

CHRONICLES OF THE  
COSMIC TIMEJAUNT

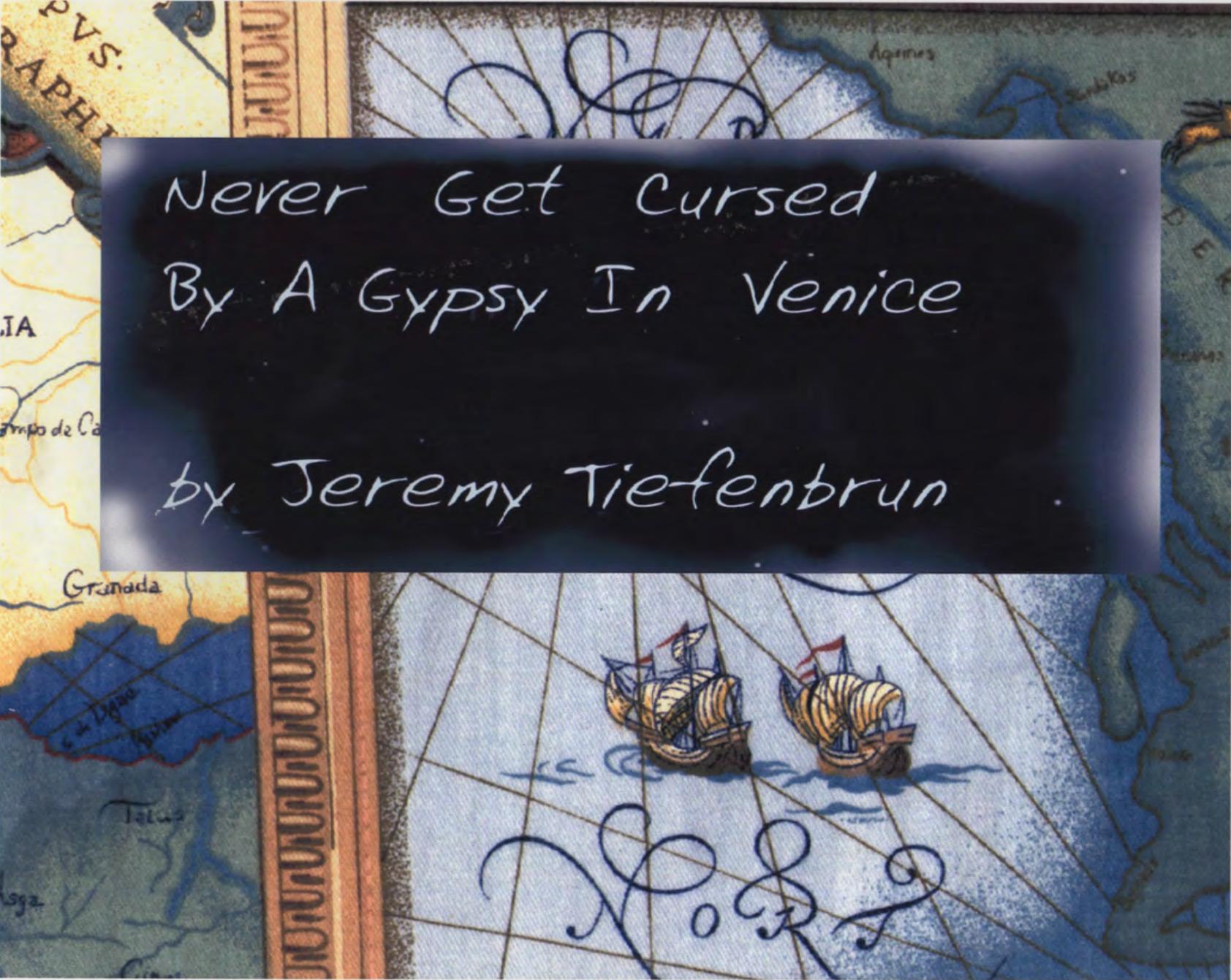
By Evan Rallasphire

# Chronicles of The Cosmic TimeJaunt

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The background is a historical map with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The map is divided into sections by a vertical line. On the left side, there are labels like 'PVS. GRAPHI', 'IA', 'ampo de Ca', 'Granada', 'Telus', and 'sga'. On the right side, there are labels like 'Aquinas' and 'Sambles'. In the center, there are two sailing ships with red sails on a blue sea. Below the ships, there is a decorative flourish. The text is written in a white, cursive font on a dark, semi-transparent rectangular background.

Never Get Cursed  
By A Gypsy In Venice  
by Jeremy Tiefenbrun





AUTOSTRADA  
1.5KM →

SOTTO PASSAGGIO



There's an old saying, "What's the use of travelling when we can't travel away from ourselves!" My three friends and I were typical American tourists, arrogant and rude, touring Italy and drinking all the time. I would soon see the error of our ways by the means of vengeful black magic. Our first stop in Italy was Florence, where we bought leather and drank until morning.

In Florence we visited the Duomo, an old Renaissance church. After lunch in a bar we passed over an old bridge called Ponte Vecchio, where the stores are built with terraces that overlook the river. One of Florence's museums had a sculpture that dated back to the Renaissance. I forgot the name of it or who made it. I guess it was just one of those old Renaissance things.







After Florence we took a train to northern Italy to go hiking. It was rural and very nice. Afterwards, we decided to go to Amsterdam on the night train. The next three days in Amsterdam are a blur to me; I can't guess why. My friends spent all their cash on illegal substances. They had to wire for money in order to go home. I still had plenty of money for two weeks. I took a train to Venice...alone.

Someone once said Venice was the most beautiful city in the world, a city of love, without cars. The canals stream through the city and the roads wind like a maze.

The Venice I discovered was overcrowded and expensive! Did you know it cost two bucks for a Coke? I mean, come on! A man has to drink, right? The cheapest beverage was mineral water with gas! And Mcdonalds! How hard is it to make a Quarter Pounder! Don't ask me how it tasted because I was already in the bathroom before I finished swallowing. Italian food is okay...but that's all there is to eat. By nightfall I got depressed, so I decided to go to the bar and get drunk!

ASERA  
ALL'OPERA  
14

V. SAN MARCO  
←





I got really hammered that night at the bar. I didn't know what I was saying. I was alone for the first time in my life, and it blew chunks. I had to blame someone...something, so I picked Italy. I kept ranting on about the crazy schedules that stores have in Italy. "In America you get what you want when you want it," I shouted. "None of this 'close at noon, reopen at three, close up at five B.S.' If someone wants to run a store, keep it open! Don't confuse your customers with crazy schedules. Forget family traditions...it's bad for business. And could someone tell me why there is just Italian food here? What about variety? Don't you people get bored?"

My loudness was disturbing a family behind me. One of their sons started to get up in order to reason with me.



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The young man approached me from behind. I couldn't see him, but I felt his presence. I don't like strangers invading my territorial bubble, especially if their intentions are not so friendly. My attitude is act first, think later. So I crashed a bottle on his head. He didn't even have a chance to speak. You can guess what happened next.





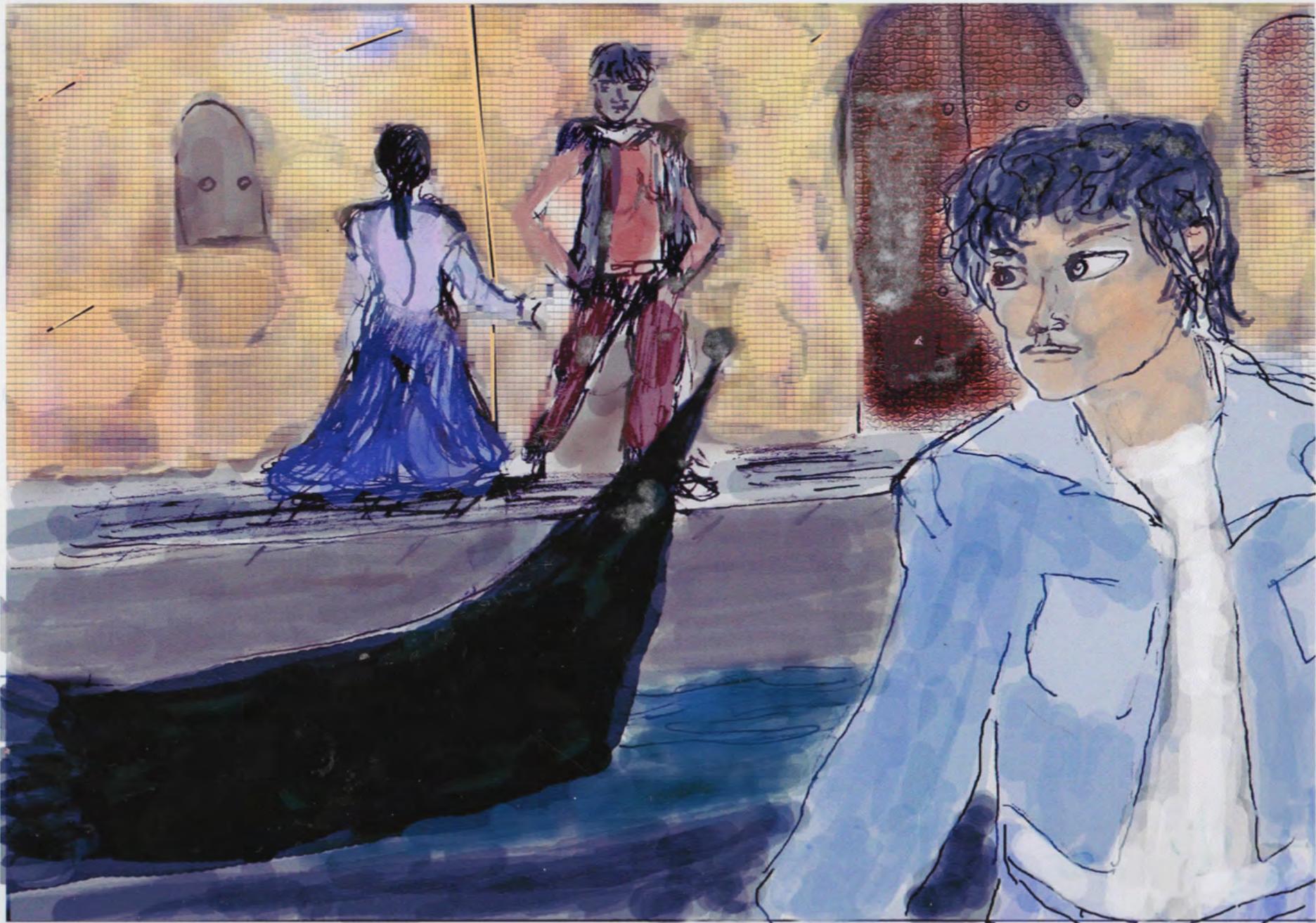


When I woke up I had the worst hangover imaginable. I walked the streets for days, starving, looking for food. I must have walked for miles the night before because this part of Venice looked completely different to me now. I knew enough Italian to get by. But here the language was older. People were dressed differently, wearing clothes seen only on the theatre arts tv hour! I tried to rub my eyes but the dream wouldn't go away. I was stuck here, living like a beggar in what seemed to be another time. As the days passed I discovered that it was another time...1412 to be precise. And it was here that I was beginning to understand a new form of hell. Nothing made sense to me anymore. I would have to adapt to survive, which wasn't easy for a guy who was used to having things given to him on a silver platter.



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I finally understood what had happened to me at the bar the night of the fight. That young man laid a curse on me, and the only people capable of laying curses are gypsies, not Venetians. His family probably settled here a long time ago. But they were so immersed in Italian culture that they must have gotten offended anyway. His message made sense to me now. The gypsy said, "Ignorant American, go learn a lesson in culture. Do you have the capacity? No one can teach you this lesson, only an experience in time." And now, because I offended his family, I was sent to the fifteenth century with no chance of ever coming home.



As I walked the streets of old Venice, suffering and starving, I became familiar with all the alleys and secret places. I was a foreign bum, lower than filth. No one would talk to me, and I needed help. I was desperate. Maybe I could do something to better my situation. One day I was looking for food when I witnessed a drunken Venetian fall off his boat. He started to drown in the canal. No one would give him a hand because no one around knew how to swim. How strange, a city on water and no one can swim! In America I worked as a lifeguard on Jones Beach during the summer. So I jumped in and gave him a hand myself.





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The Venetian I saved wasn't breathing, so I gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. People were confused and then shocked when he spat out dirty canal water. When they asked where I learned to perform such a miracle, I explained that medicine in my land was advanced. Doctors acquired such understanding of the human body that an ordinary citizen could learn to save a person with a mere touch. "Where is this land? Why do we not know of it?" they asked. I told them that I lived on an island undiscovered by seafarers. I was fishing and got lost in a storm one day. When I woke up, I was in Venice. "And what is the name of this island of yours?" they asked.



