

Corner Bar Magazine

Volume 6 Number 1

Page 1 – DEATH WISH by EDWARD AHERN. Mr. Ahern resumed writing after forty odd years in foreign intelligence and international sales. He’s had over two hundred fifty stories and poems published so far, and six books. Ed works the other side of writing at *Bewildering Stories*, where he sits on the review board and manages a posse of six review editors. His story “Best Wishes” was in the Freifaxi 2020 issue of Corner Bar.

.Page 4 – THE SAVIORS, FILTHY by Craig Steven. “Craig writes horror because he’s always enjoyed having the bejesus scared out of him. Now he wants to do the same thing to other people, and he likes to think he’s pretty good at it. He lives right by Cincinnati. Check him out at craigwrites.com.”

Page 6 – TINK, TINK, TINK by Catherine Link. Retired and living in Hamilton, Texas, Ms Link is a painter who teaches private students. She has had stories published by *Dragon Poet Review*, *Corner Bar Magazine*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, *Toasted Cheese*, *Bewildering Stories*, and *The Writing Disorder*. She is married to Robert Link, also an artist and burgeoning writer.

Page 8 – MOTHER EARTH by Patrick Eades. Mr. Eades of Waterfall, New South Wales writes, “I am a physiotherapist living in Sydney, Australia. I work with all manner of people, from the crippled to the chronic complainers. They each have a story to tell, and I’ve learnt how important it is to be heard. Hopefully I can tell some of my own.”

Page 11 – THE STATUE by Harlan Yarbrough. Educated as a scientist and graduated as a mathematician, Mr. Yarbrough has made his living as a full-time professional entertainer most of his life, including a stint as a regular on the Grand Ole Opry. His short fiction has appeared in thirty-six literary journals, including the *Galway Review*, *Indiana Voice Journal*, *Scarlet Leaf Review*, *Wilderness House Literary Review*, and *Green Hills Literary Lantern*, and won the 2019 Fair Australia Prize.

Page 16 – THE END OF THE LINE by Anita G. Gorman. Ms Gorman grew up in Queens and now lives in northeast Ohio. Since 2014 she has had 46 short stories and 17 essays accepted for publication. Her one-act play, *Astrid: or, My Swedish Mama*, produced at Youngstown Ohio’s Hopewell Theatre in March 2018, starred Anita and her daughter Ingrid.

Page 18 – FREEDOM by Shainur Ullah. Mr. Ullah writes, “My name is Shainur Ullah and I am from England. I like writing short fictional horror stories on the creepypasta site (<http://www.creepypasta.org/user/ullahshy>). My most popular horror stories online have gone “viral” - “Crunched Up Paper House,” “The Camera Man,” and “The Guys Behind Hollywood.” They have also been narrated onto YouTube - check them out!”



“DEATH WISH”

by EDWARD AHERN

“The drain pipe’s backed up again, Mr. Dimas, you have to send someone right away.”

“I had it cleaned out six months ago! What are you putting through it?”

“Nothing. Your plumbing is no good. I’ve stopped paying rent until it’s fixed. It’s unlivable here.”

Kirill muttered “God damn it” into the cell phone, but then choked back his anger and tried reason. “Look Hend—ah, Paul, the drain was repaired less than ten years ago, and you’d agree it’s worked perfectly up to now?”

“Up to now is history, and ten years is enough time for roots to grow back into it. Fix it.”

Another sub-human tenant bleeding off any hope of profit. “Look, Hendricks, there’s nothing wrong with my plumbing. Whatever you’re stuffing the drain pipe with, you have to clean it out yourself.”

“I’m done fixing things that you should have, Dimas. Either you take care of it or I’ll use the rent money to get it done.”

“And I’ll have you evicted.”

“Good luck with that. It’ll take you a year of paperwork and legal fees.”

Kirill swore again. “Either fix it and pay the rent or you’ll find out what I can do.” He resisted the urge to throw his phone

against his office wall, and hung up. The familiar rage surged up from his belly.

“Curse you,” he yelled. “Die after you’re maimed in an accident.” He tensed. His tenants were shiftless, but he’d never before hated one enough to curse him aloud. His expression hardened. He meant it. That money draining leech should cease to exist.

Both of Kirill’s hands were clenched into fists. He opened and flexed them, shifted his considerable mass in the chair, and resumed processing receipts. Toward the middle of the afternoon, Lucy texted.

Need to see you this eve.

He texted back. *Absolutely. Looking forward to seeing more of you.*

The double entendre was deliberate. Kirill was slathering Lucy with innuendo to promote his cause. The technique was problematic. His few consummated relationships since his bitter divorce had been brief and ended badly, because, he told himself, he was attracted to complex women with issues. He’d decided to make his move that evening.

He arrived at the bar fifteen minutes early, and as he waited forty-five minutes, Kirill’s composure chipped into a jagged edge.

“There you are. Finally.” He pushed out a smile.

