personal faith in the redemptive work of the Christ, he thinks.

If I don't become a preacher, I would rather become president or Prime Minister of a country. The one who rules the people fairly can influence them for Heaven more effectively than the one who only prays. But the one who rules and prays is even more effective than both, Kirl thinks.

But he still has one more question troubling him. He must ask the archangel; otherwise, he will be languishing with doubt in his mind.

“You mean, even Satan can be saved?” Kirl demands.

“No. Satan is not a human being. Jesus died for humanity, not for angels.”

“Isn't it so pernicious that the Lord Jesus should forgive the worst sinners?” Kirl still wants to know.

“No.”

“And again, I beg your indulgence. Just by believing in the Lord Jesus one can avoid Hell?” Kirl is now becoming animated.

“Absolutely. Simply by believing in the Lord Jesus, not by works, not by sacrifices. There is only one sacrifice—the one you saw the Lord make at Calvary.”

“That sounds too simplistic, and even foolish, in relation to what I saw of Hell, don't you think?” Kirl bombards Gabriel with a Molotov of queries.

“Not at all. That is what is called *love*. Because he loved, he died. And because he died, all can find salvation through him.”

“Hmm...I understand. And thank you, sir.” Kirl's curiosity is nearly satiated now.

“Come. I'll show you one more thing before I let you go. Prince Michael was about to show you this before he was reassigned,” the archangel says.

Then within a split second, they both find themselves in a rustic village inundated by people trying to make a census. And right in the midst of this fracas, Kirl sees a young girl. She could be between thirteen and fifteen years old. She was in her third trimester.

With the young woman was a young man. He could be between fifteen and seventeen, and he is riding with the young woman on a donkey.

The couple struggle to find a motel or room where the young woman could give birth. Kirl is disturbed that no one seems to care for the couple. The young man finds a place where Kirl notices travelers keep their animals as they lodge into these little and rustic motels. They had all come to this little town to register their ancestry. As Kirl observes, the young woman gives birth to a baby boy, but there is no bed to lay him down. The young parents find in the corner cattle feeding trough, and

there they lay the baby wrapped in swathing clothes.

“Do you know who that couple is?” asks Gabriel.

“No, sir. How could I?”

Gabriel does not say another word. Rather, the archangel teleports Kirl to another time within the same night. And what Kirl sees shocks him.

“Is that you actually leading the charge of angels?” Kirl asks, exclaiming in bewilderment.

“Yes.”

“Oh no. That can’t be. You mean the Lord whom I bowed before in glorious majesty and splendor is the one you are announcing has been born, in a dirty animal shelter?” Kirl is disgusted.

“Yes,” the archangel answers calmly, again.

Kirl is taken aback. All along his tour, he has been downplaying the humility of the Christ. Now he understands. For the first time, Kirl goes on his knees and begins to speak to the Lord.

“I know what you did, Lord, and it is shocking. But I understand,” Kirl begins his prayer. “Because if I were told before this encounter that you are humble, it would not make any sense. But I see. Those garbage collectors, whom the angel is telling to come and worship you, could be the only people who would believe in such a simple story. I call it simple because you, who is the King of Kings, the Lord adorned in grand majesty, chose to be born like a pauper. That is vituperating. If the intellectuals and the rich were told it was you, they wouldn’t believe. O Lord, how grand is your wisdom!”

Kirl gets up from his knees with tears pouring from his soul.

“I am done, I am nothing,” he says.

“Yes. Your glory should not be in things, but in who you are in Christ,” the archangel preaches.

“Let me go, sir, I beg you. I now know exactly what to do.” Kirl implores.

Gabriel twinkles with a gentle smile on his face, fencing his forehead with his right arm while trying not to show Kirl his approval. And for a while, the archangel does not look Kirl in the eyes but dispels all the touring man’s invocations with a protuberance of relief.

“Okay. All right, you may now re-enter,” Gabriel’s voice echoes like the welling of a thousand quiet fountains.

Kirl hesitates, and then, as if he has been keeping it for the very last moment, he coughs rather lackadaisically and turns toward the archangel as he makes his exit from the expanse. Kirl shouts aloud, “Excuse me, sir.”

“And the answer is no,” the angel responds with a wink.

“I don’t display my wings. I don’t earn them by helping mankind.”

“How did he know what I was about to ask?” Kirl whispers to himself. “Of course, why do I forget? He’s an angel.”

“I know you are thinking of Malaikiel, Prince Michael, and Raphael, and indeed, of *It’s a Wonderful Life*. I know.”

Kirl just opens his mouth wide without uttering a word. He is thunderstruck and flabbergasted.

“Of course, sir.”

And a gentle wind blows across the expanse, and then Gabriel is gone.

“But...but...sir!” Kirl tries to get Gabriel’s attention. It is clear to him that Gabriel suits his agenda with his friendly and down-to-earth deportment.

And just as Kirl turns, not knowing where to go or what to do, Gabriel reappears out of nowhere.

“Just for this brief while, please let me hear why you called me back.”

“One question only, I promise.” Kirl sighs.

“Which is?” Angel Gabriel hints.

“In the scene Raphael showed me at Jerusalem, the Jesus I saw suffering is different from the picture I saw at Coopersville Parish. Why does the contemporary church depict him as blond, blue-eyed, straight-faced, and tall?”

“That’s just human imagination. Yes, what Prince Raphael showed you is exactly how the Lord looked like in the human body,” Gabriel says.

“So—” Kirl tries a follow-up question.

“I have answered the question you intended me to. I must be on my way lest I miss my next assignment...and indeed, the Lord was born a Jew.”

14 | Near the Solace of Abraham, Paradise

The clouds gather to the west in the bluest azure unknown to Kirl. The flowers bloom in all their intricate colors and flavors. The breeze that takes him yonder is gentle and exhilaratingly comforting. He is taken in the clouds, which are exceptionally soothing to his senses.

All these happy souls, he says to himself.

They are all singing and praising God. Kirl has never felt this love before. All around him is love—so real that he can touch and feel it.

“This is where all those who believe come. Oh, how lovely a place,” he says.

Here he finds the souls of all the people he knew on earth and those he did not know. Then he begins to realize that he is suspended at a very high mountain. He has not been aware how he arrived here. The mountain is white, as white as pure wool. The skies above are all blue—so deeply blue that he could not find any comparisons to any elements. The people here are dressed in extremely pure white frocks, and each is holding a brightly burning candle, and Kirl realizes that the candles never stop burning.

I don’t want to go back to earth, to that broken and aching body, he contemplates.

“Here I am loved. Here I want to dwell forever.”

Then Kirl observes that here there is no rank. All the souls are equal, and each has a name written on their foreheads. These names have something special—they glow. Kirl frolics in his inner soul.

“What is this place...whom can I ask?” He quivers.

Then two of the happy souls attend to Kirl, but they are not talking. They are only singing, and each time they direct Kirl, they do it by way of a hymn.

“All of their conversations is sweet music.”

And just as he is making sense of this happy place with these happy faces, Kirl’s mind opens, and he can clearly see.

“Oh, how marvelous are the blessings of life,” he prays.

On earth, rank and file, position, and influence dictate people’s happiness. Money and achievements play a role. But not here. These souls have found something more meaningful than the titivations of earthly life.

A fairy-like being, with everything about her human, dances gladly around Kirl.

“They told me I was ugly. They were wrong. I am beautifully and wonderfully made. All you now see is what people didn’t see when I lived as a cripple on earth,” she sings.

What? This beautiful girl lived all her life on earth as a cripple. For Kirl, the mystery of the afterlife keeps piling up. Amazingly, Kirl still have enough space to subsume all. He is not getting tired of listening and learning. He is not getting tired of observing and discerning. He knows things he did not understand on earth.

The clouds recede. The energy that lifted Kirl yonder the mountain now brings him to a lovely shore. He can now only observe the occupants on the bluest mountain from beyond the sea. He has not set his mind to explore where he is right now. Now he does.

The sea is a crystal ball of the clearest waters he

has never seen. The water is calm enough to be touched, clear enough to be drunk, and soothing enough to rest one’s soul in. He feels like diving in it and living there for the rest of his afterlife.

Oh, how beautiful. Beauty is an understatement; he says to himself.

As he stands there contemplating, he can hear the voices of multitudes of children laughing and playing in the distance. Kirl decides to follow the shores of the sea. He comes to an entrance, and as he peeks inside, he cannot believe what he sees. There are children between the ages of one day old and ten years. Kirl has been to Disney World before, but nothing can compare with what he finds here.

The children are playing and are extremely happy.

“Wow...what a place!” Kirl sighs in wonderment.

But Kirl will not tour more. The face of the Lord he had seen on the heavenly throne reappears in the skies above him. Smiling, the Lord says, “It’s time. Go back and fulfill what I have instructed.”

Kirl’s soul finds itself again hovering around his dying body. Sleeping soundly, possibly because of having increased sleepless nights, Ravinah is fast asleep. Kirl tries to touch her and wake her up. But Ravinah cannot see him.

She cannot hear him, however much he shouts. Frustrated, Kirl’s soul takes a short walk, and then realizes that the hospital is surrounded by chariots of fire, angels of war who come to answer prayers on behalf of those who pray.

With both Raphael and Gabriel now gone, the soul of Kirl has no one to ask probing questions. Kirl wonders back to the Devil’s Handbag; and just when he is trying to reach to Ravinah and touch her, he stumbles over some rocks and falls to the ground.

As he rises from the fall, Kirl experiences a familiar sensation. He smells some roses—the same ones he used to smell on earth.

I am back, he says to himself. *I am back*.

The discomfort of earthly life weighs heavily on him, and he feels extremely hungry.

He tries to speak, but he cannot.

He tries to move his limbs, and he realizes that his fingers can move.

Then there is a big bang on the floor. Something is broken.

15 | Resurrection, on Earth

“Hello, hello, may I speak to Caroline, please?” He is speaking to the male who has just answered the phone.

“Who is this? Caroline is still at work. Can I take the message for her?” the male voice at the other end answers.

“Hey, before I leave the message, may I know whom I am talking to?” he asks politely.

“My name is Jason. I am Caroline’s husband—or common-law partner if you like,” Jason dodges.

“Caroline’s husband, or common whatever, what are you doing in my house, with my wife, Jason? My name is Kirl Londe—used to be Kirl”—he lowers his voice so Jason cannot hear him — “I am Carol’s husband!” he roars. And as he speaks, he begins to cough uncontrollably.

He pauses, drinks some water, and again starts to bark.

“No. No. No. You’re joking, my friend, and who are you—wrong number?” Jason Phillips says and then hangs up.

And immediately, Jason goes back to his work. He has a crucial examination tomorrow, and he needs to burn the midnight candle if he has to meet the matrix required by the Alberta Medical Association (AMA). It has been eighteen years since he took the New Jersey medical licensing exam. Now he has to take a modified version again in Canada. It’s not that it matters whether he passes it or not. It is just a requirement for anyone transferring from a foreign jurisdiction into Canada.

“She told me he was dead. She showed me his

grave. She introduced me to his mother, Julia. She went with me to Victoria, BC, and Justitia confirmed all these. This is a joke. Caroline is a principled woman; she couldn't have lied. No, it's impossible. This is a prank, I am sure," Jason ruminates as he grinds the tip of a pencil in his left hand so tight that the lead snaps and breaks.

Jason takes this as nothing and immediately returns to his work. He is barely back to the textbook when the phone rings again. He picks it up, and it is the same person who claims to be Kirl on the other side. They exchange what seems to be bitter words, ending in Jason threatening, "You call again, I will call the police on you. That guy you claim you are, is long dead and forgotten, you hear me? You hear me, imposter?"

Kirl keeps calling and calling and calling, but Jason does not pick up. Then the calls stop.

"At last," Jason sighs very deeply.

He picks up his cell phone and calls Caroline.

"Honey, I am sure your day is going well. When you come home, I will tell you about a prank going on here. Apparently, a guy who is holding himself to be Kirl Londe called and said he's the one—that he never died and that he's coming home."

"Really, really...I think it is the SISC...they have started. Somehow, I knew they couldn't just go quietly. I will be on my way soon. We will talk about it when I come home. Keep studying, okay," she assures him.

From that time on, Caroline's afternoon is more or less over. She is now disturbed. She cannot concentrate on what she is doing at work. She dismisses her class and fidgets irresolutely behind her huge mahogany desk. She agonizes deliriously and hysterically.

After a while, she arrives at home and opens the

front door of her house. "Hallo, I am home," she calls to Jason shortly after parking her three-year-old burgundy Hyundai.

She takes care of it as carefully as she does her own body, washing it every day except when it rains: "The rain is my friend. It washes my car," she once told her friend Brenda from AIA.

"I passed by Tim Hortons and bought for you some honey-deep doughnuts, your favorite," she motions.

He rushes to her, simultaneously collecting the package from her and kissing her on the lips at the same time. They talk about little incidents and exchange reports of what happened at home, at work; and after a while, they are in the kitchen, where Jason is making two cups of homemade coffee.

And just as a by-the-way, Jason begins, "That call I told you about—he called again just before you came. Do you think it's true?"

"It's a prank, honey. I don't want you to dwell on it. These guys are good at that. Imagine, we were married for four years, and all these years, I had no clue he was employed by them. Even when I was informed, I couldn't tell my own right hand from my left. They are that good. But I feel that this has gone too far."

Just before Jason makes a comment, a beep sounds on her Blackberry cellphone. It's a message blinking, she opens it.

"He was—"

Jason is about to complete the sentence when Caroline interrupts. "Wait a minute, insanity!" she shouts hysterically. "This imposter is texting me, and look, an e-mail here. How did he get my new number? Here it is. Read it, honey. Read it." She hands him the cell phone, and he sinks hopelessly

into the brown couch at the end of her right-hand side. The email reads:

Carol, I know I have been calling home and you were not there. A guy picked up the phone. It's me, Carol, hey V-Carol, my babe. I am so confused; I read some blogs and researched some archives; they all said Kirl J. Londe died. That's not true. In a coma for eleven months, yes, though I had been hospitalized longer. The time they say I died I was even protecting the PM in Vienna, you heard about the ICFCD? Hey V-Carol, I am so sorry I neglected you. I have even more disturbing news for you, I am with your sister Ravinah here in Ingersoll, and I even saw your father in Paradise. I know all these are confusing you even more; they did to me. But now I understand everything. V-Carol, I need to come home so we can talk, but we need to handle this delicately because of who are involved in this...give me a chance...please keep this to yourself until we talk.

As Jason is reading, Caroline interrupts, "He calls me V-Carol, honey, and it's only him who knew about that. We, you know, called each other silly names sometimes, you know, and *V-Carol* was my fantasy name. How possible is it that this guy knows it?" she explodes out with great compunctions.

As Caroline is saying this, she dives into deep thoughts. The moments she can remember most, and even by her reserved standards, she cannot help but cry.

Kirl always referred to her female womanhood as a V-Carol, and he would spend a great deal of time petting Carol's V-power, breaking all of Caroline's defenses before consummation. She loved the way he did it—inch by inch, detail by detail. Although Kirl was rarely at home, the times

they made love had coitus, were some of the most memorable.

He had promised her that he would never make love to her in a hurry. She understood him. He always made hurried love to his fellow spy agents. He wanted to make a distinction between sex with his wife and sex for business. And he was true to his promise. He had vowed not to engage or provoke Caroline into making love until he was sure he had at a minimum about thirty minutes available.

He would not let Caroline undress herself. He would begin by stroking her hair, then dip down to her neck, caressing each and every contour. He would then come to her chest, remove her bra with impeccable skill, and tickle each and every one of her breast cells. He would not touch her nipples until he had caressed her calves and had numbed her bellybutton.

Then he would go in reverse, igniting Caroline's system with meticulous exactitude.

First, he understood how irritated Caroline was with having her feet tickled.

Second, he knew that Caroline was a type who took time to get in the mood. But once she was there, she was a steam engine.

So, Kirl would begin by driving her from the delicate to the sensitive. Patiently, he would tighten all the gears, first into neutral, and then in the drive, times three. He would massage her feet nimbly and gently. He would cover her naked body in a white towel. And then toe by toe, and nail by nail, he would kiss her.

At this time, Caroline would groan. "Nice...please keep doing it."

Before she got too comfortable, he would drive in a higher gear toward her fingers, squeeze, and massage them and then stroke the knuckles again

until all her defenses began to give way.

For a little while, he would shift from touching to saying it.

“How beautiful are your legs, soft to the touch are your hands. How lovely also your cheeks and good to behold are your eyelashes,” he would tenderly and softly whisper into her ears.

“I would do this for thousands of years without end,” he would sweet-talk her.

Then he would drive across the towel, slowly but firmly, toward the edges of her breasts. Tenderly, he would climb the avocado-shaped mounds, cell by cell and tendon by tendon.

He would lick each of her nipples, biting them mockingly at intervals as he surveyed all their divine magnificence.

Caroline would be jerking invitingly, and she would be breathing so deeply and groaning so loudly that a child sleeping soundly in the next room would be awakened on the spot.

Caroline would cry and call on him to “just do it.”

“Just come in, sweetheart. Come in, please,” she would beg and beg.

He wouldn’t get in. He would go back to her chest, this time, as he had promised, to fiddle with the *areolae*. In a brilliant and well-rehearsed movement, he would toss them right, left and center, and then kiss them calculatingly. He would fondle them like two delicate little twins of the same make and sensibility. He would then, and simultaneously, drive down to the V-power in a mantis-like tease, and in tandem, caress the nipples as he does the same to her *pleasure hood*.

Caroline would be *dead* by now, the bed wet and her breathing deafening. She would not know, or even be aware, after he had entered. She would wake

up the next morning or after some time so relaxed, so comfortable, and for the next eight weeks, she would be so fulfilled that she would not want to be close to any scent of a man.

“He fixes me well,” she would brag to herself.

But today, despite these flashbacks, she knows it’s impossible for Kirl to come back to life. Even if he did, it would be difficult to have him as her husband again. Just yesterday, her relationship with Jason clocked one year, and she is technically in a common-law marriage with him. Then there is another complication: it could be a hoax. Secret agencies are known to play believable pranks. The trouble with the SISC never ends, she guesses; and immediately she tells Jason to dismiss all “these games as harassment.”

She mops the floor of the coffee she has just spilled and excuses herself from Jason. As soon as she enters her bedroom, she throws a towel on the floor and bends to massage her V-Carol, as Kirl used to call it. The sensations she had felt a while ago have continued to put pressure her.

She is so pressed sexually that she almost begins to fabricate an excuse to ask Jason to come to the bedroom.

“Honey, a minute,” she calls out.

“I am coming,” he responds.

Before Jason can come, she controls herself and shouts, “Never mind. I found it.”

“So close,” she comforts herself. “So close.”

Then she holds her V-Carol very tight until the pressure is diminished. She does all this with lights solid on, in honor of Kirl. He did not make love to her without lights on.