I told them "Isola Lungo" or in English "Long Island" because my island was very long. A man laughed. Everyone laughed. Then one of them came forward and shook my hand. "You are a very funny people," he said. "I like that. My name is Giancarlo. The drunkard you just saved is my brother Paulo. Come, we will get you clean clothes, food, and you shall live in my home as a brother, until you find a place of your own." "I need a job before I can do that," I said. "Well then, you shall work for me in my ship yard, of course! Come people, let us rejoice with the man from Long Island!" And just like that I joined the merchant class.



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Giancarlo was one of the richest men in Venice. His house was an incredible mansion once owned by an Austrian diplomat. Giancarlo owned The Venetian Shipbuilders School or scuole, a community of carpenters who constructed ships for the Royal Navy and all of Europe. I had little experience as a carpenter, but Giancarlo took pity on me. I learned fast and became a good worker, which made him happy. As time passed we became very good friends. He even invited me to his own private masquerade on the night of Mardi Gras, a festival which lasted for many months in fifteenth century Venice. Modern Venice continues the tradition for only one day. Giancarlo's masquerade was unimaginable. He even had an orchestra in the upper level. Partners were chosen randomly in an unusual courting dance. Once the pairs were chosen, we were not permitted to speak until after the formal dance was over. Afterward, the unmasking ritual commenced.





That night at Giancarlo's masquerade, I met the girl of my dreams, Gabriella Antonetta. She was the daughter of a lacemaker in Burano. Their products were intricate, expensive and world famous. Without realizing it, I had stepped into a new world of Italian culture. We started to take walks in Giancarlo's gardens. We took nightly strolls across the canals. She showed me places only known by Venetians. I found it inspiring that Gabriella's charming intelligence mixed so naturally with her wealth. Her family actually bought books for the pleasure of reading, not for the appearance of literacy. Gabi was taught everything from Plautus to Plato and explained it to me without once making me feel inferior. But I felt empty anyway...because it became apparent that the world I used to live in had suppressed me.

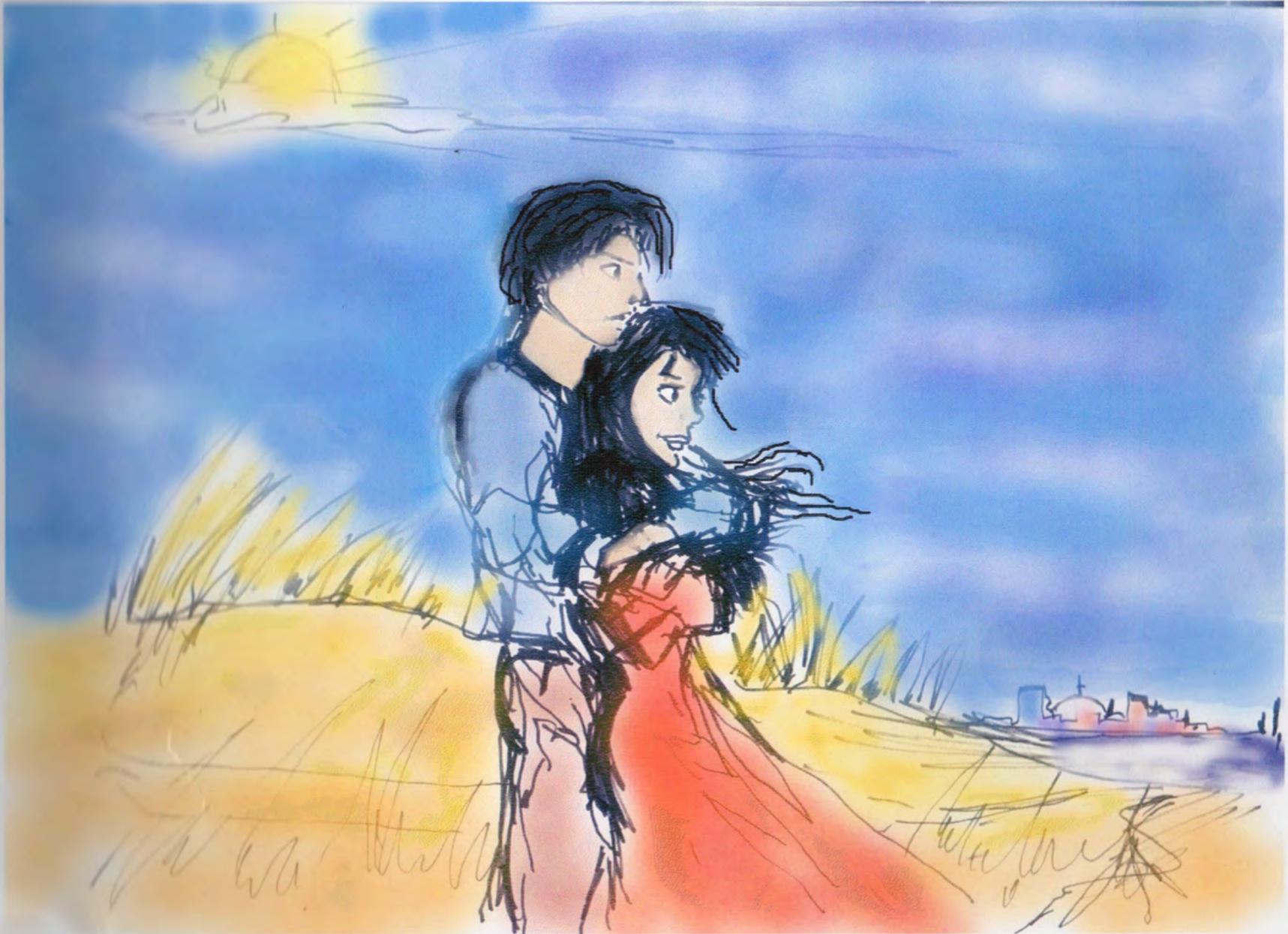




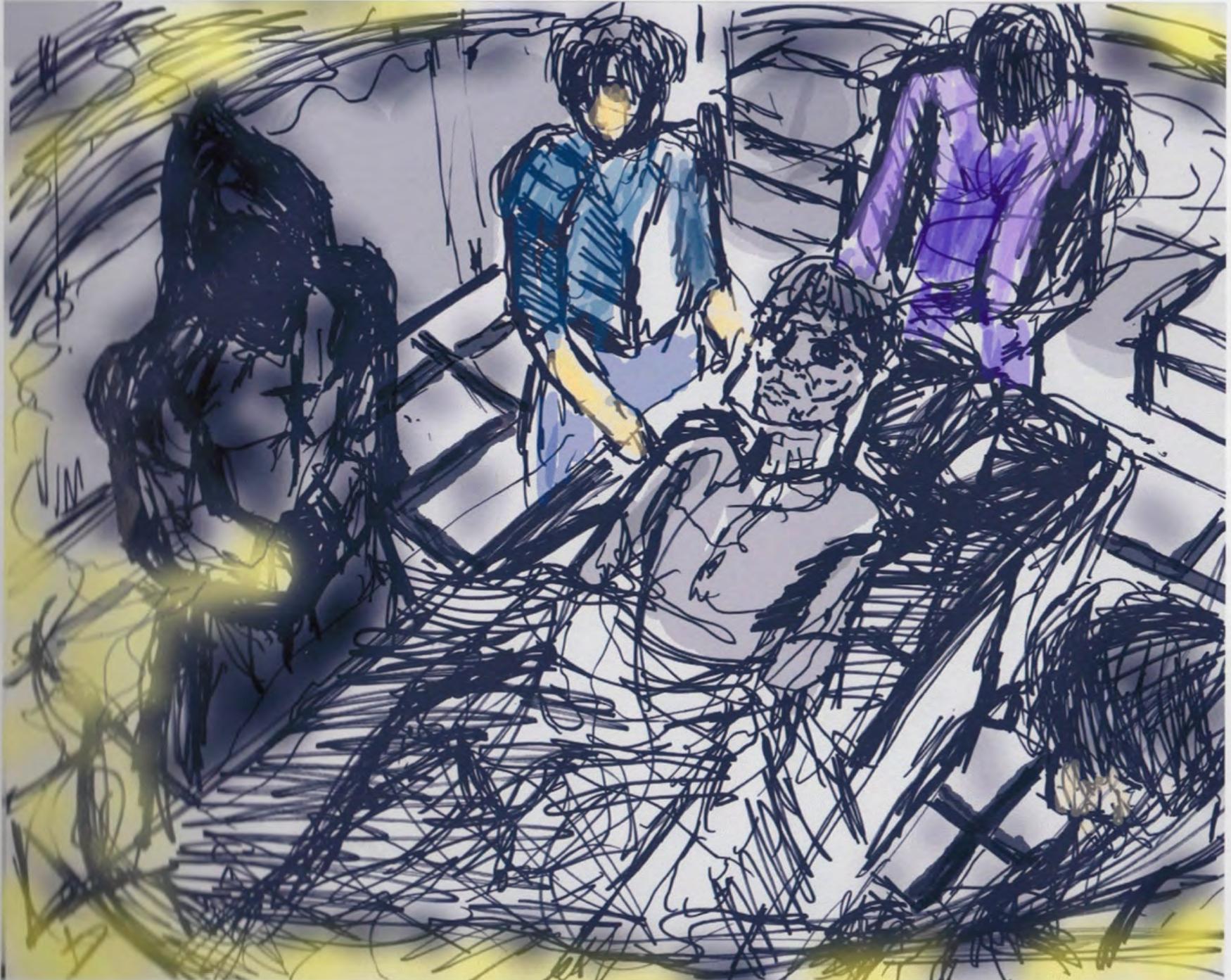
One night Gabriella asked me about my home. I told her, "Where I come from people are highly advanced, but they don't value life in the same way. They never stop to look at the sunset like you do here. Every person in Venice is respected for his individuality. Where I come from, young people suppress intelligence because they are more concerned with 'fitting in' than anything else. Individuality makes people nervous on Long Island," I said, "and because of that I never felt inclined to appreciate anything. I know nothing except how to fish and play basketball." I explained how the game worked and she became fascinated. "I know nothing at all," I said. "Well, now you know a little something about Venice, and also about me." With a smile Gabriella kissed me, and at that moment I knew I'd be spending the rest of my life with her.



Gabriella and I married the following year. With the money I made in Giancarlo's business, and with Gabi's trade as a lacemaker, we were able to afford a home in Venice as well as a small cabin in the mountains near Positano. We spent our summers by the sea watching the city from afar. Those were glorious days together. Eventually, we had three devoted sons. Where I come from, a happy family is close to impossible, but for some reason my sons identified with me and rebelled rarely.







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Time passed, as time does, and my wife passed away at age forty five. For people of today this seems very young, but in the fifteenth century women rarely lived past forty. It happened sometimes, occasionally, but not to my wife. She died a natural death. I raised my children alone for another twenty years before I became old and sick. And one day all my sons sat beside my bed and knew my time had come as well.