Lucy was dressed in well-worn jeans and hoodie rather than date clothes. She sat, not next to, but across the table from him. After drinks had arrived, Kirill allowed Lucy two sips and a question about how her day had been before launching.

“Lucy, you know I’m seriously interested in you. I’d like to...”

She held her palm toward him. “No. Please stop, Kirill. I came tonight because you deserve to hear from me in person. I guess you’re a good person, but—I don’t know how else to say it—you unsettle me.”

“Look, Lucy...”

“No, please let me finish. You’re smart, well off, and decent looking, but I’m not comfortable around you. And before we could get closer I’d have to feel something that’s lacking. I’m sorry, it’s probably me, but we need to move on.”

The anger crawled on crab legs up Kirill’s throat. He blurted, “You bitch. Slurping down my booze, teasing me. Who the hell are you?”

Lucy started to say something, pressed her lips back together, got up and walked away. Kirill sat motionless and flushed for several seconds, then quickly downed his scotch and soda. He switched glasses with Lucy’s and swigged Lucy’s drink, the grapefruit juice rasping his throat.

He pulled out his cell phone, turned it on, and started thinking up comments to trash her on social media. But he noticed a voice message. It was from Hendricks.

“Plumber comes in the a.m. If I spend my money you get reported to the Renters’ Complaint Center.”

“You runny dog turd!” The foursome at the next table turned their heads to stare at

him. Kirill didn’t care.

“I curse you, Hendricks. I curse you! I CURSE YOU!”

His waiter ran over to Kirill’s table. “Sir, you must lower your voice or I’ll have to ask you to leave.”

“You can go to hell too. Forget a tip.”

Kirill peeled a few bills from his money clip and tossed them on the table. Back in his car, Kirill forced himself to drive close to the speed limit. He knew if he let out the rage he’d be busted for speeding.

Once home, he microwaved and ate something mislabeled as edible. Then he loaded up a tumbler with scotch and ice and sat in front of a black TV screen nursing his drink and a black mood. Halfway through it he realized that his eyes were watering. *Dammit, Lucy, we could have been good for each other.* He finished his drink, washed the dishes and went to bed.

Kirill frequently dreamed but could never remember much. Not that night. That night whatever dream he’d been wallowing in faded away to reveal a naked woman facing him. She had the body and face of a slender young woman, but gray hair that hung down straight from her head and pubis. The muscles on the woman’s arms and legs were sharply defined. There was no visible fat on her, and her face was as sharp boned as a model’s.

“What the hell,” Kirill dream-said.

“You may call me Nemma. Sister Nemma. You summoned me.”

“I never...” Kirill hesitated. He hadn’t had a wet dream in decades, but just maybe this was shaping up into one. “Sure. What did you have in mind?”

“You summoned me to execute a curse.

I am prepared to do so. But be forewarned, this killing will be premeasured. If it is not warranted, the death will be on you.”

The dream woman’s expression was stony, and Kirill figured his subconscious wouldn’t let him nocturnally emit. “What? Who? Oh, you must mean Hendriks.”

“Jacob Hendricks. Yes. Think carefully. You are about to sanction a murder. Be careful. Righteous anger is akin to measured love, the words do not fit together. Do you validate your curse?”

He hesitated again, caution surfacing, but knew the cheap scumbag would keep his rent money and report him for violations. Rage choked his dream voice.

“The bastard deserves to die. As soon as possible.” Kirill felt himself smile.

The woman’s face saddened. “Know that I take no pleasure in the deadly judgement between the two of you.” And then, with no sound or vapor, she was gone.

Unlike his other dreams, the woman’s words and image were still vivid to Kirill when he woke up. “I wish it were that easy,” he said aloud. On an impulse he called Hendricks.

“Dimas, I just woke up from a horrible dream, about you and some woman. She mentioned your name and threatened to kill me. It was the worst nightmare I’ve ever had. She touched me and the pain was so intense I had to answer her. I woke up screaming. If I dream about her again it will kill me.”

Kirill realized he was shaking. “Look Hendricks, just pay the rent and repair.”

“Not a chance,” Hendricks said and hung up.

Kirill dressed and went to work. He

occupied himself with the rental accounting until the receptionist called.

“Mr. Dimas, there’s a Sister Nemma here to see you.”

Fear chattered up through his chest. “Tell her to go away. I’m not available.”

“Yes, Sir. OH! She touched me. I’m to tell you that she’s on her way up.”

Kirill jumped out of his chair and was halfway to the door when it opened. Nemma faced him. She wore leather sandals and a plain gray, sleeveless shift that hid the contours of her body. Gray hair shimmered around the expressionless eyes of a bird of prey.

“I am come to test the stone caster.”

“How? Who?” Kirill flinched and backed up toward his desk.

She didn’t seem to move, but was next to him and touched his cheek with her fingers. The left side of his jaw screamed with toothaches as his memories were sucked out into her fingers.