“I love to see the V-Carol,” he told her. “I like your shape—V like you,” he joked.

Now Caroline, induced by the voice Kirl had left

on her mobile phone and the e-mail, she is perspiring profusely. She cleans up the floor.

“Oh, Kirl. Oh, my love, you have never died in my heart,” she grunts unbearably.

“Oh, Father, please forgive me. Sometimes the temptations are just too much to overcome,” she prays.

At this point, she is now realizing just how sexually deprived she has been ever since Kirl left her, and then died.

“It’s just two weeks and counting,” she begins. “Sooner rather than later, I’ll be officially married.”

She leaves her bedroom, with guilt written all over her face. She comes straight to where Jason is bending over trying to pick up the lid of a bottle of soy sauce that had fallen to the ground. She lightly strokes his bum, caresses his chest, and gives him a deep kiss. She breathes heavily and then runs quickly to the bedroom.

“Not anymore, not until the wedding,” she shouts.

“I get it. That was magical, though,” Jason laughs.

This night Caroline cannot sleep. She keeps tossing and turning in bed. She gets up, turns the side light on, and reads the e-mail again. Everything is Kirl’s—the style, the way he would say things, and the humor, or lack of it illustrate it all.

“If I didn’t know that he was dead, I would have believed it. But what if what this guy is saying is true? What if the SISC just did a trick on him? What if the guy we buried was not Kirl?” she agonizes in her sleep.

She cannot find the answers.

“I will call Julia tomorrow morning, but...but no, I will call my mother. This guy says a Ravinah is my sister, and ‘I saw your father in Paradise.’ What is this?” she boggles.

It is Saturday the next morning. The phone does not stop. Caroline and Jason have just returned from their usual breakfast at the Corner Plaza. Although the two restaurants, Tim Hortons and Wendy’s are located in the same building, the couple prefers Tim Hortons to Wendy’s. Jason loves double-doubles with blueberry-dusted muffins. Caroline goes for French vanilla with any types of *danishes*, but especially apple cheese *danishes*.

This morning, however, they both go to Wendy’s for the chipotle mama burger.

“Hmm...I didn’t know Wendy’s is this good,” Jason intones with a mouthful of the bundle slathered through with an impeccable combination of mozzarella cheese.

“Yummy...oh, yummy.”

But something is bothering them both. An elephant in the room—one need not look far, the unending telephone ringing. Kirl has not stopped calling her, on her cellphone, on the land line, and texts as well as e-mails. He keeps leaving message after message.

“This is getting out of hand. We need to tell someone, the police,” Jason suggests.

“No, not the police. They will do nothing. Whoever the caller is, he must be tied to the SISC,” Caroline says.

The duo has had a relatively quiet relationship since Jason moved from New Jersey to Alberta. They had met on ChristianMingle.com roughly twelve months earlier. Julia had encouraged her to marry and get on with her life. She had refused but was persuaded, especially when Justitia, Caroline’s

mother, had also chimed in.

“My daughter, you’re still young and fertile. Marry, and who knows you might provide me with a grandchild,” Justitia had said.

At last she had signed up on the dating site and was matched with Jason. They met at the gorgeous Maples Hotel in downtown Calgary. At first, they just talked; and after two days, Jason left for New Jersey. During the Christmas vacation, Caroline spent the break with Jason.

Maybe I can give this one a chance, she had convinced herself.

Jason, a six-foot-tall handsome figure, was a rare breed of human species. He was too hard to resist. He had been brought up by very good Christian parents. He had married too young at the age of twenty-three, but the marriage did not last. He divorced his wife after being married for only three years. He decided to go to medical school, where he graduated at the top of his class as a cardiothoracic surgeon.

After seven years as a bachelor, he decided to marry. He was determined to find a good and mature Christian woman. And reviewing Caroline’s profile—in her mid-thirties, married once, and a professional—Jason felt that she was the perfect match for him.

But when she suggested “No sex before the wedding,” she had completely bought his soul. Because of his failed marriage, he was now willing to marry for love and principle, and Caroline was just the perfect woman.

“I have met over seventeen women in the last three years, but you—you’re the most amazing woman I have ever met,” Jason whispered to her while breathing heavily beneath a checked shirt.

After three months of constant dates, Jason

proposed, “Caroline Londe, with this ring, I propose marriage to you!” he said.

“Oh, yes, oh, yes, I will marry you, Jason Phillips.” she had happily accepted.

That’s when she popped the option: “On one condition only.”

“What is it? I can do anything for my graceful doe. Try me,” Jason dared.

“That we can only kiss, but no sex, as I said, until after marriage,” she repeated.

“That is a hard one. Everything in me just wants you, but yes, I agree. I will wait,” he accepted.

“Deal, then.” She relaxed.

“Deal,” he answered, relieved, and challenged at the same time.

After that deal, it took Jason only twenty-eight days to be accepted by AMA; and after a three-month internship sabbatical, he would be a full-fledged practicing medical doctor in Canada.

It is a requirement by AMA that anyone who wishes to transfer from a foreign jurisdiction into Alberta has to pass the transfer examination.

After their engagement, Jason had asked Caroline if he could stay at her place until the examination.

“Yes, honey, you will be sleeping in the guesthouse until the wedding,” she had insisted.

Jason had no problems with that suggestion, and he moved in with Caroline. He is now sharing the same house with Caroline. Caroline is now the full-time owner of the house she shared with Kirl. It is a four-bedroom Albanian masterpiece built from burnt-red brick. It has two garages, two powder rooms, two washrooms, a guestroom, and two master bedrooms. The two-storey house has a mini movie theater on the second floor and a massive library in the basement—the library Kirl had built

and from where he carried out his clandestine secret agent operations.

It is now only three weeks before the wedding, and preparations have been made in advance. Caroline and Jason have hired Miss and Mr. Bridals to plan their wedding. This has freed them up for Jason to concentrate on his examination, and for Caroline to keep her blood pressure to controlled levels.

The silence is broken. The lyrics to Julia's ringtone pierce the air around her.

She recognizes that it is Kirl's mother. She hesitates to pick it up. Then she gathers all her strength and picks up the phone.

"Yes, Julia, it's Caroline."

"Caroline. It's him. He is here. Kirl, my son, is here. Caroline, he did not die. It's a long story. He has a witness to that; she is someone you might know or should have known about. Can you come home this weekend?"

Julia and Caroline agree to meet in Edmonton. Caroline would not be qualified to get another two days off because she has already signed up to take, in ten days' time, four weeks off.

She will be married and then take two weeks off to the Italian Pelagie Islands in the Mediterranean Sea. First week of honeymoon, they will be in the commune of Lampedusa before spending the other week around Linosa in the Sicilian provinces of Agrigento, Linosa, and Lampione. Then after the honeymoon, they would spend a week at the Waikiki Resort in the island State of Hawaii.

All reservations have been made already through Expedia.

The recent news, although no wedding plans have been put off yet, is causing a lot of anxiety to all involved. Caroline will only attend the meeting in Edmonton this coming weekend and return to Calgary the same weekend.

And the weekend is here. Julia is the chief host, and her house has been thoroughly cleaned, especially for the homecoming of the son who was dead and now is alive.

But they have managed to keep all to themselves. Kirl arrived in the night because Julia advised, "We don't want to alarm the neighbors, who know that you're already dead."

Kirl came with three other guests: Ravinah, Pastor Lawrence Ezigbo, pastor of the New Nations Pentecostal Assembly (NNPA) in Ingersoll, Ontario, who has been mentoring Kirl after Kirl came back from the coma. With Pastor Ezigbo also came his assistant pastor, Dennis Maclean. With John, Kirl's father, in the Alzheimer's care facility, Julia has been basically alone, with Caroline acting as her own *de facto* daughter.

It was drama yesterday night when Kirl arrived at home. Julia had summoned all her strength to hug her only son. She had her doubts: Could it be that someone is playing her? *Is this truly my son Kirl?* she had thought through and through.

With the tenacity of a mother, she had defiled all fears and doubts and hugged him, anyway. Pastor Ezigbo, Ravinah, and Pastor Maclean had calmed Julia and tried to explain how events have unfolded. She had examined Kirl, and with tears she had kissed him repeatedly. "My son, my son. I knew when the SISC got you, when Premier Franklin Morris called

me to his office and gave me that envelope, I knew I had lost you.”

Then she went into details, explaining to the trio how Kirl came to be a spy at the very tender age of sixteen.

Even more than being disturbed by events surrounding Kirl’s reappearance, it is the other woman with Kirl. Julia is visibly beside herself. She squeezes her aging eyes and looks again. She is dumbfounded. She tries to hide her feelings, but she cannot. She is terribly going crazy.

Did Kirl come home with Caroline? Who is this woman who looks like Caroline? What is happening, and what should she do? Julia is so confused that she just pretends everything is okay. Now there is reason for her to doubt Kirl as well.

But he is my son. I bore him. I know him.

She tries to work with the moment and carry on her role as host with dexterity.

“Maybe things will become clear again.” She calms down.

Then the bell rings: *Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding!*

All emotions are at their peak, especially for Caroline. From doubt that it could have been a prank by the SISC, she has begun to believe that this could be true. With Julia’s endorsement, she has come to the understanding that Kirl could be alive.

But how? she keeps repeating in her mind.

“How could he be alive? The media...the grave...the casket and all the publicity...Can the SISC go to those lengths just to conceal a lie?”

When Julia opens the door, she sees it is not only Caroline who is standing at the door; there are three people with her. Caroline’s mother, Justitia, and her uncle Jean-Paul are here as well. Jean-Paul had come to support Caroline at her upcoming wedding, to give her away since Caroline’s father is long dead. It

was only five weeks ago when Jean-Paul was boasting before Justitia that he would have the rare opportunity to give away his niece twice to two different men in his lifetime.

Also with Caroline is Jason. Lori cannot be with them because she has been busy preparing to defend her dissertation: “Comparative Law: the relationship between common law and Sharia matrimonial regulations – the case of Canada.” She would be briefed. “But keep everything within the family,” she had advised her mother and uncle.

“If this is true,” Lori has been reasoning, “it will make for an interesting review to the *Divorce Act*—declared clinically dead, but he’s still legally alive?”

Lori made her mother proud when after completion of an LLB degree from Alberta University, she went straight into LLM program after successfully articling for the law office of Shuster and Holms LLP in, ironically, Vansigra BC. She had then told her mother, “Mom, practicing law is not for me. After a stint at SandH, I kind of resolved I would follow in the footsteps of my sis, CSF, and teach.”

She then applied for a PhD program, which she is now about to defend.

“Come on in, Justitia,” Julia invites her.

Then the drama starts.

People begin to fall down as though they have been felled by a plague.

First, it is Caroline. She passes out completely on the floor.

“I am a doctor. I will handle this,” Jason offers.

Just when Jason is attending to Caroline, Justitia is also fainting. “Oh, my God...” She is just about to complete the sentence when she falls into the arms of Jean-Paul.

Jean-Paul himself is now confused. He looks at

Caroline and then at Ravinah. Is he seeing the same person in doubles? What is really going on here? Just then, Ravinah starts to puke and gets very sick, and now Jason is traversing among three people who are dying.

Jason and Brother Ezekiel now begin to attend to Justitia, Caroline, and Ravinah.

Jean-Paul and Julia, as well as Pastor Dennis, are now busy trying to control the situation. It is a rumpus, a circus.

Meanwhile, Pastor Ezigbo is busily praying in what they call tongues. “Kuraba baba...kuraba...baba...” the pastor keeps groaning.

The commotion continues for a while until things begin to return to normal. Caroline and Justitia are now well and recovering in the other bedroom. Ravinah is with Pastor Maclean.

Brother Ezekiel, Julia, and Pastor Ezigbo are trying to bring everybody together again. It should be obvious by now what has transpired.

But it is not.

Indeed, everyone is being affected differently. It is not clear whether Caroline fainted because she saw Brother Ezekiel or a replica of herself in the form of Ravinah or both.

The situation is so confusing that when they come together in the living room, no one is saying anything. They keep staring at each other as though they’ve seen ghosts.

Justitia is crying tetchily. She crawls toward Ravinah and holds her tightly and the tears just keep flowing. Without uttering a word, Ravinah begins to sob in profusions. The plethora of the confusion is being annihilated by the implications of familial deductions.

Just over six years ago, she had been told that Jonah and Dr. Kasson were not her real parents. She

grew up believing they were her parents. No. It was then revealed to her that she was an adopted child. Efforts to find her blood parents had failed. She just came to accept her situation as fate. She continued to love the Kassons, and just last month, after Brother Ezekiel had gotten out of the coma, she had called Dr. Kasson to tell them of the good news. That was the last time she spoke to her. Now, right here, she is almost fully convinced that she has finally found her own relatives.

It is true what Kirl said. He truly saw my father in Paradise, Ravinah begins to think. “This is real. These guys look like my own relatives.”

She then remembers what Kirl told her in Vienna when the two first spoke. He had told her that she looked just like “my ex-girlfriend.”

She took it as a compliment. She didn’t take it seriously. But now, it all comes knocking at her heart.

“It is true we look alike, just like sisters. Kirl was right.” Ravinah is visibly amazed.

Tears continue to roll down, and both she and Justitia cry, hug each other, and wipe each other’s tears.

“Mother...,” cries Ravinah.

Justitia takes Ravinah’s left palm, turns it upside down, and hugs Ravinah so tightly that they both remain there for a while. Ravinah cries uncontrollably while still hugging Justitia. Justitia takes Ravinah’s left palm again, and again she cries. She now kisses the mark on Ravinah’s left palm and, without saying a single word, sobs sporadically.

“My daughter,” shouts Justitia. “There is no need for an explanation. Everything is now clear. They are related.”

“Come. Come here, Caroline,” moans Justitia. “Look, it is your sister. I thought I would not live to

see her...oh...oh...oh.”

Caroline runs and hugs Ravinah, and the two begin to cry. Now the three of them are holding each other tight. They are just there—not moving, not saying anything. The developments here are too real, and too unbelievable.

A daughter given up for adoption several years ago has grown into a beautiful *lady*. She meets a gentleman at a conference in Europe, and they fall in love. Shortly after that, they are married. After the marriage, he is shot, hospitalized, goes into a coma, but comes back after eleven months. He claims he went to Hell and on his way to and from Hell, he sees this old man who tells him that he is the father of both of his women.

“They are my daughters,” the old man said.

It just happened that before he was surgically altered by the SISC, he had been estranged from his wife, Caroline. They never divorced, but before they could decide what to do, he had been reported dead. His grave is here in Edmonton, the same town where they are gathered today.

Pastor Ezigbo then takes the center stage and begins the meeting. The emotions of reunion and of lost-child-now-found are turning into anger and disappointment. Jason is fuming because Caroline tells him, “Don’t call me *honey* for now.”

And Brother Ezekiel seems to be concentrating more on Caroline than on Ravinah. Meanwhile, Justitia does not want to leave Ravinah alone, and Caroline has noticed. It is as cumbersome an atmosphere as it is charged with uncertainties.

“No one would have prepared me for such a situation,” begins the pastor. “When Brother Ezekiel came to me, I thought it was a joke. He...” Pastor Ezigbo notices that everyone is begging for clarification about who Brother Ezekiel is.

“Cough...cough!” The pastor coughs to clear his throat, catches his breath, and continues, “As I was saying, I did not believe when your son, then called Kirl, came to my church. He told me that the Lord had directed him to me so that I could prepare him for the work that the Lord has called him to do. As a human being, and we live in times with so many dupes, I did not take it seriously. Later that night, when I was sleeping, an angel appeared to me and told me to accept the testimony of the brother, pointing at Kirl. The angel also told me that from thence, he would be known as Brother Ezekiel, and the messenger of the Lord gave me Ezekiel 37. That chapter, especially verses 1 to 6, says:

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said, “Sovereign Lord, you alone know.” Then he said to me, “Prophesy to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, bear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

“I told the messenger of the Lord that I would do as commanded. The next morning, Ezekiel came accompanied by sister Ravinah. He explained all that he had been through. He was telling me almost word for word what an angel had explained to me in a dream. I was convinced beyond doubt that what Ezekiel had told me was the truth. Since then,

Ezekiel has been under my supervision in fulfillment of the Lord's calling upon him.

"It is a rare happenstance in our days. No one has ever gone to Hell and come back, except our Lord Jesus Christ. Brother Ezekiel will be the voice of the Lord God in the last days. Please accept him, not only as your own child, but also as God's chosen instrument.

"The other issues of relationships Brother Ezekiel has hinted me to, I will leave that for you all to resolve. For now, I would like us to celebrate a great feat the Lord is doing in our days. I beg you all to control your emotions, especially since we know that Brother Ezekiel is also connected with the Intelligence Service."

Pastor Ezigbo's speech seems to have achieved its purpose. The room is now quiet, and everyone is calm. The message is so good to Caroline that she starts to cry. "O Lord, you're so faithful," she says. "All I wanted was for him to be a normal man, and, Lord, you have made him more than I could have ever asked for."

While Caroline is praying, Jason is wondering what would become of him, of his relationship with Caroline. Ravinah has found her parents, but as the pastor has suggested, "You will not confirm the issue of paternity squarely on divine revelation. In this case, do a paternity test."

Justitia is in tears. She cannot believe what Pastor Ezigbo has just narrated: "You mean you saw my Fenner in Paradise? You saw my Fenner—Lord, I thank you. Thank you, Jesus," she says in deep adoration.

Tears of joy continue to trickle down Justitia's cheeks as she continues to hold Ravinah's hands. "My daughter, how I thought I had lost you. God is good."

The next morning, Julia, Caroline, and Brother Ezekiel visit Kirk Londe's alleged gravesite. And here they are: "R.I.P.," greets them.

"This is abundantly serious," says Brother Ezekiel.

But then he begins to make the connection in his mind.

"This is what we did as secret agents, faking the deaths of others. Now it is my turn," he quibbles.

"And look here," shouts Julia.

"Caroline suggested this."

Julia points out where it says, "At peace in heaven."

Brother Ezekiel winks a bit and then lets out a huge sigh, "What a paradox," he winces.

"What? Why are you blanching, did I say something—"

Caroline is just about to ask a question when Julia adds, "And just for curiosity's sake, do they really rest in peace in heaven?"

Brother Ezekiel holds his mother tight and chuckles, "Oh, Mother, I am now wondering why people insist on rest. I think you and the rest will need a detailed lecture on the afterlife. For now, let us go back."

As they drive back, Brother Ezekiel begins to relish the thought provoked by Julia. He thinks deeply about why the humans write on tombstones things they do not know much about.

"Souls resting in Hell," he gasps. "And these poor souls—if they were to be told of how sanctimonious their graves are decorated by their loved ones...when they...day and night only gnash their teeth in flames that never cease and worms that never die...they would curse the wombs that nursed them."

For those who he will manage to snatch from the jaws of Death and Hell, and for this reason he was lent some fifteen years, Brother Ezekiel knows he has work to do.