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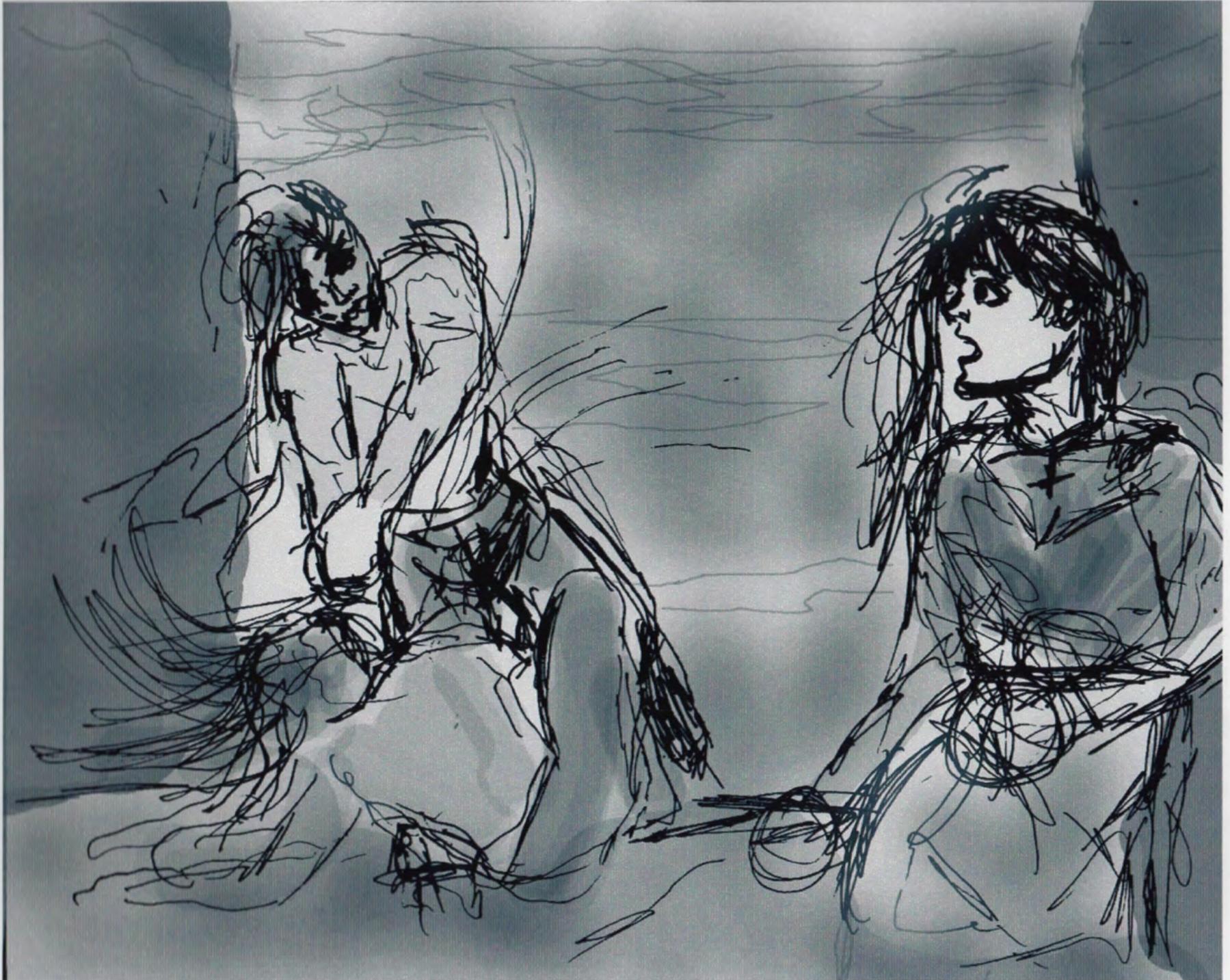
I awoke from my death as if it were a dream. I found myself back in modern day Venice, back in the gutter where everything began. My hangover was gone, and according to my watch only eight hours had passed. "It must have been a dream," I thought, as a police boat sped by. So I collected myself and took a walk through the labyrinth of modern Venice. All I wanted to do was find the train station. What I found instead was a poor Venetian girl being harrassed by an American tourist. A day ago I might have been that American. But today I took it upon myself to teach that stupid American tourist a thing or two about respecting the Venetian culture.













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The girl and I locked eyes. I asked in Italian, "Are you all right? Are you hurt?"

She answered, "No, I'm fine, thank you. That man followed me from a club last night. I slept at a friend's house, and as I was going home he...well, you know. You show a lot more sympathy than the average tourist and your Italian is not bad either. For a moment I thought you were a Venetian."

"The poor American tourist look gives it away, doesn't it?"

"I didn't think you were American, but now that you mention it, I'm even more surprised. You seem more cultured than the average American. Most Americans don't even speak Italian."

"Well, I try." I replied. We kept staring at each other for a moment. I think the attraction was immediate, but don't quote me on that. I was staring because she looked just like the girl from my dream. I wanted to find out for sure.

"My name is Ryan. What's your name?"

"Gabriella. But my friends call me Gabi." I couldn't believe my own ears. The likeness was uncanny!

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"Well, can I at least get you a hot Cappucino? You look like you could use one." I asked humbly.

She paused and then laughed. "I think I'll take you up on that offer." She gave me a quick look and said, "You're not trying to pull a fast one are you?"

"Are you kidding me? I only hope you didn't get hurt. Now do you want that coffee or not?"

"Okay, okay," Gabi whined. I took her hand, and we started to walk away together. "Ryan," she said, "Try not to take this the wrong way. I just really feel like I know you, and I don't understand why!"

"I have that affect on people," I lied. "You're not the first person who's said that to me."

"No, I'm not usually this open to strangers. I trust you like I trust an old friend."

"Oh come on, it's not like we met in a past life, is it?" Gabi took me seriously for a moment and then laughed. Who knows. Maybe she really believes in reincarnation. That morning, the city changed from black and white to color, as we walked together toward the sunrise.



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A gypsy sent me straight into the gates of hell. But I showed him, big time. Maybe the gypsy sensed that there was some hope that I could change. Maybe that's why he tested me by sending me back in time. But I survived a hellish nightmare and met the girl of my dreams.

So my fellow Americans, if you want some travelling advice, listen to me, and listen good. Whatever you do, don't get cursed by a gypsy in Venice. You might be forced to look at your life differently. Perhaps I got off easy on this trip. You might not be happy with what you see.



The End

AL VARETTO  
→

ACTO...

## A PIECE OF TIME

By Jeremy Tiefenbrun

“The specifics of the design are difficult to explain. Its like, Its actually wrapping an electromagnetic boundary field around a certain area....and pulling that piece of land here.” The professor said to the journalist. They sat at the coffee shop, just chatting.

“How is that possible?” the journalist asked Markus. “No one will believe it. I’ll have to write it as science fiction. Do you have evidence?”

“ I’m just a historian,” Markus replied. “I can’t get into the specifics of the project.” he told the journalist. It would be a fictitious tale.”

“ But basically its this. There are multiple parallel universes around us in different times of history, each with a similar outcome to ours or perhaps something completely different. Once our scientists had evidence of them, they learned to puncture through the space time continuum, they could peer into these alternate universes. They were even able to create a warp field strong enough to pull a piece of land from that time into this one and hold it for a limited amount of time. Within this amount of time a missing second goes by in their world. Do you understand the value of that?” He slobbered down a shot of vodka down his throat desperately trying to drown his sorrows.

you understand the value of that?" He slobbered down a shot of vodka down his throat desperately trying to drown his sorrows.

"Tell me."

"We could use the land to relocate people into a new world if the population got too large. An empty piece perhaps. Or once we learned how to harness it forever we could—"

Markus looked around, stared at a fly and crushed it....and began to explain his point of view about the project. But elsewhere, another story was beginning. It would be quite important to the story about to told right here.

Year: 1887

LOCATION: Earth, in a parallel universe

PLACE: Town of Whittier, CA

When Melissa awakened, she felt that angst again. Her father had married that witch Hester, who really wasn't a witch but she sure acted like one. Hester was her father's new wife and she was given the keys to the city hotel they were running. It really bothered Melissa. She was already 25, more than ready for marriage, and she still hadn't find that someone could take her away from this miserable place.

Outside, people walked the dirt roads between the wooden shanty stores in their top hats and petticoats. Horses and

wagons continued back and forth, with their riders too. The sun was hot and malicious. But people got by.

Melissa dressed, put on her long skirt and shoes. Her father Laurence was in the bar again playing poker. Many people liked to play cards there. On down time there wasn't really much else to do in Whittier. Melissa did such a great job minding the inn part of their establishment he never took the time to take care of things.

It was the gold rush period, and miners were coming in through town all the time searching for the gold. Some of them found some, others did not. Most didn't actually, but people still came in droves. So there was usually business happening at this time.

"I'm sick of cleaning up around here," she told Laurence. "I want to get a job as the schoolteacher. There is an opportunity at this time. Why don't you start looking for extra help! I'm tired of being a maid servant."

"This isn't the time to be talkin' about that girl. Can't you see I'm playing a game?" Laurence said.

"Why don't you fix us some drinks?" said his friend. "It's what yer good at!" they all laughed.

She picked up his glass of beer and splashed it on his face. The man stood up and almost pulled out his gun.

"If you were a man I'd shoot you right here." He said. Laurence stood shaking.

"But you're not, are you sir?" She said.

“There’s no need for that Sammy. Melissa doesn’t know her place.” Laurence explained. “My daughter is a bit hot headed.”

“ I am a woman,” Melissa said, “and I can get away with it”.She told him and walked away.

Two of the town women, wives of bank tellers, Mariella and Amy, whispered to each other, laughing as Melissa ran away.

“She’s a strange one, that Melissa. “Headstrong, but strange.” Mariella said.

“I overheard her Pa talking about her. I heard him say she hears voices. Talks to people in the bathroom who ain’t there.” The second, Amy said.

“Doesn’t surprise me.” Mariella laughed.

They both could hear the yelling afterward. It was at that time Hester yelled at her too and told her to clean up the kitchen. What else could she do but listen? She had to stay there to live!!

That night, Melissa looked outside the porch of the house and stared at the stars. She even wondered if there was life on the moon and the stars. She wondered if anyone thought about such things. Probably not. After all, they were all hot heads. Two weeks ago there had been a draw. The local drunk got shot by a real wagon robber. The shooter got out of Dodge real quick. He was supposedly named Quick Draw McGraw. Others say Billy The Kidd himself. But what do you expect from local folk.

She went upstairs crying and of course everyone ignored her. After she took her bath and put on her pajamas, she wrote

Ma in the mirror of the bathroom. In her tears she cried, "Oh please Ma, please, I need to talk to you."

The woman sat on the bed as Melissa turned toward her mother.

Melissa fell into her arms. "I miss you so much Ma. Why did you leave me alone?"

"You know I love you Mel. I had hay fever. I couldn't survive. Sometimes that's the way it goes."

Ma turned to her with a similar brown hair and daring glare, but somehow, wiser as though she were consoling a child.

Melissa started to cry. "I wish you knew how hard it is with that witch Hester. She has no soul at all. In all the stars of the universe I cannot understand. I cannot understand what Pa sees in her. I wish you were here."

"Dear child. Your Pa has a good heart but he doesn't love me anymore. I have moved on as well where I've gone. And you...you have a wonderful ability child to reach out beyond the beyond. Someday you're going to find a man who's going to accept you for all you are. He won't come without baggage mind you, and you'll have to make a choice."

"When am I going to meet this man?" Melissa sighed.

"Soon dear, soon. Come now and give me a hug dear." She hugged Ma and cried on her shoulder. So close....yet so far away in time and space. In a few moments she'd be gone....but at least they would be together for a brief while.

Doctor O'Malley was the first to notice the strange light surrounding everything around town. It wouldn't go away. The light was like the Aurora Borealis ( the northern lights). The Northern Lights are really just solar flares from the sun, but they make a warp greenish blue light in the skies when they react with the atmosphere. This light was pure red, and it made the entire town go in an uproar. Everyone was herded into the local church and the county courthouse.

"Now don't worry," Mayor O'Toole said. "We have to stay inside till this blows over. We don't know what in 'tarnation this is, but we're sure to find out soon enough."

"Is God punishing us?" A woman asked.

"God is with us. We must pray," preacher Thomas replied next to the Mayor of course. The Mayor had been donating to the church, of course, so they had a pretty good relationship, and the Mayor attended every Sunday too. The preacher had a habit of making people feel guilty about not going to church and then begging for money. It made Melissa sick but she still believed in God.

They stayed inside all day....it was way into the evening that they saw the metal pipes and plates like a high ceiling across the entire town. It was in fact a ceiling and everyone knew it. It was really strange how high it was into the sky. It filled up the whole town. That's where the story began, and they knew this story would most likely cause trouble. Most likely indeed.

DEBRIEFING LOG 1187643A

Subject: Markus Finley

Age: 38

Profession: Civilian. History Professor, Boston University

Mission: Enter the target and assess its functionality and purpose for further analysis and possible displacement of the population. Calm the public and prepare for next step. Determination of maintaining project warp field for length period.

Markus scratched his head at the mission statement, slammed his hands down at the debriefing desk. "Are you telling me you stole an entire town from the 1800's? Is that what you're telling me?"

"That is indeed what we have done Markus. We did not know what we would bring back...what time period, what place, what planet. Turns out it was a parallel Earth, in a country's past resembling our own.

We've been watching the people for 12 hours. They're panic stricken Americans from Circa 1888, California, gold rush period." The Sergeant explained showing all the scientific documents and explanations on a presentation screen.

"What do you need a history professor for...what to understand them?" Markus cried out. "These are people for crying out loud. They're out of time, and out of place. Their functionality and purpose is finished. They can't go to work or do anything. They're trapped in a warehouse contained in a boundary warp field. You want me to study them now?"

"We thought it would be an ideal thing for you to study them. We're turning the ceiling down and repositioning the lights as blue skies, making the warp field invisible in about two hours. They won't be able to leave. Walking out town will transport them instantly to the opposite end of town, and any side exit back to the beginning of town. The warp field holds the entire town in place. We'd like you to study this piece of time while you have a chance and keep them busy while we try to maintain the field as long as possible, to bring the land in securely to our time. Unless you don't want to," said the Sergeant.