“Έτσι, η αλήθεια, thus the truth,” she murmured, keeping her fingers softly to his face. “You have been found – wanting. I am come to exact the death you demanded.”

Kirill yelled through the pain in his mouth. “But the curse is on Hendricks!”

“My decisions are two-edged swords, cutting as warranted. You have been judged. How do you wish to remember your death?” She was silent for a heartbeat. “Ah. Very well.”

Nemna’s face filled in and reformed. Kirill was staring at a sad faced Lucy with straight gray hair. “To what never was but could have been, Kirill,” she said, and kissed him lingeringly on the lips. He passed in the fullness of that sensation. ❖

“THE SAVIORS, FILTHY”

by CRAIG STEVEN

Dana was beautiful once. She still passed for pretty but going beyond that would be pandering. It seemed like just yesterday her whole life sat before her, ready for the taking. She missed those times dearly. Looking at the glass half full, however, she was still alive, unlike the murdered man at her feet.

She brushed hair from her forehead and eyes, wiping blood across her face without a thought. She couldn't think straight. Her mind conjured only pieces of what led to this altercation and its gory ending. Dana was normally reserved, a pushover, the definition of a pacifist. This wasn't her. But spilled milk (or blood) and all that. The damage had been done. Not only that, but she would do the deed a hundred times over if time would only allow her.

The taste of revenge rested on her tongue, that and victory. It was the first time in an eternity it encountered something other than bitterness.

Her blouse was ruined by the carnage. A shame - it was new, and designer. She had left the house, trying to resemble a cougar on the prowl. She supposed the title still fit her, although by different definition. Better the predator than the prey.

The bartender washed glasses in her

own little world, uninterested. When Dana sliced the man's throat with a broken bottle and he fell to the ground like a stubborn curtain, she merely smirked and nodded once at Dana. She, too, must have known the kind of pain that drove sane people to these lengths.

The pair of them and the corpse had the room. Dana started to ask the bartender if she had any clue what to do now, but the door to the venue slammed open, preemptively answering. It was past midnight now, almost closing time, but you wouldn't think it with the size of the crowd pouring in. The cool summer night rushed in with over a dozen men, all dressed identically to Dana's victim, running toward the deceased.

“Who are y-”

“What did you do?!” they barked in frightening unison. “He's a good man!”

“Good man?” she watched as they crowded the corpse, forcing her back a few steps. Their eyes flipped furiously between the killer and the killed.

“You have no idea what he did to me!”

“Good man, good man, *GREAT MAN!*” The cacophony of their voices drowned Dana's attempt to defend her honor against men who had known her a full minute at most.

She wanted to scream over them, but

when she witnessed exactly what they were doing, the words caught in her throat.

How they had known to bring such instruments, she didn't know. Maybe men like this were always prepared to raise one of their own from the dead. No matter the time of night, no matter their brothers' previous indiscretions. They didn't even have to *know* him to help him - they simply felt the need to.

Defibrillators, adrenaline shots, sewing needles, gauze, bags of fucking blood, for Pete's sake. Ordinary men wearing \$20 ties and Wal-Mart blazers, playing the role of witchdoctors spectacularly, protectors of predators.

Like Frankenstein's monster, the dead man rose to his feet, groaning and rubbing his throat. Dead or alive, she had scarred him. Bloodied stitches criss-crossed his Adam's Apple. Dana had no idea how he was even breathing right now, but a small victory was better than none; she had, at the very least, marked him.

His protectors helped him to his feet, acting as crutches for his wobbly legs, cooing words of encouragement. Chief among them was the reminder that he was a good man, a good man, a *GREAT MAN*, even.

He leveled a furrowed brow and dead eyes upon her.

"You fucking *killed* me."

"You *raped* me."

She had held fast to this accusation for more than half her life. Now it was one less thing she would take to her grave with her. Was it worth it? Where were *her* protectors? No one had flocked to her, all those years ago. She would have done *anything* for the

type of support these random men freely gave to this bastard now. She had only the bartender in her corner, who simply continued to frown at Dana as if to say she should have known better.

"You really think a misunderstanding that happened decades ago warrants killing me? You're not going to get away with this, you crazy bitch."

"Look at you!" she shrieked, tearing layers in her throat. For once, at least, it wasn't from crying too goddamn hard. "You're alive! Tell people whatever you want. Nobody's going to believe a word that comes out of your mouth!"

He smirked as he looked her up and down. "Back at you, whore."

Before she could retort, or kill him again, he turned and walked out of the bar. His posse followed closely, practically chanting "good man" the entire time.

Dana watched yet refused to believe this version of reality. She had him dead to rights, and literally dead, and it had amounted to nothing. Nothing but the scar he would carry for the rest of his life, easily hidden if he cared to do so. Had her honor and simple justice really been disregarded and discarded so casually? Did no one care to hear her side and fight for her?

"Sit down," the bartender piped up. "It's last call and you could use a drink."