Looking back through the window of the car as it pulls past his bogus grave, Brother Ezekiel is hit by a thought.

In there is buried nothing, no one, he begins his thought process. Just like they wouldn't bury my Savior because he's Truth, and you can't bury the truth.

"We've gathered here to ascertain the results of the relationship DNA testing that was performed on Caroline, Ravinah, and Lori to determine whether the three are blood sisters," proclaims Pastor Ezigbo.

"I am glad to announce that the probability of parentage retained is 99.99 percent. This means, and I am pleased to report, that the three of you are blood sisters. Ravinah, Caroline, you're biologically related. You're sisters."

The three sisters hug each other. Justitia already knew even before the paternity testing was done that Ravinah was the daughter she had given up for adoption several years ago. It was more of maternal instinct than the paternity testing results. Besides, the birthmark confirms Justitia's hunch cleanly.

Moreover, not even Fenner knew that Ravinah was born with a conspicuously protruding little black mark under her left palm. Only Justitia knew about it. To her, this mark on Ravinah confirms that she he has finally found her once-thought-of-as-lost daughter.

For now, things are calm. Brother Ezekiel will return with Pastor Ezigbo and with Ravinah to

Ingersoll. The wedding of Caroline and Jason has been put off pending the simmering of the events that just transpired.

Justitia, Uncle Jean-Paul, and Lori will be on their way to Victoria. Lori had joined them after successfully defending her dissertation and will now be known as Dr. Fenner.

"I am just going to apply for an unpaid leave, Mother. I will come to Victoria," promises Ravinah.

He tries to sleep, but he cannot. He gets up from his bed, tired but happy that he can now practice medicine in Alberta. The thought that the wedding has been put off, at least for now, temporarily, troubles him a great deal. He looks outside; the yellow leaves, even on this night, are still falling systematically from the canopied maple trees. The scarlet macaw sings its last melody among the bushes as the southeast winds blow along the terrain. It's getting to be a picture-perfect night, except for this development.

Jason stands up, opens his door, and, looking upstairs, he lets it off. He is still saying something when a voice emanates from the upper room. They are both now talking, shouting, and now yelling. They are only two in the house, but the intensity of their quarrel makes one think that there are more than two persons. What was promising to be a quiet evening—of course, by now a night—is slowly turning into a turbulent, if not, raucous night.

"There is no need to shout, Jason. I need time to think about all these. You would do the same if you were in my shoes," Caroline says soothingly.

Jason cannot comprehend why Caroline should dump him a week before their wedding. Even if the

wedding was not an issue, Jason still thinks the two of them should be together.

“You and I have done everything—hired a wedding planner, paid for the honeymoon, and even invited guests. Besides, we are by law a common-law partnership,” Jason says.

“I know, Jason. But all that can change, you know. At that time, I thought he was dead. Now I can’t pretend to be with you when all my being is with him. I need time to think. Weddings are not etched in stone,” she fires back.

To an onlooker, there is no doubt seeing the exchanges between Jason and Caroline that things cannot be the same. Everything has changed, indeed—changed ever since Brother Ezekiel showed up—or as it is, came back from the dead. Caroline cannot come to reconcile why she can give up on him when all she had longed for was for him to change. Now that he has changed or has been made to change—and he is, after all, not dead—she now wants him very badly.

Besides, how would her conscience find rest should she marry another man knowing that he is still alive? She cannot just bring herself to this reality.

She can do anything for Brother Ezekiel now. She has been mourning for him, regretting the things she never got to do with him while he was *alive*. Now that he is here—alive and well—all she wants is a normal relationship with a “man of God. God has answered all my prayers. Why should I now refuse to accept the will of God in my life? Moreover, my father saw all these things. I didn’t know at that time. Did my father know something we all did not know?”

“Caroline, I am not prepared to give you to him. I want you to know that I will be consulting with an attorney over this,” Jason says and hangs up the

phone.

Although they still live in the same house, Caroline’s house, they have not spoken to each other face-to-face for four days. Caroline inhabits the second floor. Jason is staying in the basement. When they need to talk to one another, they are now using their cellphones.

“You can’t hang up on me like that!” Caroline, panting heavily, hurries to the chest drawer, picks up her floral nightgown, and rushes downstairs toward the basement. She wants to say something, but she is overcome by emotions. She simply touches the door leading into Jason’s bedroom and begins to cry. Jason opens the door and picks her up and takes her into his bedroom.

“Oh, my little doe, my everything, please stop crying.” He nuzzles her hands while stroking her voluminous brunette waves.

She squeezes inside against his wide chest like a little bird taking cover from a tornado. She drops one, two, and a third tear, and then falls into a deep sleep.

He looks at her.

“She is a piece of divine industry,” he giggles.

Her ivory-column legs dangle naively on the left side of his bed, while her hair falls gracefully on her face. Her pink underpants stay exposed and the linings of her black bra overlap and expose her tomato-shaped breasts.

“Oh, my God,” Jason groans. “I will do everything to have her as my wife, even if I have to sue that guy,” he promises himself.

He picks her up and ascends the stairs to her bedroom. He kicks the door and lays her carefully on her queen-size purple-sheet-covered bed. He kisses her forehead, walks backward toward the door while gazing at her as though she will disappear

in an instant. He feels the shadows of the door. He holds on to it and blows a kiss to her, and off he climbs down to his bedroom.

“I have never loved a woman...like I do her.”

Then he slips into his duvet and begins to snore.

It's been a week now. Both Ravinah and Kirl Junior have been rested and have begun the process of bonding with Justitia. The mother of a daughter she had given up for adoption, whom she had not seen in over thirty years, is here. Not only is she here, but she has brought Justitia a grandson Justitia never even knew she had. They have gone through their history, beginning from Normandy to how the Roman Catholic Church barred Father Fenner, Ravinah's dad, because of Ravinah.

“No, not because of you,” clarifies Justitia, “but because of your father's love for all of us.”

Ravinah's visit to her mother in Victoria is relatively calm, except for a brief conversation Justitia overheard Ravinah engage in with her adopted mother, Dr. Kasson, now retired.

Dr. Kasson has had a brilliant career as pharmacologist physician; and for the last twenty years before her retirement, she had managed the affairs of the Plymouth Regional Hospital (PRH) well in Iqaluit, Nunavut. Described as a stocky perfectionist, Dr. Kasson, four feet seven, white, and a natural blonde had all the blessings of earthly life one could ever achieve in a lifetime. She was president of the Albany School of Pathology once. She held multiple master's degrees in medicine and pharmacy and was voted as one of the one hundred most influential executives in Western Canada. When she retired, her investment portfolio manager,

Bernado Estates Wealth Management, estimated that she was worth well over \$30 million dollars in bonds, stocks, and Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs).

But she had one deficiency, which she never considered as such, noting, “despite not having mothered my own child, Ravinah has been the greatest gift Nature has bestowed upon me.” With the demise of Jonah, her husband, some seventeen and a half years earlier, Ravinah will be the sole beneficiary of her financial empire in the event of her death.

“We had been trying to have a baby for a long time. We just knew we needed to adopt one when the fertility result indicated I could not have a baby. Ravinah was our gift,” she once told a friend of hers.

But it is not so for the money as for the fact that she needs someone to talk to that Ravinah called her adopted mother for advice. She briefed her about the developments, and Dr. Kasson advised her “to leave everything in the hands of God.”

In the hands of God, Mom now believes in God, Ravinah wonders.

But today, Ravinah, after attempts at getting Brother Ezekiel's attention have failed, has decided to consult the only person she feels is neutral in this enterprise.

“Ravinah, you'll need to let him marry the woman he loves,” Dr. Kasson advises.

“But, Mom, what about the child? And besides, I love him,” she responds.

“This is a very complicated matter, Ravinah. If you were not sisters, it would have been at least easier to handle. I don't know what to say. If he loves you, he will choose you,” she says, and suggests that Ravinah liaise with her maternal mother, and that if she should need her, Dr. Kasson

will be available.

“Say hello to your mother for me. Tell her I will see her after the winter.”

“Yes, Mom, I will. Tickle Sphinx for me. I miss its gracefulness, alertness, and swift maneuvers,” Ravinah says, adding that it has been a long while since she last saw the brown male Chihuahua.

“Talking about Sphinx – don’t be deceived by its saucy expression. The other day, it almost brought me trouble. It chased two small children,” Dr. Kasson informs her, and then after saying bye-bye, she put down the receiver.

Ravinah is determined to get Brother Ezekiel. *After all, it is me who saved his life.*

Then she makes up her mind instantaneously: *Where was this Caroline when the doctors gave up on him and wanted me to remove him from life support?*

Where was this Caroline when for over eleven months, using my own money and time, spent all my living and time on him, caring, changing catheters, and giving him sponge baths?

Where was this Caroline when I saved him from the bullet that almost took his life?

She resolutely decides not to compromise on this issue.

“No, I will not allow her to steal him from me. Besides, she has a husband already—what more does she desire?”

“I will not allow him to be grabbed from me. Over my dead body.”

As if a very heavy load has been lifted off her shoulders, Ravinah stands up. She squares off her upper chest. She squeezes her breasts in place as though she is trying to regulate two unruly lambs. And with a deep sense of relief, she storms out of Lori’s bedroom into the living room, where Justitia is folding freshly laundered clothes.

“Is...is everything okay with you, Ravinah?” her mother asks.

“No, Justitia. Where is my son? We are leaving now. We are going back to our home,” she answers without even meeting her eyes.

16 | Hell-Earth

Jostling petulantly into a tiny Hades prison cell, a space usually designed for one demon of average size, the three disgraced demons of Hell grind their teeth and squirm.

Typical jail cells in Hades are made up of brick and steel walls. This one is made up of only steel and a one-quarter door that is completely solid and is equipped with heavy-duty door locks. The cell itself is four feet by five feet and has no bed, nothing apart from a tiny hole in the steel ceiling that drops a ray of light only once for two seconds every week.

“If I come out of here, I will kill him without mercy,” promises Cjaron.

“Me, I will kill him double, that recluse son of a damn,” grinds Azosis-Azrael.

“You guys don’t understand how mad I am. I will not only kill him, but I will also butcher first him, his family, and those he loves,” Apepiad groans.

The three have been accused of letting Brother Ezekiel sneak away from the portals of death, the inescapable chambers of Hell. It was during a routine rendezvous on earth when Satan was informed that there was a soul on earth God was using mightily in signs, wonders, and mighty miracles. When he preached, Hell froze, and Heaven was at his command.

“He speaks like the Enemy’s Son, and he knows you and this place so well. He actually says that he has been here and back.”

Satan is deeply disturbed. He goes to one of the meetings to see for himself. Brother Ezekiel is preaching in a small-town congregation of about

120 people. Satan, disguised as a young man of about thirty-three years and carrying a Bible, enters the church as he usually does when he takes tours on earth. Brother Ezekiel, noticing that the presence of God has been infiltrated, calls the young man to the front and commands, “Satan, the Lord Jesus Christ whom I serve, rebukes you. Thou shalt not enter His House to deceive His children. Get out at once!”

The power of God comes upon the place, lifts the young man who begins to turn into a large snake with large teeth, and then he turns into a tiny scorpion and vanishes. The church erupts into glorious praise and news of this event goes out and spreads like wildfire.

Brother Ezekiel is written about in all the media in Canada and thousands of people begin to flock to his meetings. Within one month, the small congregation where Satan is cast out from a young man grows to six hundred members, and revival has since been in effect.

This news reaches Hell. Satan is absolutely embarrassed. And he begins a campaign to find out how this preacher came to be. After investigations, the demons of Hell report seeing Brother Ezekiel with Father Time, Azosis-Azrael, and Apeppiad. The three are called in for questioning and are found culpable. They are instantly demoted and imprisoned “while the Ruler thinks about a plan to destroy the Born Again.”

Then Satan announces that the task to destroy Brother Ezekiel will be delegated to the trio as punishment, and that swift action is required. But first, they must be tortured “severely enough to induce uncommon anger and wrath in them,” so that when they embark on the mission, they must “accomplish it within a moment.”

Satan’s plan is working. The three demons have not eaten, drunk any water, or even been allowed to use the washrooms for the past three months. They smell horrible, and they eat and drink their own excrement. They convulse as though they are in extreme pain. They are now beasts—evil brutes with no ounce of mercy. They have been turned into lethal and killer spiritual machines.

After Satan sharpened Detharator, the Opener of the Ways, Hell marveled and proclaimed, “There is no one like the Ruler, who is able to make such a virulent creature with incomparable ferocity as Detharator!”

Then when Death was introduced, Hell went into confusion, for “no one could look Death in the eyes and remain the same. The creature is the very epitome of all that the Ruler thinks and is.”

Then Satan gives a directive: “The time is now here. You have heard me tell you that in the Last Days, the Enemy will come strong and try and defeat us. He is now trying to do just that. In the last two thousand years since I allowed the Enemy’s Son to leave this prison of Hell, and Death and Hades relaxed and gave him some spoils (a calculated tactic on my part), there has never been anyone from that kingdom or from the grasslands who has ever come here to Hell and escaped. I hear that a grass called Brother Ezekiel came here, and even sat where Brumalin does sit, and heard all our ceremonial invocations and preliminaries, including our strategies for world destruction. That hurts me—how can this place be broken into, and then allow a shameful piece of grass to escape?

“Then you all heard how this piece of grass has been going all over the earth preaching strongly and destroying our defenses. It is reported that Egypt, our trusted sphere of operation and HQ, has been

attacked. Grasses, I am told, are flocking to Heaven *en masse*. Since the times of Spurgeon of England, Graham of America, Bonnke of Germany, Imakando, Dennis Williams, Mutiti, and Abubakar of Africa, Patel of India, or Youngren of Canada, there has never been a man who has persuaded grasses in such millions to abandon our ways and follow that of my archenemy.

“I called this extraordinary gathering for three reasons—not three reasons *per se*, but for three sets of swift but deadly actions from you. First, I want that piece of grass called Brother Ezekiel dead. This role I have given to the dishonored trio of Cjaron, Azosis-Azrael, and Apeppiad. They will kill him at the point of weakness and bring him here in Hell. I will personally humiliate him and make him a model prisoner in Hell. The trio has been already released from their punishment and sent to wreak havoc and permanently destroy the rabble-rouser, Brother Ezekiel. You must, though, give them support, as you know, the Enemy is not stupid.

“Second, and this charge is under my son, Satanael—and this is in addition to the responsibilities I gave him at our last convocation—he shall implement 2 Corinthians chapter -10 and verse -3. This is a three-prong weapon you will use against all those who have been converted by the rabble-rouser: Let them walk in the spirit but war in the flesh—build fortresses of evil thoughts in their minds; create speculations and high things in their minds that will raise themselves against the knowledge of my Enemy. Make them doubt the Enemy, and let them disobey the Enemy, for once they do that, we are victorious.

“Last, physically and practically destroy all of his family.

“I stated this point unofficially to Leviathan,

who has already begun to alienate Ravinah from her sister Caroline. I will state it again, this time to you all. No man can resist our missiles once we embark on the destruction of their loved ones. His mother, Julia, still lives, although his father is invalid. Now you know, based on our investigations, that his own family is in a mess—he is supposed to be married to Caroline and to Ravinah, and these two are sisters. I want you to bring such enmity between those two sisters that they will commit murder, and then we can harvest them here. I want you to harden the heart of Jason, so that he does not give up Caroline. He must also be used to come hard at Ezekiel and kill him for us. That way, we will harvest them both. Remember, I want you all to help the trio to kill Ezekiel at the moment of his weakness—when he backslides. Bring him temptation after temptation, especially adultery, where he is very weak. Kill his son, Kirl Junior, and bring great sadness to that entire circus.

“In respect of the progress, report to me every six seconds.

“This is my command. You are all dismissed.”

Then Satan beckons to Leviathan, the old monster, and the agent of the Fall. He slides worshipfully to Satan and reports, “At your service, Great Liege.”

Then he coils his tail all around the devil and kisses Satan’s face repeatedly.

“You know, I have a feeling my Enemy’s plan is to unleash *this boy*, and I think it was he who made him escape. What do you think?”

And there is nothing that disheartens Leviathan more than the thought that when the end comes, he, of all demons apart from Satan and Death, will receive the harshest punishment in the final abode, the lake of fire. He has thought about this so many

times.

If only Satan had accomplished the work of deceiving Adam and Eve through someone else, Leviathan has regretted.

But regret is a weakness in the Kingdom of Darkness. Here to be resolute and to carry out your evil intentions without thinking twice is prized. Besides, Satan himself trusts Leviathan.

“I hear you, Most Worshipful Liege,” submits Leviathan. “And I was thinking the same. You have never failed in your mission, oh, darling of beauties, and your great wisdom is shown daily in your pursuit for revenge. What you have commanded is law, and we shall carry it out.”

“You’re dismissed, my friend. Your flatteries have built this great kingdom and given us tremendous leverage. Go and do your part,” orders Satan.

Leviathan slithers delicately and begins to change into its signature serpentine deportment and flies across the expanse. Everyone in Hell knows that when Leviathan flies in this manner, the object of his mission is finished. Leviathan never fails a mission and has been used as an advisor to Satan since the Fall.

Although every demon in Hell is busy putting the last finishes to their strategies to destroy Brother Ezekiel on earth, the sight of Leviathan flying brings them to a standstill. They know it is one of the last moves to finally grab the Kingdom back from the Enemy’s Son.

Satan has always told the demons lies, such as he, Satan, allowed Jesus Christ to escape from Hell and that Jesus did not defeat him at all. Although many demons in high places know the truth—which they cannot bear—they have decided to side with the lies. The flight of Leviathan is, therefore, a call for a last

time stand. The *Battle for the Heavens* is about to begin.

She has never been this confused before. She gets up very early in the morning. To be exact, she has been up since 2:00 a.m., but she just came in connection with her brain in the last ten minutes. She has no idea whether she was thinking or dreaming. But the things she has been pondering on have drained her strength. She has watched them, hand-in-hand, when she is the one who carried his child for nine months. For a while, she has been restrained with the thoughts of her being her blood sister.

Just then Ravinah vocalizes her thoughts for the first time. “I know the right thing to do. But I don’t know what to do. I can’t stand her taking him away from me even if she is my sister.”

Will she take the chance and sue? After all, it was just yesterday when she was consulting Mr. Morton. As Queen’s Counsel (QC) and a very busy lawyer in Canada, she thought she had no chance of getting him to accept to represent her. But she was wrong.

Immediately, she introduced herself. He already knew.

“You’re that lady—the darling of the ICFCD-Vienna. For you I can do it, even for free.” He swivels in his rocking chair.

“Really?” she expresses wonder. “But I thought you will be too hard to get.”

“I know, but I love your story. I can live another one hundred years and can’t come across your situation, you know.”