"Naturally I want to," said the Professor. "But you better pay me."

"We'll give you the standard salary of our security guards," said the Sergeant, "and the amount is at our discretion."

"Naturally," the Professor said with a half smile, half frown.

WHITLER, CA

0800 HOURS

The Grassy Knoll

The lone man appeared at the town's edge as the tumbleweeds blew. His face was shadowed, and he was dressed in an almost Mexican style cowboy hat (the larger ones always kept out the sun.) Plad shirt and jeans, black boots. He spat tobacco on the ground. He was there, and there he waited. His face was scruffy, and he blocked the sun with his hand, ever so patiently. It was going to be a long day.

"There's a man at the southern edge of town." The butcher reported on his horse as he galloped away from the County Courthouse..

"At least the strange things in the sky and around the town vanished. We can't leave, but yet this man appears. How is that possible?" asked The Mayor. "Someone's got to talk to him. He has answers I'm sure."

The Mayor turned to Preacher Thomas. "We've got to find someone who's willing to talk to him. Will you?"

"Wayne Richards and Larry Cretan the banker fired on him when he refused to budge. He said he wouldn't talk to anyone but the Mayor. The bullets just bounced off him and there was this bizarre light as it did! They ran away on horses before he could fire."

“What in tarnation!” cried the Preacher. “I ain’t goin’ there! It’s the devil’s work!”

She stood up in all her beautiful glory, brown hair brushing to the side.

“I’ll go,” said Melissa. “Whoever he is, he’s got muchas cozones. I wonder how he’ll handle a woman.”

The Preacher looked at her and took her to the side, saying. “He’s bespelled by Satan. Do not underestimate the dark lord. Go with God my child.”

“There’s a rational scientific explanation for sure. But If its Satan, believe me, I’ll know.” Melissa consoled him. “This dude is small potatoes...ain’t nothin’ like my ex Cole, rest his soul.”

“You tell em’ sister!” A black woman, Tess, shouted from the back. All the ladies clapped and whooped.

“He ain’t seen nothing yet,” she smiled, getting ready to greet the stranger.

The lone man in the Mexican style hat hat had his hands crossed as the woman appeared with two riders. She dismounted, and the other two stood by the horses.

“Don’t mind them, they’re just paid guns,” she smiled at the man. “They don’t fire unless I give the say-so. Mind you, what are you doin this here parts, praytell?”

“The only person I wish to see is the Mayor. We’ve got words.” The man said.

“I speak for the Mayor. He ain’t an easy man to see. He’s got the whole town to mind, sir.”

The man reached for his pocket.

The men started to reach for their guns. She raised her hand, and they stopped. “Stay cool boys! He ain’t done nuthin’!”

“Where in Tarnation did you come from? And Why in Hell can’t people leave? You put the whammy on us all, didn’t ya! Why don’t you let us go and go home!” She accused.

“You’re not home anymore,” the man said. “You’re in the future, all of you. And I’m your guide. My name’s Markus.....Markus Finley.”

At the Inn

Markus turned to the bartender and said, “Vodka, straight up.”

“You some kind of classy man? All we got is American, plain and simple,” the bartender, Charles said.

“Uh, Sam Adams. Sounds good.”

“We got that man.” The bartender Charles smiled. “Always a good decision.” Finley laughed, because the bartender was serious. It happened to be the beer’s main phrase, “Always a good decision,” on the television.

So Markus sat at the table with Melissa. He had his hat off, scratching his rough face, sloshing down his beer and slamming it down.

“You look a little guilty sir,” Melissa looked at him perplexed. “Mind you tell me why?”

“You don’t understand. Your people and town have been transported to the year 2011. And I am a party to it,” said Markus.

“So that’s why we’re trapped and can’t leave. I get it that too. Okay, so you sent us somewhere new. Now you’re telling us its over 75 years?” Melissa asked.

“That’s right Ma’am. You’re a quick one.”

“That’s why the Mayor sent me. And I don’t like sarcasm. What was all that pipes and stuff in the sky and them beams of light round the whole high falootin town?”

“The boundary keeping you here. The boundary has transported you trapped within a semi-instant of time. Should you return to 1889, you won’t even remember this event even in a dream.”

“You are joking sir! What the Hell am I supposed to tell them? Boundaries and time travel? The people think they’re being punished by God!”

“I’ve thought of that. Tell em’ its solar flares from the sun, like the Aurora Borealis...the northern lights.”

“Northern what?” Melissa. “You’re trying my patience sir. I want an answer now.”

He watched her quizzically, cryptically, suddenly noticing her curves, her blue eyes, brown hair down to her butt, and all that jazz.

“Tell em’ it’s a cosmic phenomena causing time to stop...from the sun. Tell em it should pass in a few days.” Markus said. “Please.”

“Nothing gets past the Reverend in these parts. He’s got a keen mind. He’ll get em all wrapped up with his beeswhack. I’ll try. But you know all that Wrath and Hell and damnation. They won’t understand you Mr Finley.”

She slapped him.

“What the Hell was that for??” he cried.

“That’s for stealing the town and puttin’ us in the future.” She punched him in the arm.

“Stop! Ow!”

“That’s for staring at my legs! You got a lot of nerve, stranger.”

The bartender winked sarcastically, as if to say, “nice one,” and gave him the ok as she huffed off.

“Now wait just a minute miss. I’m trying to help!” Markus shouted.

THE TOWN MEETING

Markus was led to the town meeting, where all the population of Whitler waited for an answer.

The Reverend Thomas had his hands clasped around his hips, as if he knew something Markus didn't. The Mayor stood in the background waiting near the podium. Everyone booed and hissed at Markus.

"Good luck hotshot," Melissa told him, slapping him on the back, ( a backhanded way of saying "try getting your way out of this one, buster.")

"My name is Markus Finley," said the traveler. "I'm here to answer all your questions."

"Why can't we leave!" cried a lady! "We try and we always head back to the start of town!"

"How long is this going to last!" Are we getting punished by God? Is this the end of the world?"

Markus smiled and said, "This is most certainly not the end of the world. And you are not being punished by God."

"Then what in tarnation is going on?" cried another man.

The Reverend looked quizzically and judgementally at Markus, and it was really getting at him. He had the sudden feeling nothing he said would ease their minds. They knew nothing of the Aurora Borealis—and a time trap based on that would get him nowhere. He decided to tell the truth—to keep it short and sweet. He had a hunch the Reverend

was going to wrap it up and link it to God somehow—to control the masses.

“You are all part of a US government project which was constructed in the year 2011 AD, in the month of March. Your town was snatched within one moment of time from your time and taken to the future. The town is now housed in a warehouse somewhere in the Arizona desert. You cannot leave for your own safety. You are housed within a boundary field...it protects you from interacting with the future. That’s why you cannot leave.”

“This man, whoever he is, and we don’t know where he come from, is an agent of darkness. A minion of Lucifer! He ushers the coming of End of Days!” said Reverend Thomas.

“Let me show you the Way to God.” Here, at Thessolanians 4:17,” he quoted verbatim,

In one single event, the saved who are alive at Christ's coming will be caught up together with the resurrected to meet the Lord in the air. "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

Oh yes, let us not forget here at Peter 3:10 “Human life will cease to exist on earth for a period of time.<sup>[7]</sup> "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up." ([2 Peter](#) 3:10)

Lock up the doors and pray! We must pray! For here we are to die at the coming of the End of Days! The good souls will find a place in Heaven. Confess to your sins and be one with the Lord!”

And so they locked up the doors. People began singing hymns and there was much sighing and moaning.

A child asked her mother. “Are we ever going to see the light of day?”

“I don’t know. But we have to stay in church and pray. Until it passes or we die.”

Finally, Melissa had enough. All the noise was getting to her, and she noticed the people falling into a greater pit of despair. The mental illness had to stop!

“Oh, the great Reverend Franklin Thomas,” said Melissa walking toward the church podium, as people were clamboring holding each other. “Great job. Your mother would be proud. The so-called voice of reason. You really have em going. You have em runnin’ scared. But you don’t fool me.”

“How dare you Melissa! Do you dare defy a servant of the Lord?” Reverend Thomas cried.

“Servant of the Lord? You’re no servant of the Lord. You’re the servant of you and the sound of your own damn voice! Look what you’ve done? Look what you’ve done? Something’s going on, something’s happened, and now you’re claiming it’s the end of the world. Now these people think the wrath of God has come upon them and its all ending now.”

“First, you make us feel guilty about believing in God. Then you take our money, and if we don’t there be another guilt trip. I guess we’re shit out of luck with you. Well my Ma used to say, “Something’s fishy in Jones town.” I love the Lord as anyone sure enough. But I suggest The Lord didn’t put us here but man did. Man’s own actions and deeds. I guarentee you’re wasting your time, while we could be trying to solve the problem with a rational scientific explanation.”

“Clara, Wendy, Mariella,” she urged them. “Don’t listen to this charlatan. He’s fed you with lies all his time here. Now he’s controlling your minds with this end of days scenario. Life is a game of survival people. Survival. If you follow him and lockin’ us in with no food and water, you’re pissing your lives away for no good reason! There’s no end of days. This’ll all be over in a few days. Who’s with me!” cried Melissa. “Who wants to survive!”

“Damn you child!” Reverend Thomas shouted.

“Don’t damn me liar, thank me. I just saved your precious flock.” She and a few women threw the benches away and unlocked the door.

“I can’t believe we listened to you,” the mayor said to the Reverend.

“If you don’t pray, you’ll die and go to Hell all of you!” shouted the Reverend as the entire congregation poured out of the town hall. No one was listening... anymore.

The next days were difficult ones for Markus and Melissa. People treated him with scorn and disdain, subtly disacknowledging him. They

had successfully discredited the Reverend's apocalyptic vision—but people just wanted to go home. They knew that Markus' team had all the locks and keys. So they gave him the silent treatment-and ignored him.

Markus went back to the bar with Melissa and had a drink. "I don't understand why they hate me...I've no reason to lie. I'm a historian, not a scientist. I've studied the Gold Rush period and mining towns such as this one. After the Gold Rush they all shut down and unify into counties. That's what happens.

"You did a good job," Melissa said, "Its not the end of the world. But you're not making it any easier on us. We just want to get home."

"Why do you bother talking to me?" Markus asked. "I thought you hated me."

"I have a confession to make." Melissa said. "When I found out you were from the future, you intruiged me. I want to know more about the world you come from."

The more questions she asked, the more intruiged she became.Little did Markus know that this future knowledge became his launchpad--- for love.

It happened slowly, over a three day period. And so he talked about the post industrial age, and the rise of the United States in world affairs. World War I, and World War II, and the rise of the airplane and other things. Even the dawn of the computer age, and all that implied.

They took long walks together, and while the rest of the town ignored and hated them, Melissa became more and more interested. How could such a charming man be so bad?

And on the third fine day she asked him, "How do they kiss in the future?" Surprised he said. "Much like they do here. Mind if I showed you?" Even though he asked, he just went for it. So it was.

So there they were, in her room rocking the whole night long. Markus admitted he had never experienced so much heat and fire in his lovemaking at all. She kept moaning, he kept pounding at her. When they were done, he felt the climax of a century in his mind. His shaking did not stop right away, but she consoled him in the night.

All of a sudden he started to cry, and she held him tight.

"What is it? What's wrong?" She asked concerned.

"I wish I could tell you. Its that I've never felt so alive in my life. I think." He fell into her arms and she kissed him.

"I'll take care of you. Rest now." She said, and they fell asleep in each others arms.

Two days later, Markus was gone. He simply wasn't there anymore. But he left a note with the bartender, who gave Melissa the note. It read:

"My dear Melissa. I am so sorry I had to return to my time. It has come to my attention that in this little town of yours I have been living a lie. You see, I have a wife and five year old child....a life though very

troubled is still mine. I cannot walk away from my responsibilities. I am so sorry I mislead you. Don't worry. The town will return to 1800's in two days, Tuesday night at 12:20 PM. The US government cannot hold the field past that time. It will all be okay. But you and your township will not remember these events. Only I will. Forgive me dear child. I love you but I don't know what to do."

Sincerely,

Markus Finley, Historian

Melissa was transfixed and filled with pain. She raised her head in tears. Unsure of what to do, she went to the bathroom upstairs and set the water on high. As soon as there was steam, she wrote the words "MA" on the mirror.

Her mother, Ada, appeared to her. She hugged her mother and said, "That man came, like you said, and....and...."