She sighed, pouring whiskey into two glasses. "All of us fucking could." She downed the shot, grimacing. She either didn't know she was crying, or she was so used to it she didn't bother hiding it anymore. ❖

“TINK, TINK, TINK”

by CATHERINE LINK

“The Dragon Sea,” Gan said. “Where typhoons blow half the year and cyclones blow the rest.”

He was a Vietnamese elder—a thay boi mu—blind and bent with age. He tugged the beard hanging from his chin, scowling as he shouted warnings to a crowd of foreigners on the dock.

“There are no good seasons to search for sunken treasure, but still you come, as I came—decades ago, a foolish youth.”

Daily, Gan sat on a bench, telling fortunes. He put his begging bowl near his feet and listened for the tink of coins.

“The Dragon sea is a bone yard where fools sacrifice bits of themselves to the gods, praying for treasure. We know the gods forsake us, but still we try. Some give all and go to next life where they try again.”

“And you? Did you sacrifice your sight?” A man asked.

“Eyes knocked from head by a dragon. Searching the sea floor, I found a chest in the sand. Wood chest covered with clams, coral, tube worms, other creatures that no longer exist. In the center was a gigantic oyster with two pearls. As I reached for pearls, dragon guarding chest strike me with claw.”

“Why didn’t he kill you?”

“To punish me in the most cruel way. I found treasure but cannot see. For that, I

name pearls “Tears of the Dragon.”

“You have them?” a skeptical voice asked.

Gan stood, raised his head and opened his eyes. People nearby gasped; a few cried out. In his eye sockets were two enormous orbs the color of imperial jade—luminescent green flecked with gold dust.

“Now I see as the dragon sees. Energy of goodness or shadow of doom, aura surrounding everything, everyone. Helps to tell fortune.”

Tension grew as the old man spoke. Hands reached out and he gripped them, feeling palms, reading lines with the tips of his fingers. He felt scalps, searching for significant bumps. He spoke to them all, telling each something they needed to hear. When Gan was done, he sat on the bench, exhausted.

“Fate is as always was. Riches for some. Death for others. Sameness for most. You know your fortune already. Listen to your heart, yes?”

Tink, tink, tink—coins filled his bowl. As the people scattered, going back to their lives, Gan heard hope in their voices. That was his gift to them, as their money was a gift to him.

Wind from the southwest brought the smell of rain. It was time for him to go home. He picked up the begging bowl; it

was heavy, and that pleased him. He would eat well and stay warm while the coming storm passed.

The old man was tired. His eye sockets ached, so he removed the pearls and put them in a silk pouch. He unfolded a white

cane, moving it back and forth to keep from falling, for without the Tears of the Dragon, he was truly blind. ❖



“MOTHER EARTH”

by PATRICK EADES

‘Earth is an infectious pustule threatening to contaminate our neighborhood and destroy the stability we’ve had for the last four and a half billion years. I propose she be forced to self-isolate for the next 200 million years to ensure her disease won’t spread amongst us,’ Mars said, glowing red with conviction.

‘Earth, do you care to respond to these accusations?’ the Sun asked.

Mother Earth stared back at the Sun, as she had done for as long as she could remember. She liked staring at the Sun. She didn’t like staring so much at Mars, who thought the Sun shined out of his own arsehole.

‘Your Honour, these accusations are baseless. And to be quite honest—disrespectful,’ Mother Earth said. She wasn’t worried—she and the Sun had a connection far deeper than any of the others.

‘Mars, do you have any evidence for these claims?’

‘Evidence! How about the pile of metallic junk she fired at me a few years back? I’m allergic to graphite—it damn near killed me.’

Mother Earth had to stifle a laugh; Mars was such a drama queen.

‘Please, my children were only mucking around. You know how they love their toys,’ she replied, trying to catch the Sun’s

eye.

Mother Earth let her thoughts travel back to the early days of their relationship, when she couldn’t tell if the Sun liked her any more than the others. She knew she wasn’t the only planet he courted, but she was the only one to bear his children. Of course the others would be jealous.

‘It’s not just that though. Have a look at her! Holes in her ozone layer, enough gas leaking off her you’d think she’s trying to impersonate Jupiter,’ Mars said. ‘And those cute little white patches on top and bottom? Melted away by the infection that boils within. I’m sure even you can admit Sun—she’s let herself go.’

A rainbow of colour twinkled across the Sun’s surface. ‘Enough! Personal attacks will not be tolerated in this court.’

Mother Earth felt reassured the Sun jumped to her defence, but Mars had a point. Motherhood had taken its toll on her appearance; the millennia had not been kind. Her once clear surfaces now pock-marked by angry zits and old scars, discernable memories of sibling disputes. Her bright blue seas, which used to excite the Sun with his reflection, had curdled into a greyish hue—poisoned by her children’s rancid discards.

‘Any comments from our other members?’ the Sun asked.

'Your honour, I have known Earth for many years,' Venus said.