Mr. Morton’s retainer is fair by his strict standards. She will pay him hourly. But the fact that

she has managed to retain him is in itself a great victory. She will do everything to win the case, but she has doubts.

“What if I simply worsen my chances by suing him? What if he gets mad and then hates me forever?” Ravinah contemplates.

That was then, last evening. But this morning, she has suddenly stumbled upon some extraordinary courage. She must sue her own sister and salvage her man from the woman who neglected him.

Yesterday, her brain and faculties were in shambles. Today, she has all her issues in focus.

I know what to do, she assures herself.

“I will sue—not as plan A, but only as plan B. Plan A—Kirk Junior. What kind of a man would not budge for his own flesh and blood?”

She has everything figured out. She knows that Brother Ezekiel will not abandon her because she has his son.

Another thing. Caroline has a man in her life: Jason. She postures she will incite him to fight for what is his own. Caroline is his fiancée, and if she can push Jason hard enough, he will accept to join her in the lawsuit. She will give him a reason to join and fight. If she is successful in persuading him to join the lawsuit, then they will be stronger.

Jason will claim that since the two have been cohabiting for a year, they are technically man and wife. Besides, “I have heard him say the same,” Ravinah says, exuding stamina.

She has it all figured out now.

At 8:00 a.m., I will give Mr. Morton a call. She falls on her back in her bed and smooches Kirl Junior’s cheeks.

“Your Honor, this is a highly unusual case,” starts Morton Morris, counsel for the plaintiff, Ravinah Kasson Londe, who has sued her sister Caroline Londe for “breaking up my marriage and holding on to my husband even though their marriage was dissolved by death.”

Ravinah has been distraught since the return of Kirl Londe, now Brother Ezekiel, from Hell. Attempts at convincing him that she does not just love him but needs him in order to provide parental guidance to Kirl Junior have failed.

Brother Ezekiel continues to give the same answer. “Ravi, you know that all that happened between the two of us was done wrongly. I was sedated, deceived, and cheated. When I met you, I was technically married to Carol, your sister. You know perfectly well that the Lord hates divorce, and I will not compromise over this.”

Caroline hasn’t made things easier for Ravinah, either. Since their meeting at Julia’s residence, Caroline, Ravinah, and Justitia have met over six times, and each time the status of the two sisters’ relationship vis-à-vis Brother Ezekiel has featured prominently.

“Everything in me wants me to simply let him go, but he’s the love of my life. Besides, he needs me in his work for the Lord,” Caroline has maintained.

“But you have Jason. Please, my sister, leave him for me and Kirl Junior,” Ravinah insisted.

Both sisters have remained adamant. The brawler has reached fever-pitch high, and tensions have led the two into becoming bitter enemies. Now Ravinah cannot visit her mother, and Caroline refuses to speak to Justitia over “this issue.”

In one of their exchanges, Ravinah had threatened suing her sister, saying, “I have done everything, but *sisi*, you are just as stubborn. I have

no option but to consider bringing a lawsuit over this.”

Caroline, defiant as ever, had replied, “If you want, you can do so. We will be ready.”

Brother Ezekiel has taken the squabbles with moderation, tempering his sense of love for the two sisters with sensitivity toward their conscience.

“Lord, I have asked you to let this temptation pass me by—nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will,” Brother Ezekiel had prayed.

So, when he was finally named in the lawsuit as co-defendants together with Caroline, he had simply allowed “the will of God to prevail.”

Ravinah’s Statement of Claim is simple but specific: Ravinah wants the court to find Brother Ezekiel’s marriage to Ravinah legal; and his marriage to her sister, Caroline, a nullity by virtue of death. She wants the marriage between Caroline and Brother Ezekiel nulled.

In her defense, Caroline has asked the court to dismiss her sister’s claim, defending, “My marriage to Kirl Londe was legal, and continues to be so. The separation did not mature into divorce; the alleged death of Kirl was but a ploy by the SISC and, therefore, obtained fraudulently and in bad faith. This court should follow its tradition of standing for the truth and for justice and uphold this nuptial so lawfully covenanted.”

So, on this day of the beginning of the trial, which counsels from both sides indicate will take at least three weeks if all goes as planned, the court premises are parked with people, mostly the members of the press and the media. Most cameras are on Brother Ezekiel. “The first man to ever be

declared dead by a secret agency, and he lives.”

Since the defeat of Paul Harper by the new prime minister, Joseph Cartier, in an election, and his subsequent death, just six months upon relinquishing office, DI Perry Hurst has maintained that “Kirl’s case was from the beginning the late prime minister’s idea, and that my office was not involved.”

Even before the trial date was scheduled, Hurst had applied for a long leave of absence, leading many of his not-so-supportive opponents suggesting that, “The SISC has connived with the court over trial dates. He’s run away from testifying.”

His second in command is, however, here to testify on behalf of the secret agency.

The trial continues.

“In the alternatives, and if this Honorable Court does not find by virtue of resolution by death, being more than twelve months when the couple, the defendants, were in separation, and by that operation of law, this marriage had acquired an automatic divorce status,” Mr. Morton submits.

Due to a publication ban order issued, because of the nature of issues involved and the “issue of national security following the addition of the SISC as intervenors,” the media is banned inside the courtroom.

Further, “it has been the convention of this court to ban the media when it involves the custody of a young child.”

When Mr. Morton brought the case on behalf of his client, the plaintiff, the issue of young Kirl Junior

was not part of the original claim. The custody of Kirl Junior was added to the lawsuit at the advice of Ravinah's friend, Karen, who noted, "I know that afterward, Caroline will ask for him to strengthen her defense. This is what happened to my auntie Mirabella a few years ago."

Mr. Morton and his team have planned to deliver a *coup de gras*, a killing blow to shut off Brother Ezekiel once and for all. In its arsenal of evidentiary assortments, it has Brother Ezekiel's supposed death certificate signed by Dr. Pierre de Suza, the medical pathologist who performed the autopsy on then Kirl Londe's body. The certificate is entered as Exhibit 103, and Mr. Morton questions Dr. de Suza whether he signed the document.

"Yes, I did, and I confirmed that it was the body of Kirl Londe based on his dental record," the experienced sixty-four-year-old mortician answers.

Seated there, calm but alert, Brother Ezekiel follows everything from the opening statements of the plaintiff's counsel and his own lawyer, Joyce Zimmerman. As Kirl, Brother Ezekiel, knows the extent to which the secret agency can go to achieve its goals. But he was not prepared for what he is hearing in the court.

"I knew that something was wrong with me after Brazil, but I didn't know what it was," Brother Ezekiel intones as he hears evidence through SISC witnesses, morgue documents, and photos of his alleged death.

Desiree Wiles, Senior Operations Officer at the SISC, answering a question from Mr. Morton as to whether his organization had confirmed the death of Kirl, says, "Yes, and we proceeded to award his surviving wife with all the pension benefits. As far as we are concerned, he is dead and erased."

"What do you mean by erased?" asks Mr.

Morton.

"Yes, it means that he is officially and legally dead," answers a lanky self-styled Anglo-Saxon who has a reputation for flogging offenders at the SISC until they vomit blood.

He is said to be next in line to the DI, the Boss. He is standing in because the Boss is on vacation.

Asked if it were the idea of the SISC to erase the then Kirl Londe, "so that the agency could use him as human machine in its stealthy missions," as alleged by the co-defendant, Brother Ezekiel, in his defense, Desiree denies it: "For all that matters, the SISC has enough manpower to commit to any mission. There is no need to stage his death."

Seated in between Ravinah and Caroline, Brother Ezekiel kisses both ladies on the cheeks as the plaintiff makes the case. Mr. Morton has not yet decided whether Ravinah will testify. The sisters are easy on each other, but one cannot avoid not seeing that they don't like each other. They are, however, united in one fact: they both love Brother Ezekiel with a passionate love, and they display it openly.

Counsel for the plaintiff had advised Ravinah, "In order for the court to be sympathetic to your cause, you must show it that you love him."

Unbeknownst to the plaintiff, the defendant's counsel had also advised Caroline to always "show affection for him in court."

At recess, the trio hang out around each other.

"What do you want to eat, Carol," asks Brother Ezekiel.

"And what of you, Ravi," he asks, without giving Caroline an opportunity to answer.

Simultaneously, as he is asking, he stands in line

at the MacDonald's inside Bertrand's Cafeteria and orders two Big Mac combos for the two sisters. Brother Ezekiel knows that both sisters have a weakness for the 360-pound beefy burger.

He is always surprised that it had never made the ladies gain weight. Caroline is around barely 135 160, down by nine pounds from five years earlier; her sister Ravinah is only 147 157.

"Get mine with 7-Up," shouts Ravinah.

"Mine with Fruitopia, and do not forget ketchup on mine, please," adds Caroline.

They sit by the court patio, observing as the clouds set the stage for their last episode. It has been raining all day, and people are crammed up in the concourses and along the atrium that leads from the Maples Courthouse into the subway. Although the subway train station has recently been renovated, the court building itself, lying astride the Chan Boulevard and the reception end of Maples Courthouse, famously known for its address, 393 Chambers Lane, is a dilapidated Israeli structure constructed at the end of the Great War.

In Canada, the end of the Great War signaled the beginning of many and monumental developments. It was also during this time that the first female lawyer was admitted to the Canadian Dominion Law Society Bar (CDLSB). Bertha Bertrand would go on to becoming the first ever female chief justice of Canada.

Here they stand, or sit, if posture must mean physical composure. Their mind races as their mouths chew the two humongous burgers. Brother Ezekiel only helps himself to some orange juice. Since he was awoken from an eleven-year-long coma, he's been ulcerous, and his family doctor has advised him to pay particular attention to his diet. He does not drink soda pop, and neither does he

survive on heavy-calorie food. His hearing is also a problem, and Brother Ezekiel has been using a hearing device since returning from the dead, if one thinks of his coma as a mini-death situation.

"You must remain on a strict diet, with lots of rest, and avoid stress-inducing thoughts." Dr. Yin had advised when Brother Ezekiel was discharged from the hospital.

"Yours is a miracle. A majority of patients who go for this length of comatose come out completely dysfunctional—if they are, indeed, lucky even to wake up," his family doctor, Dr. Kevin Strasberg, had commented.

Brother Ezekiel's health, though stable, has been closely monitored by the two doctors, working in coordination, and sharing information and progress on the recovery aperture of the "risen" brother. Both Ravinah and Caroline have shown unprecedented care for him. Even if they do not relate to each other that closely now, especially after Brother Ezekiel had elected to keep his marriage with Caroline and part ways with her sister Ravinah, they have continued to call on him, supplying vegetables and fruits, "because he does not eat meat anymore," and supporting his ministry, especially Caroline.

After Brother Ezekiel announced that he had an encounter with Hell, and also with the Lord Jesus Christ, Ravinah has been at a loss. Raised as an atheist, most of what Brother Ezekiel claims to have experienced do not make sense to her.

For example, "Since he returned, he has refused to smoke cigars or drink beer," Ravinah complains to Karen through a telephone conversation.

"Oh, really?" Karen is inquisitive.

"Before that, we partied and smoked together." She numbs her nerves, regretfully. Then she

comforts herself, “It’s okay. Whatever he says he encountered has saved his life. That is enough for me.”

“Tell me more, dear. What has become of your dude?” Karen is upbeat.

“Well, he never swears anymore. And of course, he used to be very judgmental of others. Now, he sees only the best side of people. Even in his enemies, imagine,” Ravinah explains.

In a stealth aside, Karen curses what has become of her once very best friend. “Yeah, and he’s broken our friendship, too.”

But even by Ravinah’s old standards, she has seen that there is a change in her. She now feels strongly that there could be a God somewhere.

“People like Kirl don’t just wake up and start to say things like they have found God,” she has been telling her best friend Karen.

“If you saw him before this, girl, you would understand. My husband, of course, also Sister Jane of the Last Saints Church, have helped me to see a possibility of faith in God.”

Just this morning, Ravinah got up in the wee hours of the morning, right in her nightgown, and she kneeled beside her bed and uttered a prayer: “I know you’re there somewhere because you brought my husband back. Help me, please, to win this case.”

Returning to Karen on the phone, Ravinah says, “But...” Then she hesitates.

“But what, Ravi?” Karen inquires.

“To tell you the truth, I miss his lovemaking—the way we do things. I want him, you know, every day.”

“Insanity, Ravi, insanity. What can you do now, pal?” Karen chokes at the other end of the line.

And when she began pestering Brother Ezekiel why he should choose her over her sister, she raised the issue of faith, saying, “I know you think I am not

religious enough for you.”

To which Brother Ezekiel had replied, “You need Jesus, not religion.”

But here they are now—two hearts kneaded together in love for one man—a man who seems to care more for divine missions than for temporal trophies.

At a deeper level, Brother Ezekiel cares for the two sisters a great deal. In the old life, in the life he had become accustomed to as a secret agent, this combination would have been efficacious: the brains and sexual agility of Ravinah, and the innocence and spiritual graces of Caroline, and both of these fused together into a genetic pool that is, in essence, the same pool. Brother Ezekiel knows he would have won a hearty jackpot of two exemptions – law and grace.

But no, he cannot now. He knows what exists in the world under and the one above. He has been baptized into the experience a few have had a chance to undergo, and for now, the promise of everlasting life outweighs all the titivations of human achievements. He must do the will of him who has commissioned him. He must do so even if it means having to go through the cumbersome legal process. And here he is, and here they are. And Caroline is now saying something.

“Hey, darling, it’s time to go.”

“Don’t forget what I told you,” Ravinah reminds him.

“How can I, sweetheart?” Brother Ezekiel says. “I know that you are just trying to do what is legal. Let the Lord’s will prevail. I will never be angry with you. You’re forever a part of me.”

“You may take a seat, Ms. Londe,” a receptionist offers.

“Thank you,” Ravinah answers politely, and then sits, sinking down into the black leather sofas that serve as a waiting area for clients who are in line to be attended to by Morris Morton.

Today, she has come for final preparations because she is due to go on the witness stand to give testimony. Last week, Mr. Morton, her legal counsel, had indicated that she needed at least an hour of coaching if she was going to provide not only credible but structured testimony.

She woke up this morning and dressed in her signature black dress, pink underwear, and tall platform shoes. She is as gorgeous to look at as she is to be with. Surely, her interview will provide her with enough ammunition—that is, legally speaking—that will enable her to dethrone her rival sister from what she calls “my deserved marriage, because I love him.”

Mr. Morton looks himself in the mirror, just to make sure he is well kempt for this meeting, as is his custom. Suddenly, he begins to feel dizzy, and in the blur of the moment, he begins to see doubles.

No, this can't be happening. I am just about to see a very important client, he tells himself courageously, trying to keep his composure and sanity.

But he cannot control it.

A strong swelling pops up on his tummy, and it moves speedily upward toward his throat.

Vomiting! he cries out silently, bearing in mind that his legal assistants are just a wall away from the reception area. He tries to keep his cool.

The swelling stops. Then it pops out of his mouth, and he sees, albeit briskly, a snake's tongue coming out of his own mouth. He runs back to the mirror and wipes it clean, and he can now see very

clearly. Up to the head, he is still the same person—human and very much Mr. Morton. But above his neck, the head of a serpent with blazing red eyes stares him directly into his own eyes. He has been changed into an animal, or perhaps into a human-serpent.

“No, no, no...,” he chokes.

Leviathan will not allow him to keep his mind functioning normally. The ancient serpent swallows the lawyer's cognitive capabilities and begins to control both of his motor and cognitive faculties. He is now under the spell and total control of Leviathan. It dances steadily from the powder room and into the conference-room.

“Margaret...let Ms. Londe in, please,” beckons Leviathan, now impersonating Mr. Morton and taking the role of her advocate.

“Sure, sir...,” answers Margaret, Mr. Morton's senior legal assistant.

Within a minute, Ravinah was sitting on the direct opposite side of the long brown conference table facing *Mr. Morton*.

“Our strategy must change,” Mr. Morton begins.

“Now we must adopt a confrontational approach. You must not sympathize with Brother Ezekiel any longer. From my view of things, he has been seen favorably by the jury because they seem to feel that he loves you. Reject his love—it's a strategy—and show that you love your sister instead.”

Although the thought troubles Ravinah, who fails to see any sense in showing hatred for Brother Ezekiel and loving her sister will win her the trial. But he has his reputation before him. In the last seven years, Morris Morton has only lost one case—even that one cannot be said to be a loss. It was a trial commuted into a settlement halfway through

the trial. He has been Canada's most successful family lawyer, and his office has become the busiest law office in the nation. Mr. Morton chooses whom to represent. A blogger recently joked, "For Morris, you need to ask *leave* to be represented—more or less like the Supreme Law Office of Canada."

It was a game changer. Ravinah now must face up to the opposing side like enemies. She has been too lenient in the name of self-preservation. But this is war. She must first win, then make peace later. She cannot afford to lose him, and her child. She cannot afford to see her sister claim a man she never showered with love, the man she separated from. She now knows she has a maternal mother and two blood sisters.

"But what is all these if the only love I know better is taken?" she determines.

Mr. Morton is right. I have been just too good, too tolerating. When I sat on that deathbed tending to him, where was Caroline? When I carried his child for nine months while trying to navigate work, him in coma, and paying for the medical bills, did she come to my aid? Ravinah reminisces, and then she indicts, Over my dead body. She will never have him for as long as I live.

Justice Ackim Campbell, a native of Newfoundland and Labrador, but a Métis by ancestry, fifty-four years of age, reviews the *Londe v. Londe* file in his chambers. He has been doing so for the past four weeks; and today, he's confident he has basically formed up his opinion of how matters are going. Based on what he has heard from the plaintiff's witnesses so far, it is very clear to him that unless the plaintiff herself testifies otherwise, what has passed through his court, with clear instructions

to the jury, and pending the evidentiary makeup of the defendant, there is pretty much no case for the plaintiff.

Then the phone on his large wooden table rings.

"Hello, can I help you?" asks the judge.

"It's Prime Minister Cartier. How are you, Justice Campbell?" he inquires.

"It's an honor, Your Excellency. I am...I am surprised," he says appreciatively.

"No need to be...I am calling regarding the case you have been adjudicating—and by the way, this conversation should be kept between us. It's confidential," warns the prime minister.

"Yes, sir, I am aware...and yes...I am sitting at the bench in this matter," Justice Campbell confirms.

"I am, in the interest of national security, instructing you to find a way to find that man who claims to be resurrected liable. I need him to lose his marriage to his wife and given to that concubine he married while on drugs. If he wins, the devastating blow this will punch to this nation will be catastrophic. I hope you understand?" says the Right Honorable Prime Minister.

"I know...but..." The justice pauses.

"I know you want to say, but what of what was reported in the media...that we have said that the late prime minister Harper killed him—oh, no, that is just politics. Everyone knows now that the late prime minister was innocent," the incumbent panders.