"Shhh...its okay," Ada smiled. "You have fallen in love and so has he. But he is not without baggage mind you."

"His name's Markus Finley. He's from the future." Said Melissa.

"Yes I know, and he has a wife and child."

"What do I do? I'll never see him again! Oh, I don't blame him but why do these things happen to me?" Melissa said, the tears falling down her face.

Ada's face dropped to a more serious tone. "Melissa, do not panic. You are with child. I see it growing in the unborn womb."

“Oh, mother!” Melissa sighed. “It can’t be!”

“Do you want the child?” asked her mother. “Now it is time for your choice. The pregnancy may be stopped. Just make a request to the universe and it will be granted. When you go back, you won’t remember anything at all...as if nothing happened. If you want the child you shall remember your time here. The choice is yours.”

“Oh mother what about God? How could He let this happen to me?”

“You know this has nothing to do with God. You are responsible for your own actions, My dear. Make your request in your mind. Its not too late to stop it now.”

“I love you Ma, and thank you for your help.” Said Melissa. She turned around and her mother was gone, but he heard her say, “I love you too my dear child, Melissa. You make me so proud.”

## MARKUS RE-AWAKENS

When Markus returned home he found the apartment empty. All HER things were gone, and so was the little one Ricky. She left a note on the door. How poignant, how fast these changes were happening.

Dear Markus,

I can’t tell you how disappointed I am in you. Not only are you terrible in bed these days, but you leave us all alone for days on end on what you call some ‘Top Secret Experiment’. I have a confession to make. I’ve been having an affair with a malpractice attorney Dan

Redmond. He's willing to be a dad for Ricky and I've never been so satisfied in bed. Better than you ever were. I guess this has been happening for awhile and it has been culminating finally after all this time. I hope you're proud of this. Your absence, even from before, drove me into the arms of another man. I guess I want too much, I don't know. Just a stable life for our boy. I want what I want. You can't be part of our lives anymore. Goodbye Markus. I'm leaving you, you irresponsible asshole."

Sincerely,

Wanda

The thought that he'd never be able to see his boy again, that that choice had been taken away from him drove him to tears. He didn't understand. Why? Why had she become so selfish? So concerned about sex and her own happiness? Why? It was just a job. And although the experiment was being shut down, as it did not bear any possibilities, she took this rambunctious turn.

So he made plans within plans. on Tuesday, he finished recording his story with the reporter. By midnight while the whole team was away Markus had already snuck into the reactor chamber and jumped into the 1880's landscape. He jumped back in time....with the whole town.

ONE DAY IN 1889

Melissa found herself with a brush in hand staring at the mirror. The sunlight from outside was blinding and real. Last night her father and Hester yelled at her for throwing water on a customer and friend of the Inn. Once properly dressed, she walked downstairs to the clerk's room and waited there.

"You should be ashamed of yourself," said her father as she walked by.

She turned to him and said, "You know, you should be ashamed. You treat me like dirt and I practically operate this whole place myself. You better be nice sir, or I'm gonna walk one day."

A man walked into the Inn. He had a Mexican cowboy hat, overalls, leather jacket and boots. He almost looked like a farmer with the hat. The man smiled and said,

"This here's the only inn I hear." He said, looking at her brightly.

"You're a funny sort. How long you stayin'?" she asked.

"I'll be working at the Wells Fargo bank as an accountant. I have previous experience before I became a history teacher. But that's all academic. I need to stay here until I get my own place."

"So what's yer name?" she laughed. "I'm Melissa. I feel like I know you....but I know we have never met. You putting the whammy on me??"

He looked strangely surprised. "Wouldn't dream of it. Name's Finley," he smiled. "Markus Finley. The pleasure's mine." He kissed her hand pleasantly, and the day was already beginning.

THE END

## Planet of the Simmeans

By Evan Rallasphere

### Chapter One: Space

I stared blankly into space, into the endless nothingness of the stars. From the cockpit cabin window in the beginning it seemed so exciting seeing the great expanse of endless space rushing by at warp speeds, but all I kept thinking of was her. That girl in the left sleeper. My Lieutenant Commander....Natalie Cooper.

Two nights ago before launch she knocked on my door with a slight tear in her eye and laughed slightly, saying, "Drink?"

"Why would I do that, Lieutenant?" I droned.

She hobbled to the side, flicking off something uncomfortable on her heel and said, "I thought you would like picking young astronauts for their final flight. If what they're saying is true, we're never gonna see home....again. So who cares. Drink?"

Cooper and Amos. They were a dicy relationship but they were in love I thought... What hold did he have over her, and why did she always go back? I never knew. Things were not so good with her now. Natalie was drunk off her goard. I knew she was fighting with Amos but not even NASA knew about what.

"What about your boyfriend, Lieutenant Amos?" I asked. "Doesn't he have a say?"

"Oh he's such a bore. Somewhere downtown in bar I dunno. That guy...gay or straight, we don't know. Drink?" She said, shaking a bottle of Bailey's Irish Whiskey in her hand. Lies, of course I stared at her and she stared at me. She looked so lost. It was a clue.

“Get in here, Cooper,” I said at last.

“Yaay!” she laughed and ran into my arms, shutting the door.

A night of fierce love-making and future conflict, I would argue. Knowing the Lieutenant, it had to be justified. And after about two hours of great sex she whispered in my ear and told me, “What happens in White Sands Pre-launch, stays in White Sands Pre-launch.” Great. And I never had a chance to tell her how I felt in the whole thing. Not after that. When I woke up she was gone, and I could tell she left in a huff.

The last thing I said to her, was this, as we were outfitting in our spacesuits. It wasn’t so much as cold, as it was uncaring.

“Don’t you have anything to say to us Commander? Are we ready??” Lieutenant Amos looked nervous, but said nothing. Someone was eyeing him in the background, and I thought it was a man.

Cooper was so cute, ready to be punished in her little space suit. And I could do nothing to tear it off. “I expect you all to be prepped and ready for launch by 0900. Understood? We’re going to the Pleiades. I couldn’t ask for a better team. Let’s make humanity proud!”

Our Doctor and genetic biologist Padesh was in the corner crying on the phone with her parents, who didn’t want her to go. She missed the speech! Still on the team though. For a moment, I kept thinking, she was realistic to cry. Leaving everything seemed insane. She was into biology and saving the planet. Not leaving it all behind her. There was something ominous about that crying. Did she know something we didn’t?

On the starship, all my crew were tucked in. I flicked on the recorder and spoke. “It’s forty two days away from the international space station where the SS Renegade was built; so far the first ship built in space. We have in our ship enough human DNA to rebuild a new colony on an Earth we found in a distant system. With our test tubes and computer system we should be able to start anew, and bring people from Earth to the new colony once it is started. Plus there will be myself, Amos, Natalie, Doctor Padesh, the quiet biologist and a beautiful Indian girl, who although was on the team could not be convinced to be fired into space. She had the cloning device engineered so well, it required no biologist.

“Anyway, with this fusion warp drive operating, fifty two days away from Earth is almost fifty years. Space time relativity included, we calculate a new breed of humans are now on Earth; hopefully better than our own. Are we still war-like, and is the world burning like before? I hope you make the world we are leaving a better place.”

I stared at the three astronauts in their sleeping chambers and wondered about the future. I jumped up, got in, and let the lid close on me. The invisible gas put me to sleep, where over a period of three days I would be placed in a kind of frozen stasis. I would be asleep the whole time. I fell asleep, and the journey into deep outer space began.

DAY 210:

PROBLEM WITH FUSION WARP COIL:

ACTING AS DETONATION DEVICE

DEACTIVATING: EXPUNGING IN DEEP SPACE

WORMHOLE SPACE EDDY DETECTED:

ENTERING IN T-8 SECONDS

EARTHLIKE PLANET DETECTED

LAND SEQUENCE INITATED:

LOSING CONTROL VECTOR

EMERGENCY LANDING

## Chapter Two: Dreams of a Simmean Traveller

An astronaut in a similar vessel, somewhere in time, stepped out of his craft into a marshy landscape, following a voice in his head.

“I hear you, but I cannot see you. Where are you?” asked the astronaut.

“I am on shore. Please come. I would like to meet you.” The welcoming voice replied.

“What is your name?” The astronaut said walking on shore, suddenly noticing the caves with little holes in them.

“Do not venture any further. Remain on the beach.”

“What kind of species are you??” The astronaut asked.

“We are grasshoppers of an intelligent kind. Our only neighbors are militant cockroaches.”

“Grasshoppers eh?” What is your name?” The astronaut wanted to know.

“Nibbitz.” The psychic grasshopper answered.



Suddenly the beach was swarming with grasshoppers for a moment. A moment later there was all but one.

“I am the one you seek, thought sent the grasshopper to the astronaut. I wish to travel to your world and explore the ways of your kind for a time sir.” The grasshopper thought-sent.

The astronaut, bewildered took out a case with holes for specimens. He placed the grasshopper in the case.

“The oxygen in this sector is breathable,” said the astronaut. “But there is no life other than insect, yes? I shall take off my helmet.”

“What is your name astronaut?” asked Nibbitz the grasshopper.

“I am Evalion Octavion. I am a Chimpanzee. A Simmean from an alternate Earth.”

As the astronaut took off the helmet, it was apparent he was a primate, or species of chimpanzee. A chimpanzee astronaut. And I woke up to a pinging sound.....a harsh emergency beacon.

### Chapter Three: AWAKENINGS

As I pulled off the injector feeders out of my arms, the mask covering my face, I fell off into a flooding cockpit. Great.

The emergency beacon was pinging, but no one would collect us. I saw the ship's clock. 3,080 was the year. Below that it read: Atmosphere: stable: Planet unknown. Sector: Uncalculated.

Amos' sleeper cabin was black. A hole in his glass shield had penetrated the sleeper program. He died in his sleep and deteriorated into a skeletal hulk.

Natalie was still alive. I released her from the sleeper, she took off the apparatus' and jumped on to her hands and knees coughing. There was water rushing in.

"Hurry up Lieutenant. We don't have much time. We've crashed in a lake, and the ship is sinking."

"What? What's happening commander? Where's Amos."

"Hole in his sleep chamber. He died in his sleep."

"Amos...." The look was terrifying...from pain to blame. And the blame was on me.

"Noo!"

"Come on Lieutenant! Configure the emergency door!"

The water was knee deep. I grabbed ration packs for us both. As we slid them on, she started crying.

As the door blasted open, an emergency raft waited for us. We slid down into the raft as the ship sunk.

"It's going, going, gone..." Natalie said, tearfully watching the ship go down with her dead husband.

“Amos....” She looked around in the lake as we began rowing to the shore

As we pushed the raft on shore, she shouted at me.

“You promised us! You promised us you’d protect us!”

“It was a computer failure when we hit some kind of energy field in the cosmos. I couldn’t have predicted it. I didn’t have much time to see it on the computer after we crashed. The data has been downloaded on my solar powered device. We can look and see, Lieutenant.”

“Where do we go now?” Lieutenant Cooper asked.

“I have no idea. We have rations for forty eight hours without ship assistance. Let’s go north.”

“Why?” She cried.

“No idea why. Seems like a good plan.” I told her.

She looked at me as if to say, “You are so cold.” But she followed.

Natalie rationalized it and said aloud, “Don’t think you have any second chances at me after pre-launch. Just keep us alive.”

“Open your pack Lieutenant. We both were given guns with two bullet packs. Small ones. Just in case. And I’m not about for us to take suicide pills if this place is too hostile. We just have to survive.”

She listened. “Can we ever return home?”

“No. This is our home. I saw the ship's clocks. We're over three thousand years in the future. 3,080 AD. I think they might have even forgot about our mission sweetie. No chance on going back. Everyone we know is dead and gone, if the world is even there still.”

“Evan! Can't you be p-p-ositve at all?”

“Do yourself a favor. Consider this our home now. We have to find an adequate place to make shelter.”

Natalie was silent.

“The genetics device went down with the ship. We cannot retrieve it.” I told her. She did not seem to care. She was cold as ice, on an alien planet, and wanting to go home.

We set up separate tents in a desert valley. Out in the distance, I could see some forestation, which was good. There were lightning flashes ever so often in the horizon and that was troubling me. It got dark fast. We each had our own heaters, and were able to go to sleep.

By morning, I found Natalie cuddling up next to me, like a lost scared girl. She was terrified of all the sounds outside.

“It's okay, Lieutenant, it's gonna be okay.” I told her.

“Why don't you call me Natalie?” she asked horrified. “ok?”

When we got up, we found many of our rations and goods stolen. There was a huge mess and our packs were missing. Her tent, which had the large amount of the stuff was torn to pieces.