Mother Earth relaxed; Venus always had her back. At one stage they had been rivals for the Sun's attention, and Mother Earth knew how desperately Venus wanted children of her own. But as time passed, a friendship blossomed, and Venus admitted to Earth she and the Sun weren't compatible anyway (Two hotheads like us? Uh uh, not gunna work).

'Earth always puts others first. She is a loyal friend, lover and mother. She would never knowingly cause harm to anyone. However, in this case I am inclined to agree with Mars.'

Mother Earth jerked to attention, causing a landslide in the Philippines and ten new apartment blocks in Sydney to crack beyond repair.

'The love she has for her children blinds her,' Venus continued. 'She can't see what destructive little shits they are. They couldn't give a fuck what happens to us other planets. They don't even care about the damage they inflict on their own mother. Tell me, what's going to happen when they've finished her off? They'll need somewhere else to live, to infect. I don't feel safe.'

'Hear, hear!' said Mars.

Mother Earth felt the heat boiling below her surface. A volcano, long thought dormant in the north island of New Zealand, threatened to erupt. 'Excuse me, I will not allow my children to be attacked. They can be a little naughty, sure, but they are barely out of nappies! Show me a toddler who hasn't caused a little destruction. They can't be held responsible for their

actions.

'And Venus, so much for the sisterhood of terrestrial planets hey? No need to take your jealous gas rages out on me, just because you're barren.'

Venus started to yell obscenities, and the Sun had to roar to be heard. 'Order! Order! What did I say about personal attacks? We will have a short 15-year recess before the court resumes.'

As the other planets turned away from the Sun, Jupiter —silent until now— approached Mother Earth.

'Hey. If things don't work out with you and the Sun, I might be able to help.'

Mother Earth rolled her eyes, and tidal waves surged towards the arctic circle. Jupiter still clung to dreams far beyond his reach. He kept telling anyone who would listen that one day he would be a star even bigger than the Sun. Like the middle-aged singer who still believes his YouTube channel is bound to 'blow up bigger than Bieber's,' he was a pitiful sight.

'If he kicks you out, I could come with you. We could start our own solar system. We could call ourselves *Earthupitor*. Or *Jupitearth*. I'll let you decide, they're both pretty catchy right?'

Mother Earth thought about telling Jupiter he couldn't even melt a snowball in the Lut desert in mid-summer, but sometimes you have to let a dreamer dream. Pity he was such a weakling; his stripes were kind of cute.

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'Now, I would request all members behave in a civil manner for the rest of the trial,' the Sun said once everyone returned.

Mother Earth tried to catch the Sun's

eye, but he wouldn't look her way. She felt coldness where there should have been warmth.

'Are there any final comments before I make my decision?' the Sun asked.

'Can I just say,' said Mars, who sounded as if he were reading an autocue, 'In the short recess; Earth managed to burn through half the major forests on her surface, lost thousands of her so called *children* to extinction, and spewed out millions more tons of elemental excrement into our system. All the symptoms of a raging infection.'

'—And,' Mars continued before anyone could respond, his voice rising several notches, 'Her favourite sons launched another attack on my soil. Look!' he said, screeching.

'This aluminium mosquito crawls across my surface spreading who knows what disease. She needs to be stopped.'

Mother Earth could feel her crust begin to simmer. A heatwave blasted across central Australia, withering the sugarcane crops and scattering cattle amongst the dried up river beds in a fruitless search for shade and moisture. 'What do you want me to say? Sure—I'm not feeling a hundred percent right now, but what mother ever does? None of you have any idea of the sacrifices I've had to make. And in case you've all forgotten, we are sitting on an expiry date remember? The Sun aint gunna shine forever, and what do we do then? My children might be the best chance we have at extending it.'

A wave of overwhelming tiredness washed over her. She was sick of begging for forgiveness, begging for love and

warmth and just a little fucking glimpse of stability.

'If you kick me out,' she said, tilting towards the Sun, 'That's it for us. I won't come back. Our children will die, and I'll never forgive you.'

Silence.

'Very well. I have come to my decision. As much as it pains me, we have to protect the safety of all our members. If this is an infection, it will pass in time, and you can return to our system. Earth, I order you to self-isolate for one hundred million years.'

A small asteroid, directed by the power of the Sun's gaze, crashed into the Earth and caused a dust storm to blanket the Sahara Desert. Its impact knocked Earth a fraction off her orbit of the Sun, and she began to drift away in ever expanding passes. She thought back to when she had first met the Sun. How good it felt to have him all over her. The promises he made, to provide for their children, to keep her warm through good times and bad. Turns out he was just an egotistical shit who thought he was the centre of the universe. Some stars aren't meant to be fathers.

She could hear Mars cackling away, but the Sun's voice intruded one last time.

'Mars, as you have been in close contact with Earth, there is a risk the infection may have spread to you. You are also required to self-isolate for the next one hundred million years.'