The presiding judge is left wondering. Just this week, the prime minister's office has been praising this man who claims to have come back to life,

saying that he deserved his rights. Even the Chief Justice had sent Justice Campbell a congratulatory message even before the end of the trial, saying that the chief justice believed that the judge would see the matter through and, hopefully, find that the woman's case had no merit at law. This change of heart suddenly does not sit well with the judge.

Now he finds that he is being bombarded with political pressure. He knows that his nomination for a Supreme Court appointment is in the offing, and that if he does not do what the prime minister suggests, his own promotion will be on the line. Besides, when it comes to vetting, this case may come back to haunt him if he does not side with public opinion on this issue.

Meanwhile, in the prime minister's office in Ottawa, Hell has literally broken loose.

"I have total command of his soul," reports Satanael to his father, the Devil.

"He, in fact, I, has just instructed Justice Campbell to make that rascal lose the case," Satanael continues.

"Good job, my son, for your Antichrist office was created for you from the day you were born. Yours is fated bliss, and the annals of eternity have already placed you highest—just second from me, of course—on the apocalyptic signage," Satan informs his son.

The prime minister is under a spell and cannot form his own independent will. He has been possessed by the evil spirit of Satanael, and now he must hate Brother Ezekiel and hurt his case. This way, it will frustrate Caroline, make Brother Ezekiel sin by committing adultery with a woman who is not

his by law, "because that marriage was obtained when Kirl Londe was still married to his wife."

Confusion now reigns in Justice Campbell's chambers. For the first time in his twelve years on the bench as a judge, he has never been squeezed this close to the wall. He has known for some time that those who resist the government's machinations do not become judges of the Supreme Court.

"Now this neoliberal prime minister is doing something unliberal," the frustrated and now visibly confused Justice Campbell soliloquizes as he paces the floor of the six-by-six-foot-long inner court chamber.

The trial resumes.

"There is a motion before the court this morning. Do you, Ms. Zimmerman, still wish for the defendant to continue with the subpoena for Mr. Perry Hurst?" Justice Campbell asks.

"Yes, Your Honor. And we ask that this court session be adjourned as we prepare and serve our affidavits," answers the lawyer for the defendants.

"Do you have any objections, Mr. Morton?" asks Justice Campbell.

"We do, in fact, Your Honor," responds Morton. "As we said before, Mr. Desiree Wiles was presented before this court, and he did testify in the place of Mr. Hurst, Your Honor. We oppose the motion on the sole premise that it will not adduce what Mr. Wiles did not attest to. We strongly ask that you deny the motion as an abuse of the court's process and this session's time," Morton submits.

"Can I say something, Your Honor," Ms.

Zimmerman storms; and the manner in which she does it, with a sense of urgency, one can immediately see that she has a point she wants to make.

“For the record, Your Honor, we did canvass the idea of Mr. Hurst being present at this trial if the administration of justice in this province is to be efficacious. Mr. Hurst is not only a material witness, Mr. Hurst’s testimony and cross-examination thereto will be the most relevant aspect of our investigation. He employed the defendant, then Kirl Londe, and we submit that it is only he who can answer properly to the allegations presented before this court. We respectfully submit, Your Honor, that Mr. Hurst be summoned. And if it pleases this court, within three days, this session should be convened.” Ms. Zimmerman bows to the judge and then drops hard into her seat.

Justice Campbell hits his gavel on his table and visibly orders, “This court is adjourned.”

The court clerk stands up and says, “Order in the court. All rise. This court is now in recess.”

“We have a rebuttal to the motion before this court this afternoon,” Mr. Morton begins as he addresses the court after three days of recess.

“And the rebuttal is?”

“I was just about to say that subsequent to our rebuttal, Your Honor, the identity of the director of intelligence is by law forbidden from publication, for security reasons,” states Morton.

“Is this the first time the issue of the director’s identity is being brought before this court?” the presiding judge directs the question to Mr. Morton.

“As far as I am concerned, yes, Your Honor,” Morton answers.

“Fair enough. Let’s see what you have to say to that, Ms. Zimmerman,” prompts the judge.

“We have no submissions to that effect, except that whoever holds the office of the director of intelligence is not by law precluded from testifying before the courts. This matter is *sub judice* in a court of law, and the legal process should be respected, Your Honor,” confutes the lawyer for the defendants.

“What is your response, counsel for the plaintiff?” the judge prompts.

“What is at state here, Your Honor, are matters of national security. The director, pursuant to the *SISC Act* (1984), has authority to recruit agents of the agency for the security of Canada. I, therefore, move that any mention of the director’s name in these proceedings is injurious to the democratic nuance and the posture that Canada has taken relative to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The director is the chief diplomat in Canada.”

“Your answer, Counsel?” The judge motions to Ms. Zimmerman.

“This is not a political trial, Your Honor. This is a proceeding in which the so-called director of intelligence went overboard and infringed upon vital *Charter* freedoms and the human rights of the defendants. It borders on the abuse of office, and is, therefore, subject to cross-examination,” she submits.

Even before Justice Campbell has an opportunity to grant Mr. Morton leave to speak, Mr. Morton pulls the microphone close to himself, clears his throat, and speaks: “There’s a broader principle at stake that we have to uphold, Your Honor. Moreover, this court has no jurisdiction to hear matters relating to the director of intelligence.

The act is clear on this issue. All matters of discipline or investigation are subject to the Security Intelligence Review Committee (SIRC). SIRC, Your Honor, is a creation of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada who are not members of the Senate or the House of Commons. By its nature, Your Honor, SIRC is independent and, therefore, can be expected to render fair and impartial investigations and decisions. This matter is *ultra vires* to this court. I submit that this motion be dismissed."

Ms. Zimmerman stomps from her seat on the left side of the table facing Justice Campbell, and in a heightened voice, she states, "Your Honor, I beg your indulgence, may I address the bench?" she begs.

Justice Campbell, sitting with his left elbow on the table while the same hand is holding his cheek tightly, simply nods his head.

"Your Honor, the plaintiff's counsel seems to suggest that the director is being subpoenaed to be tried. What we are saying is that he be called as a witness. We had no issue with Mr. Wiles, his second in command—why should it be an issue with the director? What we are asking is that the person who employed and supervised the plaintiff Kiri Londe attend and answer to some relevant questions and be cross-examined. The plaintiff received instructions directly from the director. The director was not forthcoming. He abused his office and did to the plaintiff what is not done to other agents. And invoking jurisdiction is immaterial to our motion. This is a court of competent jurisdiction in matters of civil and family law proceedings. The director may be immune from prosecution for matters of national security while he was in office, but this motion is asking for his presence as a witness. I submit that the director's attendance is both

necessary and required if the defendant is to provide full answer and defense in this case."

The honorable judge adjourns the court for fifteen minutes to get the facts correct and review the rules of family court in chambers. Then he returns just after five minutes and informs the clerk to reconvene the court.

"I have heard from both counsel on this motion," the judge begins. "And I have made a decision."

There are murmurings going on across the room. Some people begin to complain that it is not proper for the judge to make a ruling on this motion without doing a comprehensive scrutiny of the submissions made before him. Some people seem visibly impressed with the judge's competency and expediency, saying, "We need astute decision makers like this one. This saves the court both time and resources."

The courtroom is in frenzy. The police officer on guard is trying to no avail to silence the muttering audience. It is not working. One could even hear the noise from outside the courtroom down the hallway.

"Order in court!" the judge shouts, hitting his gavel hard on the table.

There is silence in court now; it is so quiet that one can hear a pin dropping to the floor.

"Good. After listening to the sides, both sides, I have come to the following ruling," the presiding judge states.

Then there is some commotion at the back of the courtroom. No one is saying what it is, but the police officer is taking care of it. The judge, not desiring to be interrupted, invites both counsels to approach the bench, and after a brief discussion, the duo return to their respective seats. No-one heard the instructions the judge had whispered to the two

legal representatives.

The judge rules: “This motion is dismissed, and here are my oral reasons. The director’s second in command testified before this court, and I am satisfied that he said exactly what his director would have said. I am also satisfied that although matters of jurisdiction do not persuade me to decide one way or the other, I find that this court has jurisdiction to hear such motions. However, on the balance of probabilities, I find that it will not be prejudicial not to allow the director to be cross-examined. I find that in a broader interest of national security, the director should be left out of this proceeding, even if just as a witness. This court will hear the case on merit.

“Court is adjourned to tomorrow at 9:30 a.m.”

No one says a word. The courtroom is emptied of any human presence. The parties as well as the audience leave the room.

“What are our chances of proceeding without this motion?” Caroline asks Ms. Zimmerman.

“Wha...what...do you think?” Ms. Zimmerman ducks the question and bounces it over to Brother Ezekiel.

“We will be okay,” Brother Ezekiel answers, matter-of-factly.

He’s truly a different person. This is not the Kiri of old who would have thrown histrionics all over in a situation like this. What happened to him is really strong, Caroline thinks.

It is around 9:45 a.m. The courthouse is buzzing with people, as numerous as the sand of the sea. But ironically, the courtroom where the *Londe* case is supposed to be taking place, room WZ-18, is not

open to the public.

Both Mr. Morton and Ms. Zimmerman are locked up in chambers with some court officials whom neither the plaintiffs nor the defendants can identify.

“It’s been over an hour and a half now, what is happening?” Caroline whispers into Brother Ezekiel’s ears.

“I have no idea,” he answers.

The parties continue to wait.

Ravinah comes close to Brother Ezekiel and begins to stroke his hair. Caroline, who is now fatigued, is fast asleep with her head on Brother Ezekiel’s chest.

“I can’t wait for this case to be done. Then we can go back to what we used to be,” Ravinah says to Brother Ezekiel.

“Ravi, it’s exactly as I told you. We will leave this in God’s and the court’s hands,” Brother Ezekiel answers.

“But what about Junior—your own flesh?”

“As I said, he too is a gift from God to me, just like you are. He will be just fine,” Brother Ezekiel soothes Ravinah with his well-chosen response.

Meanwhile, Jason cannot seem to stop gazing at Ravinah. It is obvious that Jason has been hurt by Caroline’s rescission on their wedding plans. But there is nothing he can now do except to allow the court process to run its course.

They continue waiting for the two legal minds to emerge from the chambers. It has almost been three hours since they arrived at the courthouse. Other courtrooms have now closed their doors, perhaps on their respective recesses. There are some sounds coming out of the chambers, but no one can say exactly what those representatives are talking about. Then both Mr. Morton and Ms. Zimmerman

emerge. They go straight to their own clients.

From their demeanors, it is clear that Ms. Zimmerman is the happier of the two.

“Judge Campbell is not going to hear the case. We may need to fight a mistrial,” Mr. Morton instructs his client.

“What is a mistrial?” Ravinah is peeved as she asks her lawyer.

Just before Mr. Morton can answer his client, they are interrupted by a sharp and happy voice. It is Caroline. She lifts up her hands in prayer and praise.

“Thank God. Thank you, Jesus,” she squeals with delight as though she is intensively inebriated.

It is now obvious that something happened in those chambers. Whatever it was, it portends some good news to Caroline’s side and bad news to Ravinah’s side.

“Oh, no! This is not good at all!” Ravinah exclaims, with a complete lack of fear.

Caroline is all over Brother Ezekiel – and as if she has been waiting all her life for this just one new encounter, she holds his hands and whispers in his ears very softly and calmly, “V-Carol can’t wait another second. Let’s go, now.”

The very next day year, there were various headlines surrounding the *Londe* case.

“It’s a mistrial. Kirl Londe, a.k.a. Brother Ezekiel, is a free man!” reads the front page of the *National Post*, Canada’s leading newspaper.

Variations of the same heading saturate all the major newspapers in Canada. But it is what follows in the aftermath of the mistrial that pours scorn on both the administration of justice, as well as

exposing corruption in government.

Justice Campbell has been dropped from the bench because he floundered the precept of “good behavior.” He has been found wanting by the Judicial Service Commission of Canada (JSCC). According to the communique released by the JSCC, “Justice Campbell received kickbacks from the prime minister’s office in order to rule against the plaintiffs. Investigations have found that from nowhere, the prime minister just started to side with the defendants even when he had been averse to them in the past leading to this trial. A private secretary in the prime minister’s office told the JSCC that on the morning the plaintiffs and defendants were to present evidence, the prime minister made a call to the presiding justice and ordered him to rule or cause to rule in favor of the defendants. This is intolerable in a civilized and democratic society like Canada. We have, with immediate effect, revoked the disgraced justice’s right to prosecute judicial matters in Canada.”

As this news erupts, the eyes of the world are now focused on Canada: How is this world-renowned harbinger of democratic principles going to handle this double tragedy, with executive and judicial branches of government getting embroiled in a private matter.

The opposition is calling on Prime Minister Cartier to resign. Rumors also have it that within the government, there is a great rift as to who should be blamed—the prime minister alone or the entire party that has misled the public in its statements to the nation when in secret it continued to plot for the downfall of the plaintiffs.

Others are reeling over this matter, opining that that Justice Campbell is “innocent in all this; he is the unfortunate victim of historic racism against the

First Nation people of Canada.”

After the mistrial, Kirl Londe, a.k.a. Brother Ezekiel, who was also flanked by Caroline, had this to say to the media.

“From the beginning, we placed our trust in the infinite mercy and wisdom of the Lord. The devil tried to bring confusion to my family—and I want you all to write that both Caroline and Ravinah will always be my family. Kirl Junior is my family. Justitia and Jason are my family. The Lord told me that I should cooperate with the entire process because he was going to use it to bring sanity in government and glorify his name. What has happened today is the vindication of what the Lord has already promised me. Now what the devil meant for evil; God has made for good. To him, and him alone be all the glory.”

When Brother Ezekiel finished talking, the media and press followed him with questions: “So, now how are you going to deal with your two women?” “Whom will you prefer in bed?” “What if both of them still insist you’re their man, as they did at trial?” “Whom do you love more?” “Who is the prettier to you of the two sisters?” “Can you choose between your son and Ravinah or between your son and Caroline?” “Did you really go to Hell?” “Are you mad at the Canadian government?” “How does it feel to die and rise again – are you Jesus?”

“No...no comment,” replies Brother Ezekiel. Then he gets in his car and they drive away.

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“ “It’s now seven weeks, and our efforts have not worked. In fact, we have suffered much during this period,” Cjaron says regretfully.

“I am awfully worried. The Ruler’s Son will hear of this again. He was angry at us the first week because we did not kill Ezekiel as commanded,” recounts Azozis-Azrael.

“I am outraged. I am angry with this kid. How can a simple grass keep on frustrating plan after plan? Phase 1 has been extended to next week. If we fail again, we risk harsher consequences,” reminds Apepiad.

The three demons of death gather, dressed as fans of the Boston Red Sox against the Cincinnati Reds at Fenway Park in Boston. Cjaron has donned the red-and-white gear since the days of Babe Ruth, as early as the 1915s. After the Red Sox won the World Series 1918, Cjaron left them to support their bitter rivals, the New York Yankees.

However, after over eighty years of supporting the Yankees, Cjaron was almost maimed by the prayers of the fans of the Yankees, so he decided to return to the Red Sox.

“I know why His Excellency, Honorable Bueranjie, likes the city of Boston.” Cjaron listens to himself as he swathes the flavorful intellectual fervency of the United States. “Here I breathe clean air—not air polluted by the prayers of the Capers in New York State,” he brags.

As Royal Muse players invoke before any serious game, Cjaron prides himself as the protector of the

fans, the energizer of the players, and the keeper of coaches. He has been boasting that, “As long as I can keep masses flooding the stadia, I can keep them away from churches and philanthropy.”

Today, however, the meeting does not focus on who should win, who should be fatally injured, or who should be the people’s Most Valuable Player (MVP); today’s meeting is centered around Brother Ezekiel, and Fenway Park just happens to be the venue.

“The ladies don’t know it yet. Since his return, his sex drive has been reduced; he is not so interested in sex anymore. He has not asked or advanced himself toward either Ravinah or Caroline since he came. I have failed to lure his thoughts into fornication,” Apepiad reports.

“Me too,” Azosis-Azrael seconds. “I have tried to bring those gorgeous Russian models he loved. He can’t even move a tarsal. He is completely immobilized. To make matters worse, he keeps praying every day, giving me no chance to invade his privacy.”

“I thought I had it all figured out,” informs Cjaron, “when the trial began, because I wanted to escalate the animosity between Caroline and Ravinah to get to his heart. Nope, the guy keeps doing what hurts me so much. He loves—and love damages me more than any lethal weapon the Enemy has ever fashioned. Just the other day, I was lurking mortally around Bertrand’s Cafeteria, placating injurious thoughts and planting dissensions, and he didn’t mind. He even broke protocol and hugged and kissed both sisters with genuine agape love. He almost made me faint.”

“Twice this week, I almost killed him,” says Azosis-Azrael.

“But why didn’t you kill the troublemaker?”

Apepiad asks.

“That’s your problem, Apepiad. You forget too easily,” Cjaron challenges.

“What...why...how have I become a target of ridicule by just inquiring?” fumes Apepiad at Cjaron.

“You must not begin quarreling, at least for now,” Azosis-Azrael advises.

Then Azosis-Azrael notifies them that they stand a better chance together than as individuals, “although customarily, *divided we stand, united we fall.*”

“And you, Apepiad, know that Father Time is right. You can’t kill that grass until—remember the command of the Ruler—he sins and forgets to confess. It’s only then that we can kill and harvest him to Hell. Remember, we must bring him with us—that’s the command of the Sovereign.”

Even Cjaron himself is surprised that Azosis-Azrael has just advised them.

“Whoever thought Azosis-Azrael could be wise,” Cjaron reflects. But he cannot just control himself when he thinks that Apepiad has brought all these on him. He would have found another way of initiating Kirl first and would have avoided the risk of bringing him in the Presidium.

Now the Ruler blames it squarely on me.

After Cjaron has finished regretting in his heart, he concludes that he must not allow “this temporary grudge” sour all of his plans. His job is to make Brother Ezekiel fall. He will intensify the temptations that will lead to the capture of Brother Ezekiel *alive*. In this plan, he must remain focused; otherwise, he will suffer even more torture than if he merely kills Brother Ezekiel and fails to “bring him to Hell.”

And the three come to a chilling realization that what makes Brother Ezekiel dodge their plans are

his “prayer, love, and a pure mind.”

“These, you know, are impenetrable fortresses,” Apepiad educates – who has been the most vocal of the three demons. Apepiad has seen how prayer and the inner purity of the Christians have in the past aborted his missions.

“When they pray, the Enemy does something that makes all our efforts numb,” Apepiad says.

Brother Ezekiel is unaware that war is being waged on his behalf by good angels. At courthouse today, the courtroom was surrounded by a myriad of good angels at the command of Michael. As a routine, Brother Ezekiel had prayed a seven-minute prayer before leaving his apartment for the trial.

Lord, I dwell in your secret and shadowy place; You're my refuge and my fortress, and I trust you. I thank you because you will deliver me from the snare of Satan and will cover me with your presence. I am not afraid of the messengers of darkness. They are under the control of your holy angels. In Jesus' name. Amen.