“It's obvious we're not alone on this planet. Who could have done this?” She asked angrily.

“We’ll find out in time. Let’s pack up and head for the forest.” I told her.

“There are footprints commander. Footprints! They look human!” Natalie pointed to the ground. A group of human like footprints led themselves haggardly in a trail into the distant forest.

“Strange.... these look identical to human. It cannot be duplicated on another planet. Something’s very wrong.”

We kept walking, sipping water as we went. I took a look through binoculars, and saw the “aliens” with our stuff. They were in fact human enough.

“Oh, no, what I feared the worst happened is true.”

“You never showed me the data feed on your device, Commander. What aren’t you telling me?”

“We hit a cosmic eddy. A kind’ve wormhole in space-time and it altered the ship’s course into the future...all the way...home.” I grimaced. “Those....are people.”

“Bullshit,” Natalie said, “Give me those binoculars. There couldn’t be humans on other worlds, could there?” She looked and was disgusted.

“Not likely. But the question still is...is this even our own Earth? Our own universe? The energy field the ship encountered was so strong we may well have entered an alternate reality and I have no way to calculate that!” I observed.

“Look here,” Natalie said, “those are humans! We somehow ended back where we started. The whole program has failed! What was it for?” She exploded. “You tell me, Commander!”

“They certainly didn’t know what they took, those people.” I ignored her statements. “I think humanity may have been regressed to primate like level. Their minds not equipped to know what our things even were. What happened to humanity?”

Natalie froze inside, refusing to speak. I could see she was having some issues, but what they were not clear. She wanted out of this nightmare. They passed us on horses. When she spotted the guerrilla on horseback with a whole squad of them holding guns, she must have done a 360 in her head. I didn’t know what to think. She just passed out. I caught her.

“Wh-what did you do to her, you damned guerrilla! Who the Hell do you think you are?” I shouted.

“This Humann can speak! Far away from your clan eh? Put him and his mate in the caravan.”

“Yes, Convoy Jaspers,” said another Guerrilla.

“This will teach them to wander from their territory. How this one acquired the power of speech only the council will determine.”

“Humann see, humann do, if you ask me!”

“Haa hahaha!”

The guns were put away, and we were placed roughly in a caravan with various carton boxes inside. I would surmise weaponry, bullets and guns or what have you. Natalie was shaking on the ground as I held her. Then I heard her mutter, “Apes, apes.”

## Chapter Four: INCARCERATION

Victoria Octavion walked into the holding cell we were placed in. She did not know I was awake and watching. She was apparently an expert on the humans of this century, and as I listened to her chatting I felt instantly comfortable. This female ape was of a chimpanzee origin, closely related to a hominid, or human. Perhaps she would show sympathy. The guerrillas were warlike it appeared and had no hope for that at this time.

She was a curious animal psychologist, and she wanted answers.

“Don’t go near those filthy humans,” said the guerrilla keeper. “If they speak, they may be dangerous. These two are unique!”

“Don’t worry Renaldo, I’ll just ask the female.”

“It’s your funeral, doc. Never trust a human.”

“I am Victoria Octavion. Victoria!” She moved her mouth.

But Natalie moved her head up, arms crossed and refused to speak. She pointed to me.

“Amazing!” Victoria admitted.

“She won’t speak,” I told Victoria. “She’s too mad at me.” Natalie pushed me and moved to the other side of the cage.

“And how is it you two have the power of speech and the others in the forest cannot? Are you from a tribe from beyond the no-zone?”

“No-zone....what’s that? “Death crept in her eyes when I responded , and she shook her head.

“Explain where you’re from! Explain!” Victoria stared at Natalie who was furious at me now.

“It’s complicated,” I told the chimpanzee.

“Well you’d better confess soon, and get your story straight, because there’s going to be a trial. My husband is in the department of animal rights and affairs, as well as evolutionary science. He’ll be your defending advocate. There’s only so much we can do for humans, who really have no rights at all!”

I grimaced. “I’m sure he’ll figure it out. What’s his name?”

“Evalion Octavion. You will meet him tomorrow. Gnite.”

Victoria closed the door behind them, and chatted with Renaldo, saying  
“Humans. What a pity. Those two seem so peaceable like, from a different world. They all made a mess of their world once. If they’re maturing as a race again, it better be good this time around....for all of our sakes.”

Renaldo scoffed.

“I know what you’re thinking, Renaldo.”

“Never trust a human.” They said together, and laughed. She exited the building, leaving the astronauts alone and in mysterious darkness.

## Chapter Five: Evalion Octavion's Lecture

Evalion kissed his wife Victoria on the lips twice.

"You'll do fine, dear!" she told him, and Evalion smiled.

He stepped out the door of his home into town with his briefcase in hand. He was a little nervous to say the least; humans with the power of speech was no easy matter to deal with. Supposedly they were mute for whatever reason and had been for many many decades....since before the no-zone formed!

Evalion approached Dr. Zaltus in passing, and said, "I have discovered many things in that craft we launched. The one that landed in the desert last year." Said Evalion.

"Well don't tell me now, Evalion. Gather your materials and prepare for the lecture hall in twenty minutes. Then we have the trial to attend to. You have a lot of responsibility, and all eyes and ears are on you!"

"I understand sir. I-I won't disappoint!" said Evalion, heading to the lecture hall.

He had already moved Nibbitz into the lecture hall an hour ago, and left him there with some other notes and the podium. Simmeans were already getting interested in what Evalion had to say.

The guerrillas were up front, followed by chimpanzees, and then orangutans.

“You’ll learn nothing from the humans!” laughed Jaspers, sergeant of the guerillas. They laughed amongst themselves.

Evalion put his hand over Nibbitz’s cubicle, as if to stop him from talking, and it worked.

“Listen friends and professional colleagues, we are about to embark on a journey together in time and space.

“Now we all know about the tragedy of what happened here one year ago today with the death of Lucernus, Lucerno’s son, a guerrilla to remember, killed by astronaut Evan Rallasphire. Let us take a moment to remember him.”

They all bowed their heads.

“Now the craft Rallasphire and his lost crew left behind was easy to operate. I myself countermanded it through what is called a worm-hole. Not two weeks ago. And I somehow, out of the majesty of the universe, I landed in a parallel universe, on another Earth. With forty five minutes there before I would be automatically returned here.”

“That’s interesting science fiction, Evalion! Show us evidence of what you found there! Perhaps more humans!” a chimp laughed.

“Not quite,” He said unveiling the habitat cubicle for Nibbitz. “I deduce other universes and other Earths exist, and ours is but one of many worlds out there in the multiverse. The world I went to had no humans or apes at all. Just militant cockroaches and peaceable grasshoppers in a similar no-zone Right here in this area!”

A few orangutans started to leave.

“Wait for my evidence friends....Behold, Nibbitz the grasshopper.”

“Hi, howya doin’.” The grasshopper thought aloud into all their minds. Pretty powerful. The apes were shocked.

“Impossible! Impossible! A psychic grasshopper!” one of the chimps exclaimed.

Dr. Zaltus clapped. All the apes were shocked, but if Dr. Zaltus, leader orangutan was impressed, then everyone was.

“Whichever universe Nibbitz is from, keep him in your home. Impressive Evalion. One for the books.” They all left as soon as Evalion was escorted offstage. Victoria was there, and smiled, taking Nibbitz home.

“Now come with me, young one. I haven’t told you the news. Your wife was asked to keep the identities of your human defendants a secret by myself alone. It also proves your theories correct. It was for your protection. You may blame me Evalion. Go now to the holding cell.”

Zaltus smiled. “You’re doing good work for the community Evalion. I’m proud of you.

All the secrecy. What was it for?



Renaldo awakened us astronauts with a mug across the bars, and another chimpanzee walked through the door.

“Wake up, humanns!” Renaldo scoffed.

“Be nice Renaldo. Let the humanns out, under my care. They will not need chains will they?” We both shook our heads, Natalie and I, and she quickly grabbed my hand.

“It’s your choice. You’re the boss, but I don’t like it.”

“It’ll be my responsibility. If anything happens, you can tell Dr. Zaltus about it on my behalf.”

I looked at Natalie, who stood behind me, as I appeared unafraid of the young chimpanzee. I asked, "Who are you?"

"I am surprised you do not know me. You are Evan Rallasphire, no?"

Natalie squeezed my hand. "How do you know that?" I asked.

"This is not the same Evan," thought Nibbitz, observing in his mind. "He is from another universe." The message was belayed to Evalion Octavion.

"Listen to me," Evalion said, "I apologize for the confusion. It has come to my attention that you are the second group of travelers to this reality. Your duplicate, Evan, was the only survivor. He was rounded up and killed on charges of...murder of a guerrilla. The other apes may not understand."

Natalie looked at me concerned. "Second group of travelers? The first a murderer? I asked.

"You must speak forthright to the council. Explain about your craft. The council will be convinced you escaped death and such. They'll probably want to know if you acquired the power of speech outside the boundaries of the no-zone."

"What is this no-zone I keep hearing about?"

Evalion dropped his head. "That's where the first ship landed. And your double scrambled out of. All the others died in their sleep, he explained. When he discovered animosity between humans and apes in our village, namely guerrillas, we don't know who started the fight. But a guerrilla died certainly at his hand. We hung him, burned the body."

Natalie turned away, and started to cry a bit, falling to the ground. She just wanted to leave inside.

“C’mon. It’s going to be all right. We’ll explain it. I won’t let them take us.”

I combed her hair, and hugged her a bit. She nodded and whispered, “ok.”

“What happened to your ship?” asked Evalion.

“It sank in a lake somewhere in your no-zone I think,” I explained.

“You have a different demeanor than the Evan I remember.” Evalion observed.

“You are not the same man. The first would have rendered me unconscious and ran for the door.”

“We want to show good intentions. So you don’t need to get rid of us either.” I told him. Natalie just stared, letting me take control. She was happy. She didn’t want to talk to apes. Period...until it was safe to do so.

The sound of a horn, and Evalion Octavion led us into the council chamber, a stony establishment governed by three orangutans, including Dr.Zaltus.

“It cannot be,” said one orangutan. “That’s the same astronaut who,”

“Let him speak,” Dr. Zaltus said about Evalion, “Let him speak.”

“This humann and his mate, are capable of speech as we have seen because they came via way of space-ship. In this space-ship, they travelled from our past into the age of the Simmeans.” Evalion told the council.

“Where is this space-ship?” Dr. Zaltus asked.

“Sank in a lake!”

“Impossible! There cannot be two Evans! A coincidence. They are from outside the no-zone! From an intelligent tribe of humans, governed by apes. We know of them.” Another Orangutan told them.

“Ah yes, they exist, but small in number.” Evalion agreed. “They landed in the no-zone; which is toxic and perilous. No one goes there by choice.”

“Explain,” Evalion asked, “Explain to Evalion Octavio what happened.”

“Our ship travelled from the past, but I think we don’t come from this world. Maybe an equivalent world just like it.” I tried to start up about parallel worlds theories, but no one listened.

“Bah!” Dr. Zaltus said. “Even if it’s true, which it may well be, it changes nothing. You are obviously nonviolent unlike the first Evan, with or without your mate. You are part of this world now. You must travel through the no-zone to an intelligent community of humans under ape law. We will prepare your caravan.”

“It is so ordered,” said the third orangutan, who slammed down his hammer.

Natalie fell into my arms with relief. “What happened to create this future?” she asked.

“We’re about to find out.” I told her. “They’re not saying everything. I overheard them talking to Evalion a moment ago. He’s taking us personally into the no-zone with a small squad of guerrillas.”

“Great,” Natalie said a bit sarcastically, “I feel so much safer.”

We travelled past the valley and the lake we crashed into, deep into the no-zone. Octavion explained it was called the no-zone because no one was allowed to go.

So I said, "So technically, "It's a no-go zone!"

The chimpanzee laughed and said, "Of course."

At the farthest edges of the no-zone we saw marshes, and the remnants of an old city.

Natalie was transfixed at another structure; she knew we were in New York. Her eyes darted in the direction of the statue of liberty.

"They did it. They blew it all up! That's how this upside down world got started! Damn them...Damn them all!" She shouted.

She held me, like looking at the shockwave of all the dead. It was a virtual graveyard, after all.

Evalion lowered his head. "It was biochemical warfare as well as bombs, my friends. The stuff that killed off humans made other primates smarter. Which is why some humans went dumb, the closer they were to the bomb sites underground. These were terrible times for both Simmeans and humans. Years later Simmeans found their own communities and eventually ruled the Earth."

"What do you think Jaspers?"

"I do not care to tell the archives to lost humans." Jaspers the guerilla replied, "even if they are not the kind that kill." The four other guerrillas agreed.