Mars's screams echoed across the space as she drifted away. She hoped he headed straight for the black hole. ❖

“THE STATUE”

by HARLAN YARBROUGH

The area isn't exactly thriving, of course, few places are, but it has fared much better than its once-prosperous cousin on the coast, or what was the coast. The statue contributes some small amount toward whatever prosperity the inland area enjoys. The statue is beautiful, in a subdued way, and people come to see it.

Perhaps as many come to see the statue for other reasons. One of those reasons is that being close to the statue makes people feel happy. Yes, I know that sounds crazy, but I also know it's true. Not only have I experienced it myself every time I've come near that amazing piece of rock, but literally thousands of people have testified to that effect. Furthermore, not one person—not *one*—has ever denied feeling a gentle bliss and contentment when in close proximity to the statue.

Other people visit the town and the statue because of the mystery of the statue's origins. No, not mystery, exactly, because hundreds of eyewitnesses—several still living today, and all thoroughly interviewed and investigated and eventually corroborated and substantiated—observed the statue's beginnings. Few of those witnesses knew the history of the people involved, but some did and, that, too, underwent intense scrutiny and investigation and eventual confirmation.

Everyone agreed on the statue's origin and the blissful feeling induced in anyone near it, but the stories seemed, still seem, too outlandish to be true. Thorough research established the facts, however, and validated the stories of the eyewitnesses. Said witnesses included me, but I was too young then to grasp the import of what I saw. My parents and their friends, however, were mature and competent witnesses. They and other adults talked about those days for decades, so their reminiscences are as familiar to me as my own memories of that time.

Oddly, they didn't talk about what was happening down on the coast, but I watched that happen—slowly, but much faster than predicted. I saw the developers, obscenely rich businessmen, frantically trying to stave off financial ruin while still denying anything untoward was happening.

Los Angeles, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Charleston, Savannah, pretty much all of Florida, London—the barrage on the Thames held the waters at bay for a few years, but the sea's relentless rise overcame every barrier—Brussels, Stockholm, Oslo, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Rome, Venice—of course, but also Genoa and Naples—Barcelona, Istanbul, almost all of The Netherlands and Denmark and Bangladesh

and a dozen island nations, Capetown, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangkok, Singapore, Jakarta, Hong Kong, Beijing, Seoul, all the Japanese cities and Chinese coastal cities, Manila, Honolulu and all the other cities and towns in Hawai'i, Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo and the notorious Rio—all gone, all vanished beneath the encroaching sea.

The city fathers of Manchester hoped to become Britain's main port, but the Atlantic inundates the city too often and the burghers have had to abandon both the idea and the city. Tankers and bulk carriers still can't navigate the Sacramento Sound, but judicious dredging has allowed most container ships to discharge their cargo at the Port of Red Bluff.

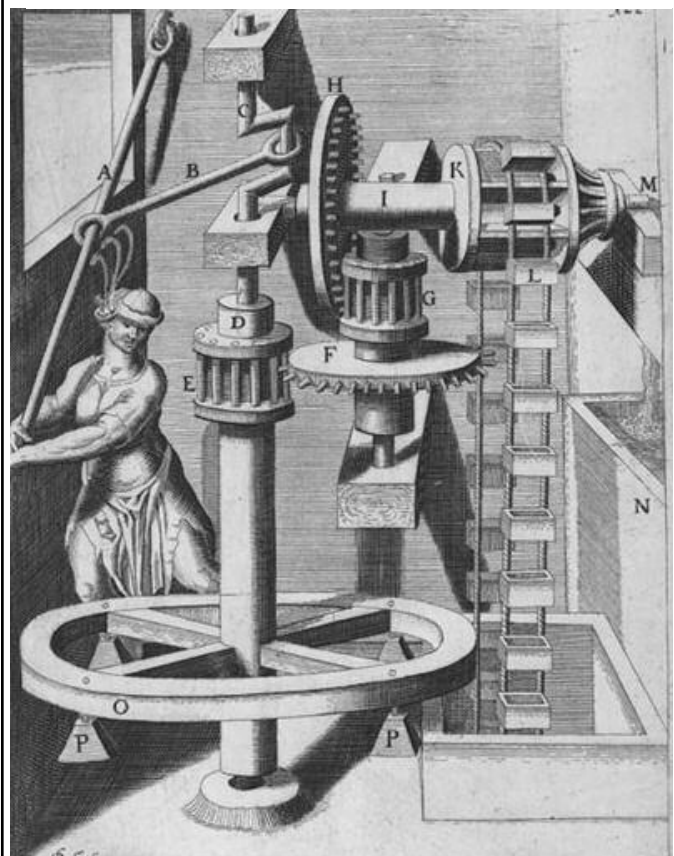
Closer to this story's location, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane, and most of Adelaide and Sydney vanished beneath the waves. Parts of Adelaide and Sydney and Hobart and the Dandenong communities of Melbourne became the present groups of islands, like San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Paris, Auckland, Lisbon, Athens, and the outskirts of Berlin.