And the LORD God had summoned Michael to his throne and directed, “Michael, I have heard prayers from Brother Ezekiel for protection. Let not even one ounce of Satan’s wiles touch him.”

And after that a seemingly normal day had passed. But the heavenlies were abuzz with commotion and rampage. Satan had gotten word that a battalion under Michael had been unleashed on earth to protect Brother Ezekiel. Satan himself and hundreds of thousands of demons of war under the command of Detharator, gathered just at the

boundary between Heaven and earth.

Michael, with only ten thousand angels, all dressed in white and holding the Word of God, comes to the pinnacles of Heaven’s fringes and awaits Jesus’ command. Satan advances with fiery cannons of immortal ferocity. He will not hesitate to destroy all the angels accompanying Michael and permanently end the rumpus Brother Ezekiel “has brought to the darkest world.”

They come face-to-face, only separated by clouds of innocence. Satan and his myriads of soldiers are ready. They have vowed to defeat the messengers of God and prevent them from taking the Good News and God’s instructions and protection to earth. Their plans of destroying Brother Ezekiel and preventing those who hear him from spreading God’s message further must go on. Not even Michael and his angels could hinder them.

“You must attack. You must not fear their faces, although they are pure. You all just close your eyes and fight to the bitter end. I, with Detharator, will target Michael and defeat him,” Satan commands.

And he adds that there will be no retreat even if the “praises for the Enemy begin to overwhelm you. Brave the swords of prayer and storm through the piercing Words of Life. Do not be overcome by the fumes of God’s glory, because at the end, there will be blood.”

Then Michael, just with less than a third of the numbers to the ones accompanying Satan, rides upon the wings of the wind with a mighty roar from Heaven. The stars and the moon stop in their orbits, and the rains of vengeance fall taciturnly upon the battalions of the dark army.

“In the name of the Lord Most Portent, the Lord of Hosts both of Heaven and Earth, the Mighty and Risen Conqueror, Satan, I command you with the

stern rebuke of the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, fall down and worship the Lord God!" Michael thunders.

"The enemies of God, one by one and also *en masse*, begin to fall down prostrate to worship the Lord God Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Within a period of an hour or so, almost all the demons of war and destruction have fallen down, except Detharator and Satan.

"You will not make me bow before my time, you, cantankerous son of blind perdition," Satan shouts at Michael.

Then Detharator advances toward Michael and his angels. With a luminous sword, he points at God's obedient warrior and invokes, "In Lucifer's name, the Angel Who Is Worshipped, I impeach your power and—cower and lay down your weapons!"

Momentarily, Michael and his angels tremble and retreat and almost fall. They stay, mostly by holding on to their javelins of hope. A strong wind blows and rips the hair off Michael and his angels, and there is a great lift for a while. But Michael and his angels will not be moved. They stand their ground.

"On the command of the Lord, Lucifer was cast out of Heaven, because he had rebelled against God's established order. He corrupted the ancient of days and tempted you all into an abyss of perdition. You will all be doomed to the fires that never stop burning. You all have no power, except what the Lord God can allow.

"Now I ask the Lord to strip you all of that power and fall!" Michael commands Detharator and his retinue in an authoritative voice. They fall fast to the ground, powerless and foaming at their mouths and begging for mercy.

But Satan is nowhere to be found.

"The best location will be near Port Cobourg, and at night," Azosis-Azrael suggests.

"Why this location and time?" asks Apepiad.

"Because this is where we have had massive successes. I killed that bishop of Hyssop there, too. You remember the time that he was entertaining a woman who was not his wife, and I struck him just at the right time?"

Cjaron laughs. And then he begins to brag: "I remember that guy. He kept inflicting one painful blow after another. Then I got him. He now gnashes his teeth in the portals of Hell."

"But..." Apepiad asks, "how do we get him there? I mean, near or at Port Cobourg?"

"I have that figured out," replies Cjaron.

"He was overheard saying that he would be at another of his crusades, and this time at Port Cobourg Arena, the same area where we have been victorious so far," Azosis-Azrael corroborates.

"But won't it be obvious to the grasses that we—I mean, the demoniacs—are responsible for two high-profile clergy murdered around the same area?" Apepiad reasons.

"You're thinking for them, Apepiad. These humans don't think. Remember when we assassinated JFK, and then Robert, these humans up to now believe it's the Mafias who did it? They don't think beyond their limited reason," Cjaron says.

"What one word can you use to describe our Ruler, Apepiad?" Azosis-Azrael mocks.

"I don't know—why?"

"Destruction!" Apepiad answers.

"That is the second, friend," Cjaron corrects.

"So, what is it? Say it now or forever keep your mouth shut!" demands Apepiad.

“*Deception. Deception*, Apepiad, is the word,” Azosis-Azrael boasts.

“That’s so obvious. I know that,” Apepiad says, shunning any accusation of ignorance.

“And what word for the grasses?” Cjaron follows up.

“*Naïve*. They are visibly naïve, Apepiad,” volunteers Azosis-Azrael.

“And what of...,” Azosis-Azrael begins, but he is immediately interrupted.

“Okay, enough of your verbal interlocutions. Let’s go for a kill,” Apepiad charges.

In winter, roads are pathetically slippery. But not today: the road workers have done a commendable job to juxtapose salt and asphalts to a brilliant dry rhythm on one of the busiest highways in the province.

“The weather focus for this morning was brutally frightening. What has happened?” asks Pastor Ezigbo, who now accompanies Brother Ezekiel on evangelistic crusades.

Pastor Ezigbo had vowed before the Lord that he would not want to miss out on what the Lord was doing in these times. He has surrendered the day-to-day running of his congregation to his assistant pastor, Dennis Maclean. For over six months now, the Brother Ezekiel–Ezigbo liaison has brought great victories in the Kingdom of God.

Just last month, in the United States town of Wichita, Kansas, a woman who had a hunchback just shot up from nowhere was clearly delivered. In the same crusade, 17,899 souls confessed Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. A man, who was given only three days to live due to prostate

cancer, had his doctor reverse the prognosis as “indeterminate; the cancer suddenly disappeared.”

But the most remarkable miracle performed by Brother Ezekiel, to date, happened in the small town of Maple Ridge. Here, all was done to advertise the event, but the population was indifferent. All the posters were stripped off poles, and the only TV station in the county refused to air the ads.

Brother Ezekiel had prayed, “Lord, I have done what is humanly possible to do, and the authorities here have hindered it. Now I surrender the project into your hands.”

The Brother Ezekiel team had turned up at the arena and found it, to their amazement, packed to capacity, with overflows temporarily provided to sustain the masses.

“Where did all these people come from?” Pastor Ezigbo had asked Brother Ezekiel.

“Ask them,” was Brother Ezekiel’s reply.

It was while he was about to introduce Brother Ezekiel when he asked the masses how and when they heard about the meeting.

“Seven months ago,” they replied.

“When...seven months...we hadn’t even begun preparing for this crusade,” Pastor Ezigbo whispered to Brother Ezekiel.

“Yes, the Lord was ahead of us—he understands the future,” the great preacher answered, and then stood up to deliver one of the “greatest sermons the people of Maple Ridge had ever heard.”

“You are forever banished to the embers of Hades. You will never ever be released, you grand failures,” roars Satanael, lying in a hospital bed, bandages covering his head except for his eyes. His

speech, unintelligible and broadcast live to the entire Hell, is being heard even in earthly stations.

As he makes this ruling, all the battalions gathered before him are deathly silent. You can drop a pin and exactly know where it has fallen. The three demons of death are permanently exiled from the company of the demoniacs. They have failed. They have betrayed the Ruler. But how did they fail and betray the Ruler, is the question no one is asking; except when you listen carefully to the trio's excuses, you may decipher what might have happened.

"No one can pull that one off." Apepiad is reeling from a failed attempt to have the head of Brother Ezekiel chopped off in a road accident at Port Cobourg.

"You have embarrassed the Ruler's Son," retorts Cjaron.

"It's our fault—all the three of us. How couldn't we know in time that it was the head of the Ruler's Son we were chopping off?" Azosis-Azrael says regretfully.

"No, no, no, it is the Ruler's Enemy's fault, can't you see it, you guys?" begins Cjaron. "We had followed the right motor vehicle, we had the right number and the right people in it—but how they suddenly turned into Prince Satanael, just when we were striking, is unfathomable to me right now," Cjaron says.

"We were duped," Azosis-Azrael, again, registers his repulsive sentiments. "That Enemy knew what we were up to all along. And he waited until we had it all figured out. Then he outguessed us. Can't you see!"

"Now we have maimed the Ruler's Son forever. What we had planned kills even demons. We are just lucky he managed to duck a good portion of it. We would have mortally wounded him. Even now, he

will have that scar forever, even if he recovers quickly." Cjaron is speaking and cursing.

"We are all in big trouble," the guilty Apepiad says.

"Now, the Ruler's Son is mortally wounded—and a mortally wounded Satanael is very dangerous not only to the Enemy but to us all as well," Azosis-Azrael says.

"We will never ever come out of this horrible place. We are permanently doomed," Cjaron says.

But Satan, the so-called Ruler, is still nowhere to be found.

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It is within seconds after he has just switched off the TV and the lights. He has been reading his father's only book, *Within Fifteen Years: The Way of Life Is Better*, when he suddenly and unexpectedly falls into a deep sleep. The eyes of his spirit open, and right there before him, in front of his face, is a dark shadow.

In appearance, it is only a dark figure in the shape of a goat. It is silent as it induces sporadic fears in him. He immediately knows who the character is.

My father must have felt this a thousand times. How he lived through this can only be through the grace of God, he thinks.

Because of all the publicity and rumpus of his trial, Brother Ezekiel had decided to relocate his ministry from Sudbury, Ontario, to somewhere near Halifax in Nova Scotia. A citadel of gigantic proportions had been built there. His manse, a bungalow, is located on the same property. Kirl Junior's bedroom is located on the first floor of the bungalow. He whirls around on his futon, incessantly, while trying to delude the creature staring at him.

But right now it is not the time to think. His world right now has been hijacked. The terrible creature before him is not playing games. It advances closer and closer to him. Although it cannot touch him, it is enough simply to fill him with fear.

I know what it now feels like to be before the devil. It is an uncomfortable feeling. How my father lived through that experience must have been torturous. No one should see the

devil. It is enough simply to bear about him, he ponders even deeply.

But here and now, the creature continues to approach him. He decides not to fear. He will stand his ground.

“My father always said that if the devil comes to you, do everything to stand. Stand with a shield of faith, a breastplate of righteousness and a helmet of salvation,” he remembers.

Then Kirl Junior braces his mental faculties for action.

“In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to go,” he orders the approaching creature.

The creature is not moving. In fact, it now sharpens its claws and continues to approach him with some speed. He stands his ground. Everything in him wants him to run, or perhaps to shout in fear. No. Not today. Not now. He is going to stand his ground. He must confront the devil and conjure the most powerful name in the world. He had seen his father use this name as a weapon time after time.

Before his father died, as he said he would, after fifteen years of returning from the dead, Kirl Junior had seen him wake up in the middle of the night and start muttering something to God. At times, he would simply get up and start to say, “Lord, all I want is a good sleep. I am tired of Satan waking me up and troubling me. Please let Michael and his angels come and form a boundary around my house, my family, my friends, and this community. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

And then Brother Ezekiel would return to sleep and sleep soundly thereafter. Now Kirl Junior feels like doing the same. He feels like just praying the same prayer his father used to pray and then sleep soundly. He now understands his father better, even though he keeps wondering in his heart why he

never experienced these kinds of encounters even once when his father was still alive. But once his father died, he began to have these frequent encounters with extremely dark animals with blazing eyes and horns like those of goats.

“You have no power over me,” he prays, “because I dwell under the shadows of the Almighty. My name is written in the Book of Life, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is a strong tower, and here I am, and I am safe in him,” he supplicates while facing head-on the beast approaching him.

The creature does not utter even a single word. It continues—or rather tries—to come closer to him. But he keeps praying, pleading the blood of Jesus Christ, and commanding the evil presence to leave him and his household. The wrestling continues for a long while. And by this time, his faculties are completely with him. He knows he is lying on a couch in his living room. His kids are sleeping soundly in their respective bedrooms on the first floor.

The presence of the evil one has paralyzed his ability to talk with his mouth. He can speak, but only with his spirit. He can see, but only with his soul. He longs to return into his physical body so that he can simply utter a prayer and then continue to sleep. But the evil presence is not allowing him to do so.

He struggles for a little while, trying to free himself from the spell of the evil spirit before him, but he is failing. Then he realizes that he is trying to wrestle “in the flesh,” and he makes himself calm from within.

“Devil, go in the name of Jesus Christ. I am not afraid of you because you cannot touch me.” He finally feels his body coming back to join his spirit being, and all the senses come back to their real

selves.

He feels a sense of relief. He slips off the couch and goes on his knees. He kneels down and says another prayer to God. He checks on his family upstairs and tells the Lord that he is tired and does not want the presence of the Devil anywhere in his surroundings.

How did the Devil find its way to me in the first place? he ponders the question as he fizzles coaxingly into the duvet and then sleeps again.

“But, Daddy, you didn’t finish the story of Grandpa yesternight,” coaxes Alicia, the younger of Kirl Junior’s two children, Kirl Londe III being the older.

“I know, sweetheart. You fell asleep, and I went to bed,” responds Kirl Junior.

Then he realizes just how the life of his father has had an impact on him even seventeen years after his father’s second return to Heaven, or another snide fulguration with Hell. His children had asked him a very simple question: “Daddy, did Grandpa end up marrying both Grandma Ravinah and Grandma Caroline as the newspapers have been claiming?”

But they had fallen asleep before he could complete narrating the entire story.

Immediately after the children had fallen asleep, and just before that encounter with a dark shadow, he picked up one of his late father’s CDs and began to listen to it. The very last sermon his father preached was entitled, “Do the Scriptures Unify?”

Brother Ezekiel was invited to give a lecture at the Faculty of Religious Studies, Harvard University, where he presented what has come to be considered a classic, just within sixteen and a half years of its

delivery:

When I was invited to come and speak here, at Harvard, I asked the Lord, “What must I say, Lord?” And within my spirit, I conceived a sermon I shall now entitle, “Do the Scriptures Unify?”

The biggest difficulty I will have, I suppose, is to define scripture itself. Controversy has never ceased over the correct interpretation of scripture, and neither on its compilation. As some of you might have studied already, what are known as canonical or inspired scripture must be differentiated from the pseudepigraphal, or the uninspired books outside the Bible. These non-canonical books are considered to be false writings.

I now would like you to turn to the book of Zechariah, chapter 3, and we shall consider verses 1 and 2:

Then he showed me Josbua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebukes you, Satan! Indeed, the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebukes you!”

This same event is reported, albeit from a different viewpoint, by Jude. Jude is making an argument about the dignity of spiritual beings. First, Zachariah is making a point about Satan being the accuser of the brethren. And second, and as the crux of my presentation today, when confronted with the issue regarding the burial of the body of Moses, Prince Michael did not rebuke Satan but, rather, said, “Satan, the Lord

rebukes you.”

I take scriptural notice that you understand the importance of language in dealing with spiritual matters, and I will only add that it is vitally necessary to fight our good fight with love and dignity.

However, Jude does not quote Zachariah as we would think. He, rather, quotes from what has controversially been referred to as the Ascension of Moses (AOM). Just the mention of this text in my sermon should invoke thoughts of illusion in some of your minds: “Why?” you must be asking. And “Why must Brother Ezekiel quote or authenticate the quotation from a book not recognized under cannon law?”

Early church writers like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Didymus, and Jewish historians like Flavius Josephus have attempted to discuss the principle of Sola Scriptura, or as you prefer to call it, “The Bible Only for Doctrine,” or BOD.

A related question must be, “What is the Bible?” And I submit to you that the answer to that question has the propensity to settling the question of BOD forever. But as you know, we live in a world in which intellectual fervency prevails and all our assumptions must be placed to a strict test of the truth of their contents.

The non-canonical writings speak thus: “And He will cause you to approach to the heaven of the stars, in the place of their habitation. And you will look from on high and see your enemies in Gehenna. And you shall recognize them and rejoice, and you shall give thanks and confess thy Creator.” We should

value their efficacy. These statements are true, although they do not emanate from BOD.

Similarly, if we believe that “the lights of the heaven, the foundations of the earth have been made and approved by God and are under the signet ring of His right hand,” we must as well be ready to believe that God can and has spoken through us in diverse manners by the prophets and has spoken to us by His Son. Here, alluding to Hebrews 1:2, “By his Son,” should be correctly interpreted as, “By his sonness.”

Moreover, the idea of BOD vis-à-vis AOM must be seen in the light of the Genesis Serpent. The serpent is written about as having seduced Eve. However, in AOM, Prince Michael the archangel, when he was disputing with the devil concerning the body of Moses, says that the serpent, inspired by the devil, was the cause of the evasion of Adam and Eve.

Again, here we see how a small book, so-called a pseudepigraphal script sheds light on a subject that has been taken for granted. The order of heavenly beings and spiritual authorities here, in this so-called uninspired book, are aligned well. For should we fail to construe that it was not Peter that the Lord Jesus rebuked in Matthew 16:23 when he commanded Satan to get behind him, just as it might have been Leviathan who was the instrument of the Fall of Adam and Eve? Yet the canonized texts are plainly true. Either way, the Lord Jesus, in rebuking Peter, was also rebuking Satan, and in attributing the Fall to Satan, he was not wrong.

Coming back to our current exegesis, for the devil, according to the pseudepigraphal

text, wishing to deceive Prince Michael, resisted, and said, “The body is mine, since I am the master of matter.” And he heard from the archangel: “The Lord rebukes you—that is, the Lord of spirits and of all flesh.”

In the Byzantine collection known as the *Palaea Historica*, Samuel is mentioned: “And Samuel tried to bring his corpse down to the people so that they might make him a god, but Michael, the arch-captain by the order of God, came to take it and remove it, and Samuel resisted him, and they waged war. The arch-captain, therefore, became angry and rebuked him, saying, ‘The Lord rebuke you, devil.’ And thus, the adversary was defeated and fled, and the archangel Michael removed the corpse of Moses to where he was ordered by Christ our God, and no one saw the burial of Moses.”

Here, again, the details concerning the rebuke of Satan by God are divulged. Yes, here, too, we hear, like in the Gospels, that another one, so-called Samuel, was, like Peter, so used as Satan’s instrument for deception.

Citing the *Slavonic Life of Moses*, Bauckham, writes:

But at the end of the same year, in the twelfth month, on the seventh day, that is, in March, Moses the servant of God died and was buried on the fourth of the month September on a certain mountain by the arch-captain Michael. For the devil contended with the angel, and he would not permit his body to be buried, saying: Moses is a murderer; he slew a man in Egypt and hid him in the sand. Then Michael prayed to God and there was thunder and lightning and suddenly the devil disappeared; but Michael buried him with his own hands.