After another day of travel the caravan arrived at the Human/ape cohabitat, under ape law. It was all the way across the no-zone, south.

The apes opened the gates and let the caravan inside.

“What is the meaning of this visit?” asked the guard, a guerilla.

“Two talking humanns, of origins unknown, seek shelter here. We would like to speak to the mayor.” Evalion asked.

“This is not a refuge! It is a cohabitat! We are selective! But you may see him, of course. He is known as Att-las! The second hut on the right. We will mind your caravan and feed your garrison.”

“Why thank you!” One of the four guerrillas replied.

“How are the humanns obeying?” asked Jaspers.

“They are intelligent enough not to attack. We have all the guns. We live in a tolerant peace. The ape community hopes to keep it that way.”

So Evalion Octavion walked toward the second hut with Evan and Natalie. He smiled and knocked on the door.

“What is it?”

“I am Evalion Octavion. I have a convoy of two speaking humanns of unknown origin seeking shelter. I wish to speak about the matter with you.”

“Then come on in. Bring the two humanns as well.”

There was a porch, and a small chair outside. Natalie chose to wait outside and sit on the chair and leave the negotiations to Evan. She was curious about this place. She felt an intuition...like someone was near.

There, walking up the road, she saw Amos in his orange flight jacket with an American flag on the right lapel, just like on their team.

“Amos...” she shouted,” and ran to him, holding him tight.

“Natalie,” he said happily, as she kissed him.

“I never want to leave you!” she cried. He didn’t understand at first, but went along with it, happy to get the attention from her. It had been awhile.

As soon as I got outside, I saw them kissing. I couldn’t believe he was still alive.

My heart sank. She was with Amos again. He must have gotten out somehow and swam to shore, but I never saw it!

“My husband is alive. I feel so lucky.” She said, as they smiled at each other arm in arm.

“Hard to believe Amos. You’re a dead man walking, it seems. Now how is that?” I asked.

“It looks like you’re alive too, Evan.” Amos said directly at me. “How poignant.”

We stared at each other angrily.

“Now guys, please, let’s get over this.” Natalie said. “There’s no need to argue.”

“I’m going back to Beta community with Evalion. I’m gonna study the apes. Natalie...this is a good chance to study them. To help build a new community of humans someday. Separate, but at peace. Do you want to come with me or Amos? Natalie?”

“I’m staying with Amos.”

“Have it your way. I’m leaving this place.” Natalie reached out, conflicted, but then stared at Amos who had those confident, vindicated, winning eyes. She wanted to know what he knew, and what Evan didn’t know.

“This humann Evan wants to be Simmean!” Evalion whispered to the mayor. The mayor shook his head. “The female is coy and recalcitrant. Only humann.”

“Are you sure you want no more contact with humanity?” Evalion asked.

“Positive. That may change. But for now, let’s go.” I said truthfully.

Jaspers walked over to me and said, "I give you a Guerilla's vest, to symbolize your entry into our community." I put it on. It had some unique symbols on it and it was brown.

Natalie and Amos were about to walk away when I said,

"Hey you two." I beat my chest. "Oo-oo!" The guerillas were stupefied. One of them spat out their food.

Natalie observed the lack of care, and liked it secretly, even while she was holding onto Amos' hand. She was very upset. She knew how much I cared deep down. And deep down my heart sank.

"Nothing to do with that now, "she figured in her mind, "nothing to do with that."

## Chapter Six: Natalie's Story

A month had passed. Who knows how much fiery sex and romance had passed between Amos and Natalie. I can't hide the fact I was jealous. I went through fits of rage too. She didn't even care. Then a month later, at least, a green military jeep pulled into Beta Village, the ape city I was living in now. It happened late at night, in the middle of lightning flashes which could be seen in the darkness surrounding the ape city.

I told the apes to leave my hut on the outskirts of the city, just in case any human visitors arrived. Sure enough, one did. A knock at the door of my hut, which had been recently constructed in my honor. I opened the door, and Natalie fell into my arms. I lifted her chin up and said, "What's the meaning of this!"

"He's a monster! We're all in danger!" She cried.

"Now hold on a moment, Cooper. I want hear all about this. But keep calm." She laughed slightly, remembering days as my Lieutenant pilot. "You're safe now."

"At first he seemed ok, and we first made love without really talking about things, which seemed strange. He was very passionate, but cold to me for some odd reason. And he had reading glasses. I'd never seen him with those before. He also had a bible at the bedside and insisted on praying at meals."

"One night I asked him, 'since when did you start being religious. Amos, you were always secular atheist. A liberal at best!'"

He told me, "I don't know what you're talking about. I was a reverend before I became interested in space. You know that. I just went back to faith after the landing here. Eat up."

“That was news to me,” I thought to myself, but said nothing. Then he proceeded to quote scripture for fifteen minutes on some ethical tirade. His eyes lit up, and said, “Amen. Let us proceed to bed.’ So we did it for two hours.”

This made me cringe inside, hearing her talking about making love, after escaping his clutches the first time. “Oh well whattaya do,” I thought.

“There were other differences. The town even. Even though the apes and humans live together, they are segregated. They barely talk to one another. And there’s subtle hatred as the humans despise being governed. Amos seemed to be a leader in a revolution against them. But that’s not the whole story Evan.”

“Two weeks later many of us fled the village to the big city to underground bunkers, where he found weapons and working vehicles left behind during the Third World War.

“I was surprised how the villagers living in the city came around to flock to his sermons. By the third day he had over 250 people listening to him in the military bunker.

“The intelligent apes are an abomination to God! We will take back the Earth under man’s rule...in the name of our Lord!” cried the preaching Amos. There were shouts of glory and happiness, and above all hope for domination of man.

At the end of the sermon I said,

“I really do not think interfering with this timeline and taking back the planet to mankind is a good idea. You don’t know the repercussions of such actions! Most of these people only know about God because you taught them! This is not the Amos I remember!”

“So you’re going against God’s plan?” he asked. “I’m disappointed in you, Natalie.” He smacked me and said, “Go to your room.” Many men saw this and approved, while other women just shrunk away.

“I can’t believe you just did that. I don’t think it’s God’s plan, you jerk, its your plan!” I yelled, and shut the door, locking it. He banged on the door a few times, but I refused to open. I heard him shout, “You bitch!” and he moved on.

I distanced myself from him a few days later, and the following night stole the jeep. After hearing their plan, I escaped in the jeep here. I’d rather be with you after all said and done. I don’t expect you to even love me Evan after all this. Just keep me safe.”

“So you do love me, after all,” I noticed.

Her eyes widened. “Yes...yes I do.” I was about to hold her when she told me,

“Wait! Just before I grabbed the jeep I threw off his team jacket from our ship. It had a different ship name. Our ship name was the Renegade. His ship name was the Apollo 68. Amos.... wasn’t the same Amos. My ex-husband is actually dead after all. I think the Amos in Beta Village was from a different ship, from a different universe! Funny huh? No wonder he was such a jerk. He may have barely known me.” Natalie finished her story, and I continued.

“You make sense. It might have also explained why Amos said, “It appears like you’re alive too, Evan. How poignant.” Apparently in this universe, my duplicate Evan killed an ape, while the other Amos had wandered off to the other town at that time and escaped harm. Both were violent and angered at the thought of an ape society. I kept thinking, if we came from a more positive parallel universe, then perhaps the first team came from a mirror like opposite, negative parallel universe. No way to know. At any rate, he really wasn’t your husband and.... I’m glad you’re back.” I told her.

“Scientist to the last. So am I.” She kissed me, but I was stone for a second.

"I'm sorry, Evan." She sighed. "I'm sorry I hurt you."

"Its ok." I paused, then kissed her with a nudge.

"Evan??" Natalie asked. "If he isn't from our universe, what is this ape world universe to us?" She asked. "Are we in our....own reality, centuries ahead?"

"I feel it too. We must be...home! If that's true, the time for man and religion has been lost. And Amos is barking up the wrong tree. We are home, this is our universe, and there was a war indeed. Ape rule is the aftermath, after 3,000 years." I told her.

"3,000 years under ape rule you said? I watched as Amos was preaching Christianity and raising military initiatives in the war torn city to bring Earth back to mankind." Natalie sighed. "He wants to kill the apes."

"So he's both bringing back the Cross after a long absence of religion and plans to destroy the apes in the name of God.... how poignant." I raised a brow.

"Sounds senseless and terrible I know. And the army will be here...in two nights at least. We have no defense. They're gonna decimate all the apes as abominations I fear."

"What about Alpha Village?" I stood up. "The human/ape co-habitat?"

Natalie held me down. "It's too late for them," she assured me negatively. "The army is coming. It's a small town, so it may be ignored, but who knows. I had to warn all of you.... I had to choose. I just want to be with you."

"I'll have to negotiate when this 'army' arrives. We must alert the council at once."

"I'm proud of you, Evan. You're like a Simmean!"

## Chapter Seven: THE BATTLE FOR BETA VILLAGE

By morning rise, we saw the smoke rising in the distance, and it might well have been the attack on Alpha Village. I felt a crushing horrific heaviness, as though a thousand people were screaming for help. I knew those apes were done for.

All the apes were pointing to the smoke past the no-zone, and a council meeting was arranged. The apes went to the vault and had their own weapons left behind by humans. They were modified over time to somehow fit the apes. This was because of secret programs by the military close to the third world war.

“We will protect our border if they get too close.”

“Your weapons will be useless,” Natalie complained. “They have guns that are big, tanks and explosives. Grenades even.”

“We are thankful you warned us. Perhaps there is hope yet.” Dr. Altus added.

The Chimpanzees and guerrillas stood together for the first time against the humans, guns and rifles drawn at the city gates, snipers at the towers. But that was all they had.

When evening fell, they saw the jeeps and tanks and buses. An explosive device went off. A bullet smacked the top of a wooden tower, causing a chimpanzee to fall, but he collected himself and slid down a rope

Suddenly there was a boom, and all the jeeps began to turn away, and all the buses began to turn in the opposite direction, save one jeep which kept going forward. The army attacked, but suddenly retreated into the war torn city of NY never to return!

This is what was happening.

On the human end:

Frank, driver on bus B saw the flames in front of the village.

“Do you see that?”

“Yeah, Frank! We sure do!”

“Call Amos!”

“Amos, do you see the fires in front of the village? We didn’t start them, they’re spreading fast!”

“I see nothing keep going!”

“Apes rule this planet now. You had your chance centuries ago. Stop the inhumane killing and leave for the city. All creatures big and small have the right to live. Find your own societies on Earth, selfish humans, and coexist.” Cried the booming voice.

“Why is everyone leaving! This is your commander! Proceed as planned!” cried Amos.

“We all heard that voice, Amos! We believe it was God telling us to leave at once.... We obey! Let’s get out of here!” Frank shouted. “In the name of God!”

No, actually, the voice was in fact Nibbitz. I have to admit. It was the darned telepathic grasshopper. Mental hallucination, pain, mind coercion. Caused the whole army to retreat. Alpha Village got burnt, so who who knows if they were cutthroat enough to kill apes. They headed for the city.

Except one jeep. Amos’.

And now all ape guns were on him.

“Natalie,” Amos shouted with his horn. “Now we can fix this. Come with me at once in the name of humanity. Stop commiserating with apes.”

Something was wrong. I pulled out my gun. He looked ready to do something stupid.

“No,” she told him, “I’m gonna be with Evan now. You’re crazy to kill the apes. Start your own society in the city.”

I saw he had the rifle pointed in their direction. The apes chose not to interfere. They saw I had it well in hand.

“I’m gonna count to three,” he said, “...one....two...three....” I shot my gun and knocked his out of hand without damaging him. But the gun split. Bad aim maybe? Who knows. An ape scoffed in laughter. But Amos got scared.

The apes grabbed him and Jaspers said, “Did you kill the apes in Alpha Village?”

“The town was empty. We burned it and moved on.” He admitted.

Evalion brushed his friend away and Jaspers shook his head.

“Curious piece, humann.” Evalion Octavion said of Amos’ Cross necklace.

“Explain. Explain to Evalion Octavion the significance of these two metal bars around your neck.”

“It is a necklace of my god.” Amos admitted.

“I see. And can not a Simmean be made in the divine will?”

“No,” spat Amos.

“Ha! Then how can you account for me? For I can speak! I can reason!”

“There is room for all God’s creatures...” Amos muttered....

“Then why attack?? IF your god is even real!”

“Will you Please let me tear this humans limbs from his body! Like the ancient ones did in the jungle!” Jaspers the guerilla threatened.

“No! There’s a message for you in your jeep,” Natalie forwarded, grabbing the prisoner.

“What is it? Let me hear it.” asked Amos, pleading.