But the statue—the statue sits at a comfortable 1,360 feet above what authorities defined as sea level for centuries or about 1,130 feet above current sea levels. Too far from even the new coast to usurp that area's minor fame and popularity, the little inland town benefits from some spillover of the few tourists who can still afford long distance travel and more especially from having one of the few international airports near enough to the new coast for tourism. Many visitors come to the inland basin and modest mountains to view the multitude of

gorgeous waterfalls, but more than a few come to see the amazing statue. To the surprise of no one, visitors and locals agree it is the most lifelike statue in the world.

Apart from that quality, what is it that draws so many people to gaze on this monolith of what tests indicate seems to be a unique igneous stone midway between basalt and granite? It is both well-known and obvious that the answer to the foregoing question is: the statue's origins. For that reason, reviewing what is known about those origins seems worthwhile.

My parents knew Bob Johns, one of the parties of significance to the statue and this story. They knew him as a friend, not a close friend but more than a mere acquaintance. Indeed, I knew him, when I was a



toddler—he used to pick me up and throw me in the air and catch me. I loved that and thought he was great, although I never really got to know him well. Much of what I record here will be from what my parents told me in my later childhood and teens and adult years.

My wife’s mother and aunt, both still alive and apparently in command of their faculties, knew Naomi, the other significant party, and have been generous with their time and knowledge. Unlike the case of my late parents, I have been able to go back and check and re-check with them to ensure I have recorded their memories accurately. Much of what I record here will therefore also reflect what I have learned from those two kind women.

In the first year after the statue came into existence, scores of law enforcement officers swarmed throughout this region. Many other government officials also came to our beautiful part of the country to investigate the phenomenon and the claims about it. All reached the same conclusion. Hundreds of independent witnesses, completely unknown to each other, corroborated one another’s stories time after time.

Once the government agencies had taken their turn at trying to figure out what happened, the scientists began arriving. The first dozen or so arrived full of confidence—they felt sure the police and other government representatives erred, missed something crucial, and so produced an incorrect description of what had occurred. The scientists didn’t relinquish that view in a hurry or without a struggle. After a year, a few of them began saying the unthinkable: that the earlier investigators got the

story right after all.

A memory of my own, not something heard from my parents or others, sticks with me, even though I would have been only seven or eight at the time. Two scientists, both middle aged men, stood talking on the sidewalk down the street from the statue. One of them had tears running down his cheeks, and he was saying, “It *can’t* be. It just *can’t* be. But it *is*.” Within five or six years, the scientific community had largely accepted that the eyewitness accounts represented an accurate picture of what transpired. Of course, there are still those who disagree—most of them scientists who have never been here to carry out first-hand research. A few still show up here every year to explore some new angle that will provide an alternative explanation that fits the known facts.

What is known and well established: Bob Johns came to this region with his wife in the mid-90s and taught at a state high school in one of the outlying communities. While teaching there, he met Naomi, who was one of his students. He and his wife later left the country and lived for several years in New Zealand, then the United States, and then back to New Zealand. Mrs. Johns left the marriage, and Mr. Johns subsequently moved to Bhutan. A month before Bob Johns went to Bhutan, Naomi began working as a teller at the bank in front of which the statue now stands. After two years in Bhutan, Mr. Johns returned to this region and bought a small property with a sound but unconventional house near the community where he taught in the ’90s. That much is incontrovertibly veri-

fied by official public records.

What is established and substantiated beyond any reasonable doubt: while teaching here in the '90s, Bob Johns regularly played music with local musicians both in this area and down on the coast and established a good reputation. In that same period of time, he developed but never expressed an intense love for Naomi. She developed similar feelings for him but remained unaware of his feelings. Already struggling with a difficult home life, Naomi suffered an emotional decline after Mr. Johns left the school. After graduation, she moved to the coast and became involved in the drug culture in the city. Several years later, she left that life behind, returned to this area, and began taking university classes. While studying part-time and volunteering as a counsellor for drug-affected young people, she began working for a local bank, as noted above.

Evidence and background for the foregoing: interviews with musicians here and on the coast testify to Bob Johns' prowess as a singer, guitarist, and fiddler. Barry Murphy, who plays an Irish instrument called Uilleann pipes, said, "I hadn't seen the lad for twenty years and didn't recognize him. As soon as he opened his mouth to sing, I remembered him sure enough. He played fiddle with us nearly every week, and we were all glad to have him back."

Tim O'Shaughnessy was another of those musicians who became friends with Bob Johns, and Mr. O'Shaughnessy said in an interview that his friend Bob had told him back in the '90s about having fallen in love with one of his students. The follow-

ing is an excerpt from that interview.

I asked him, "Have you told the girl?"

Bob said, "Of course not! A teacher can't go telling a student he's in love with her. It's probably illegal and certainly unethical and unprofessional. Besides, I'm married, and I love my wife."