Here, what has been only briskly discussed in the canonized scripture finds a detailed exposé in the writings not known to be inspired scripts. Thus, Hilgenfeld lends his view: “It is said that Michael the archangel ministered over the burial of Moses. For the devil would not accept this, but rather bore forth an accusation on account of the murder of the Egyptian, since Moses was to blame for it, and thus would not leave room for him to get an honorable burial.”

For in that Hilgenfeld is not alone, Cramer, too, surmises, “When Moses died on the mountain, Michael is sent to change the place of the body. Then when the devil blasphemed against Moses and proclaimed him a murderer on account of his striking the Egyptian, the angel, not bearing the blasphemy against him, said toward the devil: God rebukes you.”

The consideration of pseudo-Jonathan Targum rendition of Deuteronomy 34:6. “He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is,” seems to confirm a Jewish tradition of Satan trying to get the body of Moses in order to tempt the Jews into idolatry. And so, Prince Michael buries Moses four miles from the site of his death.

Allow me now to advance my thesis, this time as regards the dissertation concerning prayer for the dead. Here, I will quote from the Second Book of Maccabees chapter 12 and verses 39 to 46:

And the day following Judas came with his company, to take away the bodies of them that were

slain, and to bury them with their kinsmen, in the sepulchers of their fathers. And they found under the coats of the slain some of the donaries of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbiddeth to the Jews: so that all plainly saw, that for this cause, they were slain. Then they all blessed the just judgment of the Lord, who had discovered the things that were hidden. And so, betaking themselves to prayers, they besought him, that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. But the most valiant Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves from sin, forasmuch as they saw before their eyes what had happened, because of the sins of those that were slain. And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection, (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,) and because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.

I refer to this passage for one reason, namely, to illustrate first that the resurrection of the Christ was herein foretold, not only in the canonized scripts but as well in one of the so-called uninspired books of the Bible. Here again, the wisdom of God is revealed. There is, however, and this is my second reason for quoting this passage, that concerning the dead, should we pray for them that their sins be forgiven, and by extension debunking the premise upon—as I shall elaborate later, time permitting—which those who gathered to select the books which hereto should be

considered holy texts based on their elections?

I submit to you that the wisdom of God is enormous in this regard. If the dead, therefore, be interceded for, as Maccabees seems to be suggesting, it pre-empts as we have come to conceive divine revelation the very premise upon which the doctrine of grace and repentance are based. However, given my own experience, and the intercessions I so received as I made passage from the land of the living into the Dorsal of Hell, to that extent the prayers of the saints were of enormous importance to my passage back. I should praise the wisdom of God here that as for those souls whose consummation into the eternal passage has not been completed, the prayers of the saints for them avail much, and yet not as much for the forgiveness of their sins as for expedience's sake.

Here then and bearing in mind the likely and potential misunderstandings and or misinterpretations of the Holy Scripture, it cannot be far from the truth that, peradventure, the intention of the author has been lost in translation. Suffice, however, to mention that for whatever reason, it is a hard doctrine to conclude that prayers for the forgiveness of the sins of the dead are efficacious. God only knows, and we should in all humility give him all the glory.

This brings me directly to the issue of canonicity. For *canon* is a word that comes from Greek and Hebrew words that literally means “a measuring rod.” Therefore, *canonicity* describes the standard that books had to meet to be recognized as Scripture. And here I use the capital *S* for *Scripture* to refer to the

compendium of the entire spectra of those books which are now recognized as Holy Scriptures.

It seems to me that the decision as to which books were inspired was a human process. Different schools of thoughts here are available. One such school postulates that the councils that picked these books did not determine which books were inspired. The other school hypothesizes that the councils simply recognized what God had already determined. In each case, it is still in order to suggest that the arm of man was involved at every juncture.

The Council of Jamnia (AD 90) officially recognized our 39 Old Testament books. Josephus, the Jewish historian (AD 95), indicated that the 39 books were recognized as authoritative. Then the Council of Athenasius (AD 367) and the Council of Carthage (AD 397) recognized the 27 books in our New Testament today as inspired. In the Babylonian Talmud, completed by about AD 550, we read, "Our Rabbis taught: Since the death of the last prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy-Spirit departed from Israel." This indicium forms the cornerstone upon which inspiration is pegged. Thus, Jamnia was especially remembered for the wisdom and piety of its rabbis. Another class of rabbinical activities at Jamnia dealt with binding decisions, whether of a judicial or legislative nature. So, for these rabbis, the choice from inspiration based on the assumption of Malachi or not was a divine mandate as it was a judicial decision. Today, therefore, what has been bequeathed to us as Holy Scripture might

as well be man-made decisions.

To answer that question, let me turn to the concept of apocrypha, or hidden books. This concept does not only lend itself to the uninspired texts recognized at Jamnia, but also to other such books considered part of the Holy Scripture. One work is explicitly charged with heresy, the book of Ecclesiastes. The third verse, for example, "What profit has a man in all his labor which he does under the sun?" was thought to deny the value of studying the Torah. This was reconciled by suggesting that man's profit from Torah will be given him "above the sun." Similarly, the writer's exhortation to a young man to, "Walk in the ways of your heart" (11:9b) seemed to violate God's command to follow His law rather than one's own desire as constructed in Numbers 15:39. These were brought into agreement by noting the context of Ecclesiastes 11:9c: "For all these things God will bring you into judgment."

Ecclesiastes is not alone. Several books, moreover, are charged with lesser or internal contradictions, namely Ezekiel and Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. In the case of Ezekiel, the contradiction is said to be with the Torah. Proverbs was claimed to be self-contradictory because of Proverbs 26:4–5: "Answer not a fool according to his folly lest you also be like him; Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." A third reason for rejecting a book is charged against Ecclesiastes is that it has only Solomon's wisdom rather than God's. It is significant that some Bible-believing Christians today say the same thing.

Of course, some of you are already muttering concerning another book.

There is an interruption from the audience.

Yes, I hear you. It is Song of Songs. But I will not dwell on it due to time constraints. Ruby R. Akiba comes out as the most passionate defender of canonicity. His reactions suggest the nature of the problem. “All the writings are holy,” he says. “And this is the holy of holies,” implying that some felt that Song of Songs was not so holy. Again, it is significant that even today, some Bible believers are embarrassed by this book, feeling that allegorical exegesis is necessary to justify its canonicity. Ruby R. Ishmael cites three instances of lenient rulings by Beth Shammai and rigorous rulings by Beth Hillel. The Book of Ecclesiastes does not defile the hands according to the opinion of Beth Shammai, but Beth Hillel says, it does.

In truth, that man, Hananiah, son of Hezekiah by name, is to be remembered for blessing; but for him, the Book of Ezekiel would have been hidden, for its words contradicted the Torah.

Among the oldest sources which give numbers for the books in the Old Testament, at least two different enumerations are found. A twenty-two-book count is given by Josephus, as well as by several church fathers such as Melito, Origen, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, Jerome, and Augustine, who seem to be reporting Jewish enumerations.

Josephus’s count was artificially reduced to twenty-two to match the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, as Bentzen further

suggests. From these sources, as well as from the statements in Josephus, Ezra and the Talmud regarding the cessation of prophecy about the time of Ezra and in view of the New Testament use of *Scripture*, as though it were a recognized body of material, it seems that there was a popular consensus on the books belonging to Scripture even before the end of the first century AD. This consensus did not extend to the question of how these books were to be ordered or counted, but it did seem to be combined with the belief that these books had been known publicly since the time of Ezra.

The Lord Jesus’s remark in Luke 24:44, where he refers to prophecies fulfilled in himself: “All the things written in the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms,” suggests the authority of the Old Testament to the Church. Christians continued to use the Septuagint (or Greek-translated Bible from Hebrew), for there was no assertion of a cessation of inspiration among Christians or Jewish Christians, unlike the Talmud, which considers Malachi to be the last prophet of Judaism. Michael Barber asserts that although Jerome was once suspicious of the apocrypha, he later viewed them as Scripture.

One purpose of the First Council of Nicaea—this was the first general council in the history of the church since the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem, the Apostolic Council having established the conditions upon which Gentiles could join the church—was to resolve disagreements arising from within the Church of Alexandria over the nature of the Son in his relationship to the Father. In particular,

whether the Son had been “begotten” by the Father from his personal being, or rather, created out of nothing, a characteristic shared with other creatures. Christ is the one true God in deity with the Father.

There is, for lack of time on my part, another issue so close to my heart, and to the heart of the Lord, I suppose, and this concerns what has, historically, been referred to as the Arian Controversy. Arius emphasized the supremacy and oneness of God, meaning that the Father’s divinity must be greater than the Son’s, that the Son had a beginning, that he shared neither the eternity nor the true divinity of the Father, but was, rather, the very first and the most perfect of God’s creatures. This, I will not deal with now but, if the Lord permits, at another time.

Let me end with what I began with—Purgatory. The Purgatory doctrine, as defined by the Early Church historians, is an intermediary state after physical death, in which those destined for heaven undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. Only those who die in the state of grace but have not in life reached a sufficient level of holiness can be in Purgatory, and therefore no one in Purgatory will remain forever in that state or go to Hell. The concept of Final Purification, or the Final Theosis, literally, to become more divine, more like God, or take upon a divine nature, in my view—and some of you passed notes for me to elaborate upon—doesn’t hold any water. I neither was party to it nor did I experience its efficiency. Serve, of course, for an attendant place known from the

underworld as the Purgatoria, but that, as I have detailed in my book, is not the same as Purgatory.

I am reading another note from one of the audience members here, and...yes, Hades. Of course, Hades. Allow me to borrow from Josephus’s Discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades. He defines Hades as a place in the world not regularly finished—a subterranean region wherein the light of this world does not shine, from which circumstance, that in this region the light does not shine, it cannot be, but there must be in it perpetual darkness. This region is allotted as a place of custody for souls, in which angels are appointed as guardians to them, who distribute to them temporary punishments, agreeable to every one’s behavior and manners. Josephus, thus, considers Hades as a lake of unquenchable fire prepared by God for a future date of judgment.

As for the nature of our resurrection, I will say that when clothed with their pure resurrected bodies, the just will no longer be subject to disease or misery. The unjust, in contrast, will receive their bodies unchanged, including their original diseases. Christ will exercise the righteous judgment of the Father toward all men. And finally, as concerning our state at the coming of Christ, here I should again resonate what the Bible says, that in whatsoever ways the Lord shall find us, in them shall he judge us entirely, for Christians, towards rewards, while for unbelievers, towards eternal separation.

A voice from the audience shouts, “Sir, what

would you say was the single most important lesson you learned in Hell?” There is a pause, then he speaks:

Grace, son, grace. No matter the gravity of our sins, our shortcomings, or our deliberations, God’s grace is sufficient. My story is one of absolute *grace*.

May the God of peace and *grace* bless and keep you all. Amen.

Kirl Junior shakes his head in agreement as he hits the remote-control button that would turn the CD player off. “Oh, how I wish his end would have been as clear as his message of *grace* has been!” Kirl Junior mutters to himself.

In life as in his death, his father’s life had been a mystery. He has been narrating the story to his two children for a seventh straight night. It is something he must now urgently do before they get corrupted by the media. Even after more than twenty years of his father’s passing away, the story has never died. In fact, just this morning, the headline in the *Kanata Star* read, “Kirl Londe, a.k.a. Brother Ezekiel, Fathered Four More Children with Ravinah, Never Left the SISC.” And a companion article in the *New Jerusalem*, a magazine Brother Ezekiel founded and edited by Kirl Junior, went at length to defend the ministry of Brother Ezekiel.

When I listen to his last sermon at Harvard, I can tell he still believed in the fundamentals of biblical truth. He didn’t seem to have been sidetracked to me. The message of grace is so simple that we tend to complicate it, Kirl Junior ponders.

Kirl Junior has been struggling to come to terms with events that led up to his father’s demise. Different versions are out there, and up to now,

even after serving in his father’s ministry for the past more than twelve years, he has never completely understood.

He fights the thought that his father’s alleged affair with his auntie, Lori, then the managing partner at Lori and Associates, could have been true. He had been with them to Hawaii one summer and saw what seemed like a blooming affair.

But both Mom and Auntie Caroline sanctioned it. They figured it was better to have his needs met by someone in the family than by an outsider. That would have wrecked the ministry. I know about the set of twins Auntie Lori bore. They are my brothers, kids she had with Dad.

Understandably, Kirl Junior does not want to tell his children, or he is hesitating in telling them the entire truth.

They are too young to comprehend, he thinks.

Brother Ezekiel died exactly after fifteen years according to the word of the Lord; his wife, Caroline, succeeded as one of the co-presidents of Brother Ezekiel Evangelistic Association (BEEA). Pastor Ezigbo, her copresident, briefly chaired the Evangelistic Committee before succumbing to pancreatic cancer from which he recovered, but he retired shortly after due to old age.

Caroline went on to becoming the most powerful woman in religion, growing BEEA to unprecedented heights. The association since Caroline brought not less than thirteen million souls to Christ, planted over one thousand churches, and built six universities and seventeen hospitals on three continents.

Despite all these pluses, the controversy surrounding Ezekiel’s death still haunts Kirl Junior, who is now the current president of BEEA.

One version of his father’s death speculates that he died while entertaining a mistress in a hotel.

Another version gambles that he died on the plane in the company of a prostitute, but the airliner quickly booked a room in the hotel and left his corpse there. Still, another version, which in recent days had garnered momentum, is that when he died, he left four children with Ravinah.

If any of these rumors meant anything at all, they didn't seem to bother Caroline. Kirl Junior recalls Caroline's tribute at his father's second funeral. It was one of the most powerful he had ever heard:

I fell in love with Kirl when I was his student at CalgaryU. Truthfully, I do not believe that I can define what I felt at the time. I just knew it was something that grownups feel for each other that lead them to want to live together forever. That is my conclusion with Kirl—I was going to live with him forever.

My heart was still untamed, unshaken...it was filled with excitement as Kirl appeared in my view. My overjoyed heart caused me to smile endlessly when he acknowledged my presence. I sort of got embarrassed when he caught me smiling back at him. Yes, I looked like a fool because Kirl caught me about and asked me what I was smiling. "At nothing," I said.

I began to scold myself. My anger never lasted long, though, because I only needed to think of him or hear his name for my heart to melt. Kirl became the answer to a lot of my situations. Whenever I was having a hard time, my diary would complain about the vicious attacks of my pens, groaning and moaning until I saluted the keeper of my secrets, "Yours truly, Mrs. Londe."

You would say, I had already declared myself his wife even before I knew where "all this" was leading to.

It seemed as though Kirl was my world, yes it did, and just like every girl knows, and yes, we know things before they happen. It is called intuition.

During vacations, when I left the university to be with my family, in Victoria BC, I would go a long while without seeing him. His absence haunted me, yes, even before he said a single word that he loved me or something like that.

So, his absence brought an indifference to me because I knew I would be without him for a while. Apart from that, I also worked in his office when the university was in session. How it started—that is a different story. I can only say that he had asked for volunteers to help out with shredding some important documents. Of course, I lifted up my hands. Before I realized, it was like looking at a totally different person—when he was alone, not teaching, in his office.

Okay, maybe thoughts of him consumed me a little bit...but we were good buddies, and my love for him did not interfere with our office-work relationship. Kirl had girlfriends, but it did not really matter to me, because when Kirl and I interacted, it was different. I respected his relationships and never thought of coming between them.

Actually, I did not allow those thoughts to consume me. I was raised better than that, even though sometimes I wish I were never born in the Fenner family. I was, you know, as they say, "an accident." But you would not think so even if you wanted to. Because my dad gave up everything, including his profession as a priest, just so he could be with me, with us, you see.

Still, it was in our family. I knew my dad wanted to downplay it, but it was there, right in front of us. My mother, especially, did not want it to be repeated; she hated everything that would suggest, even slightly, that a girl would not be hindered to choose whom to love. Although she scrutinized all my relationships with boys, there was one thing my mother did not tolerate. She did not want me to lose my virginity before

marriage.

My dad—he did not seem to care. All he said, occasionally was, “Wait for your time. Marry the right person. Marry the man whom you will love and be together for life.”

But I had a conscience...and it was well and alive! I was not allowed to date till I reached eighteen, though. My parents had their own reasons.

I had already vowed never to kiss a man, never to hold hands with a man before marriage because God did forbid it. It was the only gift I would give to my future husband. And definitely, I vowed to God that I would remain a virgin until marriage. But when I saw Kiri, my heart knew it. It warmed up to him, and I said, “Yes, I can break it for him.”

Kiri, yes—I was very specific in my prayers, for the Bible declared it, that if I asked, I would receive, if I did seek, I would find. To me, patience was a virtue, not a bother. Perhaps I was one of those girls you would call weird or naïve, but I enjoyed it. I loved the choices I made.

Kiri was and has always been an exceptional teacher—sensitive, attentive to details, and caring. I was not wrong he would take those qualities into our relationship. He did.

But Kiri had one weakness—a very nasty one. Marriage was sweet, very, very sweet until I found out. My heart was terribly broken. Kiri was not all that he said he was. He was a spy, and a terrible womanizer, for that matter.

My first reaction was, “Oh, my God, is God punishing my father by bringing upon me the very things that I feared the most?”

But the words of my father kept coming to me. Even when, lawfully, a divorce was warranted, I hesitated to file for one. Even after a blistering affair with poor Jason, I still found myself unwilling to commit to

another marriage. But I capitulated.

Heaven had other plans. One can say that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men. God had a plan for me and my Kiri. Yes, a plan bigger than ourselves.

This man, now lying here before his heavenly Father, is my hero, the most faithful husband I could have ever asked for. He would not so far as watch a movie, saying, “What can the world teach me?” He confessed even for forgetting to say, “Thanks” for anything you did for him.

This man, my sweet Kiri, Heaven did wonders to him. He would not so much as gaze upon my nakedness even when I was his wife. He noted, “Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It’s not only for sex.”

Return in peace, my Kiri. Return to your Father. We shall meet soon.

Kiri Junior firmly squeezes his eyes. He pours himself a cup of dark coffee without sugar, exactly the way his father made it. As he imbibes it hot and fusing, he begins to contemplate. This time his thoughts race energetically toward his mother.

I know one woman Dad didn’t leave in his life was my mother. Although she finally married Jason, she was equally in love with my Dad all her life. She didn’t hide that truth. But Jason could not father a child with my mother, and I bear Jason, my mother Ravinah, and my Auntie Lori agreed that Dad instead should have children for Jason and my mother through Auntie Lori. It’s complicated! Kiri thumps himself on the couch and ponders hard.

But still other rumors continue to flood Kiri Junior’s e-mails and office. Concerning Jason, there is another version of the rumor, which suggests that it was Jason himself who asked Brother Ezekiel to father a child with Ravinah. Another version says it was Ravinah who wanted another child with Brother

Ezekiel because she never stopped loving him to his death.