“Still alive under captivity from the apes, Amos?” Frank said, the diplomat from the bombed out NY.

“Yes.”

“We’ve got a surprise waiting for you when you return. I’m taking over. There’s going to be co-existence. Distant co-existence. We don’t know the power protecting the apes, but it may or may not be from God. It was painful to all of us. We don’t care. You are deceitful as a leader. We will deal with you. Frank out.”

“Shit,” Amos said, turned on the ignition, and backed away from the apes.

“You don’t conquer for a god,” came the voice, “you conquer for your own selfish reasons, Lieutenant Amos,” Nibbitz shouted.

“Shit, shit,” Amos whined, “May God protect me from these apes.”

“I’ll cut you a break Amos,” I said with my rifle on my shoulder. “Get outta here. But if you come back, you’re under ape law. You’re on a fool’s errand if you’re doing this for religion, Amos. Anyone can see. G’bye! Bye bye!”

Natalie smiled as he drove away.

The apes cheered, and there was much rejoicing.

Natalie looked into Evan’s eyes, and knew she had the right man.

“Could someone get me a Simmean vest too?” She asked. “It looks so cool! Ooo-oo!” She beat her chest and they all cheered and laughed.

Evalion Octavion smiled, for he knew the little grasshopper was certainly more than he appeared to be. So it was. So it would be as it transpired. He thought sent.

“So what really happened here Nibbitz. What happened to the Apes of Alpha Village. Do you know?”

“I sensed there was danger in Alpha village, Evalion two days ago. The apes deserted the town before the humans arrived. I, Nibbitz gave the town residents of Alpha Village the tip-off, as they say, haha. Silly humans. The residents will be here in about a day.”

“I must tell the council. You are a most interesting species, friend, eh Nibbitz!” Thought sent Evalion Octavion. “I mean, grasshopper.”

“You’re blowin it. Be nice.” Nibbitz. “I need something to drink, man.”

“Very well, Nibbitz. Very well.”

After five years of living with the apes, Natalie and I would eventually make plans to create a separate commune of humans with a Simmean type of lifestyle. It was not under ape law, but was considered a neighboring city to do trade with. It was most agreeable. Even Nibbitz found it fascinating; even for a domesticated grasshopper.

Evalion concealed the truth about the battle of both Alpha and Beta Village from everyone but me. I was told over drinks not two weeks after the battles. And when he did explain I said,

“Ape Society...spared by a grasshopper named Nibbitz.... Who knew.”

Our drinks clacked and we laughed.

THE END.

Socrates

"I'm sorry Socrates, I did my best," I told him at the trial in Athens. Socrates looked at me with sad but understanding

eyes. The persecuted philosopher had no chance. "I was asked to give you this immediately. I do not wish to." A goblet of poison.

"Why you? Why not the council, Evan?"

"They want the defenders to pronounce judgement, don't ask why." I replied.

"You would have made a good friend, counselor," Socrates coughed. He took the goblet with a gasp....and in a moments he died!

I awakened in a cold sweat in the city of Atlantis, in my room there. I had travelled a long time, dreaming, travelling. I was not of this century, and I had been here for four months. The Atlanteans were good to me, and I had fond memories of the city. But things were not so well in my mind.

I went to the city Mayor, a friend, and told of him of my dream.

"You were dreaming of old man Socrates, of Athens. Word gets around in waves. He may guilty of impiety, it would appear."

"You mean guilty of not obeying the gods?" I asked.

The Mayor, Hephostles, heaved. "His freedoms are at stake for unpopular public lectures on the street of Athens for the City Administration. We can do nothing in Atlantis for him. He needs an advocate, stranger. Atlantis does not agree with this handling of his civil disobedience, I would concur."

"We are all afraid for people in Greece at the viciousness of Athens rule. They are quite rigid. We would tell him not to demonstrate, and only do his writings with a warning and possibly monitor his behavior. But we consider ourselves a fair judge."

I volunteered. "To be his advocate, would it require any knowledge of Athens law?"

Hephostles, a little dismayed said, "That depends on what you call law. We run our city very differently. This is a battle of cultural ethics, not in fact law."

"I think I know what to do." I told the Mayor.

"Then you should take my chariot, and go." Hephostles sighed. "Do so on behalf of Atlantis."

"One more thing Evan." The Mayor asked. "Do you trust in the gods?"

"Does it even matter?" I asked.

"It goes a long way if you wish to put them in their place. A clue, no more." The Mayor raised his goblet and drank some wine. "Let's toast to good times and loyal friendship in this way."

“The most important task in life is caring for your soul. Your soul is the real person, who you really are. It is the center of your character and what makes you who you are. It is the basis of your thoughts, feelings, values, and decisions. The most important task you face is realizing your potential as a person, who you are. The state of your soul makes you either foolish or wise. Just like the body, the soul should be kept healthy. An unhealthy soul is ignorant of the true priorities in life. You can keep your soul healthy by introspection and ridding yourself of ignorance.

*“He is richest who is content with the least, for content is the wealth of nature.”*

“Be a good person and you will not be harmed by outside forces. If your soul is good, then outside forces cannot harm you. If the most important part of you is your soul and the soul is not physical but inward then it cannot be harmed. The body may be harmed by another person, but the soul cannot unless you allow yourself to become susceptible to others search constantly for wisdom by way of practicing self-evaluation if you wish your soul to be liberated from outside harm.”

It had been a 14 day journey to Athens on Chariot, as Atlantis was quite far. I stepped off the Chariot, tired, tying my horses. There I found a group of men in the main square chatting away in Greek. One of them, maybe in his mid forties on the stairs, talking up a storm.

I waited as a group of men divided the audience, and they were of aristocratic noble ilk. I became questioning of their austere arrogance and haughty demeanor. I kept it under lock and key. One of them handed the older man a piece of paper. It must have been for Socrates.

That was old man Socrates himself I had to guess. Forty something was old in these ancient times, and had had an attractive youthful audience. It had been halted, and Socrates sank to the floor steps of the civic center.

“What does it read, sir?” One of the young men asked.

“It appears I am to have a trial for infecting the young community. I am being sued for the act of impiety by the city of Athens; for not following the command of the gods, to their minds be sure.”

“Maybe you should escape.” His friend across from him stated

“I would not dare, Plato,” Socrates said with a palpitated heart and sighed.

I walked closer still, as the group dispersed, leaving Socrates all alone in his existential misery.

“Why so long, citizen of Athens?” I asked, with a serious tone.

“I am to be tried. I am....persecuted, stranger!” Socrates cried out helplessly.

“What you need is a good advocate, friend. I...am Evan of Atlantis. Perhaps I can assist you.”

“You can start by telling me how a free citizen of Atlantis even knew I needed help?”

“Word gets around, Athenaen. I have heard of your lectures most notably even in Atlantis. When the religions rule the minds of men more than government, heads will turn. We see differently in Atlantis. I speak for them now. When is your trial?”

“You’re fortunate to find me now, Atlantean. The universe has shed light on my plight it would seem. My trial is tomorrow on the morning rise.”

“I sympathize, Socrates. We know of you, and are willing to assist. Please, I know you are a great orator, but if you want to get through this crisis.....you must not speak unless spoken to in the hearing. Allow me to do the talking. Consider me your counselor and defender.” I told him.

“I must find my way to the community hospice and prepare my notes.”

“I will have a speech of my own.” Socrates insisted.

“That is not advisable. If you want me to help you, please allow me to defend your rights.”

Socrates stood, aware of the correction. It was not out of place.

“Tell me what to do,” he said sadly. “I do not wish to die.”

“Get some rest,” I smiled. “If things go my way, we’ll get you through it alive.”

“Stay and dine with myself and my family. We will provide you shelter. Its all I can do. How else can I repay you?”

“Just follow my lead Socrates,” I replied. “If I’m right about this....and I am in this instance, they won’t stand a chance.”

He looked at me with a slight turn and glare, excited.

“Where are you from, stranger?” Socrates asked.

“I’ve seen this kind of thing before. Nothing’s new under the sun, and history has a way of repeating itself.” I looked past him. “Where is your home?”

“Up the hill at the edge of town.”

“We’ll take my chariot, sir.” I told him.

“You are very wise, advocate.” Socrates observed. “I do not yet know your name. What shall I call you?”

“I am Evan. Evan of Atlantis.” As the sun began to set over

Athens, I began to wonder about the meaning of life

## Morning light-THE TRIAL OF SOCRATES

“Are you ready, Socrates?” I followed him to the door. He was nervous. I pretended not to be. “Come on, let’s get it overwith.” I put a hand on his left shoulder, and said. “Do not panic. Never let ‘em see you sweat.” He half smiled, lowered his head, as if he knew something I did not.

It was a public hearing. Many Athenaens came to witness the public outcry of the city administration, including the voice of Aristotles himself, although he was not an enemy. He would have defended Socrates, but did not know how to do that thought conjecture as well as I it would appear. Why

defend Socrates? I was from the future. And I knew history could repeat itself in this way. It was only a matter of time. I had to act quickly.

“The council resides, in the hearing of Socrates versus the people of Athens.” A hammer went down. “Socrates is suspected of crimes against the gods, and civil disorder in this way.”

“Do you have a counselor, Socrates?” asked the council leader.

“I do.” Said Socrates, his head low.

“Swear him in.”

“What is your name? Do you speak for Socrates?” asked the council leader.

“I do.”

“State your name.”

“I am Evan. Evan of Atlantis. I come on behalf of all Greeks and the city of Atlantis.”

They were stunned. “Evan of Atlantis, you are sworn in as counselor for Socrates.

“Do you believe in the gods, counselor?”

“This query is irrelevant to my case. I would argue to their existence it would be not much of a legal issue what is happening in Athens. Its a difference of opinion in Atlantis. We believe the gods stay away. A warning to write and never demonstrate would have been enough. However, as for my faith, I am quite an honorable citizen with much voice and attend public meetings. I am not given much trouble about it in my home city of Atlantis.”

Stunned again, stern looks. I knew they made up their minds already about Socrates. I let them play their charade, and level their aggressive arguments. Socrates was livid and upset and expected the worst. I half smiled, caustically, skeptically, and prepared an attack response.

Then came my turn to speak.

“Can the defense shed any light on this issue? What say you? This is your public statement for the record.”

Little did they know in my own time I have been quite the artist/writer/poet/philosophical sage. I needed to protect Socrates in my ways because I had a philosopher side to my personality. I knew it could happen to me, so it carried over in time. No one knew this better than myself in this way.

“Listen to me people. This is a hunt, not a trial. The gods are not interested in this argument in my perspective. Atlantis does not share your view. I represent them right now, but that is academic. While you prepare your sentence to death for religious reasons unknown, I have a better idea.”

Aristotle rose, concerned, stunned again. “What idea do you have, counselor?”

“Socrates has ideas that are unpopular in Athens. He is a man of integrity, and need not share his ideas with you. I suggest he just leave by your orders and come with me to Atlantis, where at least he could stay home and write in peace. I suggest a more lenient atmosphere. Maybe public

demonstration might not be so acceptable, but its no crime. But I guess we don't understand that here do we now? A departure as sentence would be a more just ruling, no more."

Stunned looks, guilt trips, a change of face. Sudden phase shift in their minds.

"Thank you for your statement. We will reconvene in one hour."

Socrates waited with me in the waiting room, where he sat with hands clasped awaiting judgement. An hour surely passed, and the council resided.

They pronounced a sentence. "Departure granted. If not honored, then death by poison in 24 hours. No return to Athens required. Go in peace. It is so ordered." I carried a straight face. It was not acceptable, but a full pronounced sentence indeed.

I saw what Socrates was thinking in his anger. He wanted to return and boast his independence.

I took him to the side privately and said, "We need to talk. I have an intuition you'd return here after awhile to speak. Its not a good idea. I've seen this kind of thing in other cities in other countries, but not quite this bad.They will kill you, Socrates."

That made him squirm with a reality check. After a moment, he nodded and said, "Very well. I shall gather my affects and travel with my wife and newborn child with you to Atlantis." I smiled and said, "I appreciate your cooperation."

"I do not honor this sentence so quickly," he replied. "They don't understand freedom."

"Give them time." I replied. "The same things that persecute you and will ultimately destroy them one day. They may change their ways.I could have just asked them to stop and leave you be, but stubborn arrogant behavior can have costly effect on the human condition. Instead, we withdraw and just leave."

"You are wise beyond your years, Evan." Socrates said amazed and slightly tearful in relief.

And so the very next morning, and after 14 days, I did find Socrates and family a home in Atlantis.

Atlantis would not fall into the sea for 300 years. By that time I'd be back home in USA, 2018. THE END.