At least out of all this confusion, there is something constant. Whatsoever happened, only God knows. Truth is, God called him back, exactly after fifteen years as he told us, Kirl smiles and closes his eyes and, looking forward to the next evening when he would continue narrating his father's story to his children. He also falls asleep.

“No, he didn't. Your grandpa did not marry both Grandma Ravinah and Grandma Caroline as the newspapers have been saying,” recounts Kirl Junior to his two children, Alicia and Kirl Londe III.

But it is a half-hearted response the two children have been looking for. Knowing how their father should have answered, the kids look at each other and smother a frown.

“Why, you and you and you,” Kirl Junior points a lame hook at both of his kids and explodes into a delirious laughter while tickling them. They laugh out loud and then drop into a deafening silence. No one is talking, and no one is looking at another.

“Well, when you grow older, I will explain, I promise,” Kirl Junior assures his two children.

“But the media, Daddy, and at school?” Kirl Londe III charges.

“I know, Spiderman, I know,” Kirl Junior, calling his son by his nickname. He coaxes his son into the blanket.

“How old are you, children?” Kirl Junior asks them.

“What...Daddy, don't tell me you don't know when we were born,” challenges his daughter Alicia.

“I just need your answer to my question, please?”

Kirl Junior preps them.

“Okay. Okay,” begins Kirl Londe III. “I am ten and a half.”

“I am eight. What then?” Alicia wants to know.

“Here is my promise: when Spiderman turns sixteen, I will tell you both everything, promise?”

“Promise!” the two children demand in unison.

Then Kirl Junior kisses the kids good night and retires to bed. He has been trying hard not to tell the lads the whole truth. It has, however, been pressing hard upon him. How can't he tell them things he knows they would end up benefiting from? What if it hurts them, bearing in mind the gravitas of the oath? Yes, the oath. It has been a necessary evil, but it must be told to somebody—just like his father told it to him.

In fact, it is the anchor of their ministry and the source of all the multimillion outreach programs BEEA has been engaged in. Without it, with poor handling of it, things could go awry. The success, and even the longevity of the work itself, depend on it, to some extent.

But Kirl Junior is himself doubting many things. He knows it works, he knows the oath brings in resources, but can he believe everything his father had been telling him?

This is not right. How can I doubt what has blessed so many people across the globe? Did Dad even know some of the things he was involved in? I know it is foolishness to even question, but I am human, am I not? Kirl Junior ponders.

“I now understand, Dad. Thank you for waiting. How could I have kept such a complicated matter to myself at a tender age?” Kirl Londe III praises his father.

Everyone brought him a gift. It has been one of the biggest birthday parties of recent past in the family. And they have done it for a good reason: His father is one of the most famous televangelists. Through BEEA, millions of people have been helped. So, when they announced on TV that Kirl Londe III was turning sixteen and that a big birthday party had been planned, many people turned up with gifts, and as for those who could not come because of distance or some other reasons, the office was busy receiving gifts.

But Kirl Londe III was not impressed. He had managed to put up an excellent front, but of all the gifts he wanted for his sixteenth birthday, one could not make him forget about the one ultimate gift he was expecting from his father. Kirl Junior had promised to explain the mystery surrounding his grandfather. Now the time is here. He must hear what his dad has been hiding from him.

“Dad...,” he calls to his father.

“Yes, Bitter Sixteen,” Kirl Junior mocks.

“Are you forgetting something you promised me and Alicia?” Kirl Londe III asks.

And as though he does not want to hear further anything about it, the father said to the son who has just turned sixteen, “No!”

“So...” Alicia chimes in, descending down the stairs that lead directly into the basement of the bungalow.

The family has found it a tradition to discuss important issues in the basement, which they have turned into a studio. It is here where the children learned for the first time what took their mother, Extopia Burlington, away from them when they were very young. She died while giving birth to Alicia. Kirl Junior, who had thought of it as a curse for his mother’s sins, vowed never to remarry, and

had raised his two children as a dedicated single parent.

But today, it is not about their late mother or their other long-dead relatives. Each year, around August, they hold a memorial to Grandpa Brother Ezekiel, Grandma Caroline, Grandma Ravinah, Grandpa Jason, and Grandma Lori. During the memorial service, they have always made a prayer of remembrance for Father Fenner, whom they invoke as having never ceased praying for them in Paradise, in the Solace of Abraham. They also remember Great-Grandparents John and Justitia, as well as Great-Grandma Julia. It has always been an emotional service.

And it was while they were at this year’s memorial that Kirl Junior decided that, other than fulfilling his promise to his children, he had the obligation to pass on the touch that he had inherited from his father. The burden has always fallen on him being the only legitimate son born to Ravinah.

Caroline had conceived a child with Brother Ezekiel but had unfortunately miscarried. She had been advised by the doctors not to conceive again. She died childless. As for the other four children fathered by Brother Ezekiel with Lori, a well-kept secret has attributed Lori’s children to a man they all simply called Penard. No one knows whether he was simply paid or whatever happened for him to have claimed paternity to the twins and to have taken care of them until they were old enough to look after themselves. No one even knew where he lived or how old he was. The twins do not remember much about him. He came and left frequently but never once did they see his face, and yet they knew him so well and received many gifts and love from him.

Penard himself had never told the secret to anyone else until seven years ago, when he allegedly

passed away. It is believed that before he died, he called Kirl Junior and told him everything that happened.

Today, too, Kirl Junior must tell his children the truth.

How long can a man keep all these secrets and still promulgate God's Word? he has been thinking to himself.

“Everything you have heard is the truth, or may be some version of the truth,” Kirl Junior begins, “except for one detail.”

“What is that detail?” asks Alicia.

“Well, in order not to embarrass themselves, the SISC asked my father and my mother to withdraw the claim, and they would be paid for doing so,” Kirl Junior says.

“But if I have read well, it was Grandma Ravinah who had sued Grandpa, wasn't she?” asks Kirl Londe III.

“True. Though young, I do remember the altercations then, and sort of, I grew up with and around those issues,” the father reminds his two children. And then he pauses.

After what seems like a long spell, and after clearing his throat, Kirl Junior starts to retell the story:

“No one really knows what happened. Even Dad didn't know at first; all the claims and legal battles simply came to an end. My mother, Auntie Caroline, and Jason all just gave up, and Dad started to build his work.

“Dad's health had a meteorite improvement, his libido had returned, and he continued his recovery to the extent that he became stronger than before

the accident. He preached the Word of God so powerfully that within a short space of time, he had a growing following.

“But also remember that he was once a former SISC agent. This did not go well with the secret agency. It was a blessing in disguise, though...”

“What was it—I mean, the blessing in disguise thing?” Kirl Londe III interrupts.

“The fact that Dad's ministry was growing, and he was becoming stronger and stronger, and—”

“The fact that he was once one of them, isn't that so, Dad?” Alicia completes for his dad.

“How did you know that sweetheart?” Kirl Junior is so excited.

But before she can answer him, Kirl Junior continues to build upon his story. He tells the children that before the accident, his father had built a fighting squad, an elite squad that he had personally trained. This squad was built at the high expense of the taxpayers' dollar. It was trained in the use of special weapons they termed S.W.A.T., or Special Weapons and Techniques. The idea was not new; the Americans had been using the S.W.A.T. techniques for a long time, but only in combat. But it was the new invention his father brought to the fore that won him the nickname “The Tiger.”

Just like the tiger uses both its speed and camouflage to attack and defend itself, his father had brought up the idea of “lightning speed and accuracy” to the spy club. He created an attack and defensive machine that, since his leadership, had been able to diffuse tensions and provide intelligence to the spy syndicate. It had, however, suffered enormous inefficiencies during his long illness and his subsequent *demise* or retirement from the agency. The agency had hoped that his father would either die or severely lose his memory

because of the events that had happened. Once he came back from *death*, there were additional problems. In the House of Commons, and in the general interest of the nation, a decision to withdraw all the court cases surrounding his father was made. All the parties to the case were summoned before the House Committee on National Defence and Security (HCNDS). It was there that the oath was made and signed.

“So, who attended—I meant the HCNDS?” Alicia inquires.

“I don’t know, but it was after this meeting that Dad was also asked to help his nation one more time. He was begged to help revamp the S.W.A.T. team that had broken apart due to his absence, and to carry out a clandestine operation in the Kremlin,” Kirl Junior explains.

“What did the operation involve?” asks Kirl Londe III.

“I have no idea, son,” a patient father answers his son.

“Did it succeed, Dad?” Alicia chimes in.

“They said that it succeeded, and even worked better than before Dad was incapacitated. The story doesn’t end there, though.” Kirl Junior takes a long breath.

“What happened?” Alicia, again, wants to know.

“Well, Dad came up with a plan. He refused to continue to help them without consideration. He devised a genius plan.” Kirl Junior then looks intently upon the children from Kirl Londe III to Alicia and again to Kirl Londe III.

The children demand for him to continue the story.

“He requested that it be put in writing that in exchange for his help with the secret agency, the SISC would fund his ministry for a century, paying

all its bills and programs in two installments. First installment would last for twenty-five years, and this would be paid monthly. The second installment would be a lump sum to cover the remaining seventy-five years.”

“You mean that all your bills and this industry is funded by the government?” asks Alicia.

“Yes, sweetheart.”

“But if they do that, why do they always write bad stuff about us?” asks Kirl Londe III.

“Well, the government, technically, doesn’t write anything sinister about BEEA. It startles everyone that despite bad publicity, I mean, all that Dad did, like siring children without Auntie Caroline—it doesn’t diminish the influence of this ministry.”

“Did Grandpa continue to work for them?” asks Kirl Londe III.

“Yes, he did, but on some sort of an on-call basis, and only to provide special instructions. He still traveled a lot, but this time as an evangelist, or in disguise as one. It’s complicated.”

“There, right there. So, you’re telling me, or us, that Grandpa didn’t preach in the name of the Lord but of the government?” Kirl Londe III inquires.

“Yes and no. As I said, it’s complicated. You see, as a preacher, no one would think of him as a government spy. And when he showed up as a government spy, no one would think of him as a messenger of God. In this way, he continued to glorify God and also serve his nation.”

“But...I am still thinking,” begins Alicia. “How about the oath, what makes it authentic?”

“And just when you’re on that, does it say who and what happens to it after the *death* of Grandpa?” Kirl Londe III asks.

“The oath was endorsed by both the Prime Minister and the Governor General. Yes, it

bequeaths the benefit to all the heirs and offspring of Brother Ezekiel, my father. At the time, though, it only recognized me as the legitimate heir, together with my offspring. There is a clause in there that forbade Dad from having more children in order not to jeopardize the mission.”

“Why did it forbid him to have any more children?” Alicia is concerned.

“I guess—should I answer her, Dad?” Kirl Londe III asks his father.

“Please go ahead, Spiderman.”

“I guess it is to prevent disputes that come with inheritance, especially from siblings, isn’t that so, Dad?”

“I should guess so. And does that answer the question about the twins?” Kirl Junior looks at his children, offering them a clue.

“Oh, yes, I see it. Was it the reason why Dad and Auntie Lori had to use a fictitious person named Penard, to hide the fact that Grandpa had sired other children, and that would have compromised the oath?” Kirl Londe III cracks the conundrum.

“Yes, very true and spot-on.”

“But didn’t the government find out, given that they have resources to know just about everything?” Alicia inquires.

“Yes, the agency found out even before your Grandpa died. But fortunately, Dad had played another of his tricks.”

“Tell us, what did Grandpa do?” the children ask, almost at the same time.

“Dad had the twins adopted by a man named Penard before they were born. Each time he learned of the conception; he made sure the children were adopted in the womb. That way—”

Kirl Londe III smiles and dares not mind interrupting his father: “He was a genius, he was.

That way, prior to their birth, the children would not be considered born, and so they were, technically, not his children.”

“Yes, again spot-on, Spiderman.”

“But what about Penard—what did he want in return for his services, Dad?” asks Alicia.

“Well, there was no Penard. Penard was actually Dad himself.” Kirl Junior pauses.

“Wait a minute, you’re kidding me.” Kirl Londe III jumps to his feet, grabs a bottle of orange juice, and offers a similar bottle to his sister. After they have had a sip, Alicia probes her father further. She wants to know how her grandpa did it.

“Again, Dad used the loophole. While the courts declared a mistrial and the government, for national interest, discontinued the claims, the question of whether Dad was two people or one person—since medical records indicated that Kirk J. Londe had died, and upon his coming back to life had been christened Brother Ezekiel—was never answered. Dad was both Kirl J. Londe and Brother Ezekiel. The official oath has the name of Brother Ezekiel, and the official adoption papers have—”

“The name of Kirl J. L. Londe,” interrupts Alicia.

“Hmm, not really, sweetheart. Dad decided to use the name *Penard*, also known as *Kirl J. Brother Ezekiel Londe*. Dad figured out that—”

“I get it. That if ever there was any doubts which person it was, it would still come to the same person—him, isn’t that so.” Kirl Londe III is trying to make sense of his father’s story.

“And also, should the courts later determine that Grandpa was, in fact, dead, then Kirl J. Londe will lose but Brother Ezekiel will win, isn’t that true?” Alicia says, breaking the code.

“Children, that is exactly what it is. You modern kids are very smart. It took me years to figure it out,

but you, only minutes,” the father praises his children for their brilliance.

“But, Dad, I am still confused: Did Grandpa preach for the government or for God? And wasn’t it a conflict of interest if he did for both?” Kirl Londe III probes his father further.

“What do you say, Alicia?” the father deflects the question to the daughter.

“No, I don’t think it is conflict of interest. Grandpa just had double advantage. He could both benefit from the government coffers and use the resources to further the purposes of God. I think Grandpa was a genius.”

“And not only that,” Kirl Junior jumps in, “Dad had access to Satanic organizations across the country. He managed to know and anticipate what Satan was up to. Many times, he didn’t even need God’s revelation; he simply tailored his sermon toward breaking the back of the enemy. I remember one summer when Dad preached a message entitled ‘Let *Tazan* Go!’ and the very next morning, our citadel was broken into. There was graffiti all over the walls with all types of Satanic symbols. One read, ‘Whatever you do, Ezekiel, don’t tamper with the Ruler.’ Dad told me later on that *Tazan* was a misnomer for Satan. The Rork Nite *Terbanaclar* had invented it to divert the attention of the public as they were planning to bring Satan’s presence into the school boards. They intended to introduce free breakfast, with a snack they called *Tazan*. The program was canceled after Dad preached that sermon on TV.”

“But, Dad, I am beginning to get cuckoo upstairs. Who is the Penard you said you was buried seven years ago?” Alicia asks.

“Well, who did I say Penard was?” Kirl Junior fires back at his daughter, teasing her with the

question, answering a question with another question.

“Of course, you said that it was Grandpa, and that’s where the confusion comes in. If Grandpa has been dead for thirty-plus years since the oath, who died, then, seven years ago?” Kirl Londe III asks, at the same time answering the question for his sister.

“You have asked and estimated how many years since your Grandpa signed the oath?” asks Kirl Junior.

“Thirty-two years, to be exactly,” answers Alicia.

“And how long has Penard been dead?”

“Seven years. All right, I see it. It was exactly twenty-five years, and I guess the beginning of the second installment?” Kirl Londe III says, trying to make sense out of the exchange.

“I see it. Brilliant, isn’t it? I guess, Dad, you can now cash in on the remaining 75 percent since seven years ago?” Alicia teases her father.

“We have, and I have more news for you. Where we buried *Penard*—that is where your grandpa is buried, not where it says Kirl J. L. Londe. We kept that burial place empty for me when I finally join them into glory. Penard existed until the twenty-fifth anniversary of the oath in order not to breach its terms. Now the two sets of twins have been added to the will when Dad adopted them posthumously. They share into this work up to twenty percent. I own fifty percent, and the remaining thirty percent goes to our ministry. You, Kirl Londe III, are my successors, and your sister with your children and their children. Dad planned it that way so that his vision, mission, and ministry should not be wasted.”

As Kirl Junior makes that disclosure, the two children are dumbfounded with the sequence of events. They cannot comprehend how the mind of their grandpa worked, but they are glad they share

in his genes. They have now been presented with a responsibility secured through human ingenuity and divine intervention, and they must pay it forward as their grandpa envisioned it.

“And, Dad, do we stand a chance—I mean, can we fulfill what Grandpa desired?” Kirl Londe III asks.

“Well, children, I do have one last surprise for you,” Kirl Junior answers.

“What is it now, Dad?” asks Alicia.

“Another surprise, what can that be, Dad?” Kirl Londe III begs.

“There have been no records indicating that your Grandpa died. Since his first so-called death remained unsolved, and the one we have buried is still named Kirl J. Londe, Brother Ezekiel still remains. And the oath with Brother Ezekiel and the instructor position in the SISC is still in the name of Brother Ezekiel. The government concluded last year that the oath has no end since, and just last month we received a letter from the SISC that since Brother Ezekiel still exists as far as they are concerned, the instructor position will be passed on from one of Brother Ezekiel’s progeny alive at any point in time. I will be suggesting your name, Spiderman,” Kirl Junior explains.

“Me, how possible is it for me to fit into his two big shoes?” Kirl Londe III expresses concern.

“Oh, my God, Grandpa was out of this world. He was a pure genius!” exclaims Alicia.

Kirl Junior hugs his two children, kisses them on their forehead, and says, “No, Alicia, I tend to see it another way. I see the *Master’s* grand secret. In principle, your Grandpa still lives. He’s right here.”

Epilogue

It is 4:32 a.m. and Kirl Junior is still awake. An image shows up on his WhatsApp mobile. There is an old man holding a young child of about four to five years old. Besides the image, there is a kiss emoji.

“Who is this?” Kirl Junior asks.

As Kirl Junior scrolls down his iPhone, he realizes that he is seeing the same face he had seen thirty years ago. He jumps off the bed and rushes into his en-suite bathroom. After clearing the glare in his eyes, he continues to study the photo of an old man holding a young child on a small boat cruise on a lake.

“This is me, except it is a girl,” Kirl Junior says, talking to himself – pointing to the photo of a young girl on his phone.

There is a sound popping up on his mobile. This time there is a small message.

“Luv, Lukosha, ‘Pap Luk’ as they call me here,” it reads.

“Am I dreaming?” Kirl Junior asks.

Then there is another text message. And as he scrolls down further, he sees what is written there:

“HRU, son. BTW hv bn here in my ancestral bakyard mng an ORPHAN. De tw’n’s call’d Siavonga – Zed; JSYK. 2 Spiderman and Lav-cia, XOXO.”

“Dad is in Zed!” Kirl Junior screams.

Where is Zed? Kirl Junior thinks.

And after searching “Zed” on Google, he exclaims even louder, “He is alive; Dad is in Zambia, Africa!”

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