His wife, although very heavy, was beautiful, and he obviously did love her. I wondered if this new complication would hurt their marriage, but they left soon after and moved overseas. He sent me a couple of postcards, but we lost track of each other for the next twenty years.

When I saw him again, after he came back to this area, he was single and broken-hearted but still a great musician. I never thought to ask him about the student he'd fallen in love with.

Many people have come forward to provide information about various parts of Mr. Johns' life, including his marriage and its end, his heartbreak, his years in Bhutan, and his return to this area. What follows is a compilation into narrative form of testimony and supporting information established with a very high probability of accuracy, at least 95 per cent.

Bob Johns liked the peace and quiet of

his rural home and therefore avoided going into town, any town. He did go to one of the local towns or down to the coast and the city at least once each week to play music, sometimes for money and sometimes for fun. Otherwise, he stayed home as much as he could. He did not trust the security of on-line financial transactions, however, and therefore drove into town to conduct any necessary banking errands—the most frequent being his monthly mortgage payment.

On one such trip, when he had been back in this area for eight months and owned his property for not quite four months, he encountered Naomi, who accepted his payment at the bank. Neither had looked at the other carefully, studying instead the piece of paper with the account number and, in Naomi's case, the computer screen. As he told her his name, he looked at her for the first time and, witnesses say, appeared to recognize her. At the same time, hearing his name, she stared at him.

Naomi got her hand over her mouth just in time to stifle her happy scream of "Mister Johns". She jumped off her stool and ran to the door leading out into the public part of the bank. After letting herself out, she ran to Bob Johns, took his right hand in her left one, and led—almost dragged—him out onto the sidewalk.

Once outside, the two embraced. Bob enveloped Naomi in a bear hug, and she encircled his torso with her arms and pulled him to her with all her strength. They kissed once, gently, affectionately, and she laid her head on his collarbone just under his jaw and squeezed him tighter.

The two talked a little, exchanging endearments and background for a few minutes, then both fell silent and simply stood and enjoyed each other's proximity. Their embrace lasted long enough that people began making a point of not looking at them, or appearing not to look at them, or trying not to look at them.

The enamored pair said little, obviously savoring being close to each other, their faces radiating bliss, glowing as if lit from within—according to later interviews with passers-by. The two looked so consumed by their rapturous happiness that no one ventured to disturb them. The bank's assistant manager, Hilda Androtti, observed the two sweethearts, when she went to lock the door at the end of the business day. She said the look of joy on their faces was so intense, so profound, she couldn't bring herself to disturb the happy couple. Audio recordings and transcripts capture Mrs. Androtti's saying she liked Naomi and hoped, as she locked the bank's front door that evening, the bank wouldn't fire Naomi for leaving her post.

At some point late in the evening, one of the town's constables passed by, looked at the couple, decided they weren't hurting anyone, said, "Good evening," and continued walking. The morning's first pedestrians did the same. The statue, if "statue" is the correct term, remains on that spot today, on the sidewalk in front of the bank on the town's main street. The look of bliss on the two faces still moves me, although I have seen it literally thousands of times. ❖

“THE END OF THE LINE”

by ANITA G. GORMAN

The train jolted to a stop. The doors opened and people left the train. Only Marvin remained in the last car sound asleep. A conductor walked over to him and roughly shook him. Marvin woke up.

“Oh, where am I?” He looked out the window. The landscape was unfamiliar.

“It’s the end of the line. You’ll have to leave, Mister. The train is going back to the city.”

“Can I just go back to the city with the train?”

“No, mister. It’s the end of the line.”

Marvin grabbed his briefcase and stumbled out of the train. The doors shut immediately. The train station was deserted. Where was he? He looked for a sign. And then he saw it. It said, “The End of the Line.” But that wasn’t a real place, was it? He knew towns sometimes had strange names, but not anything like this.

He went through the turnstile. No one was working at the ticket booth. Stumbling out into the sunshine Marvin looked for signs of life and saw no one on the street. He walked to a small park and sat down on a bench. At least there were birds wandering around, and squirrels and chipmunks.

He unlocked his briefcase. The contents did not look familiar. A letter with his name on it sat on top of a pile of papers. He opened it.

“Dear Marvin,” he read, “you seem to have lost everything, the love of your wife, the love of your children, all contact with your brother and sister. What do you have left? You are at the end of the line. Which way shall you go from here?”

Who had written the letter? It was handwritten, but he didn’t recognize the handwriting. Marvin continued to look at the contents of his briefcase. Why were these things here? His high-school diploma, his award for perfect attendance, his college diploma, the tassel he wore at graduation, old ticket stubs to concerts long forgotten, a photo of his wife and children.

He began to panic. What did this all mean? Was he alone in the world? Had he died and reached some undefined place? What had he done to deserve this lonely spot at the end of the line?

Marvin closed his briefcase and closed his eyes and started to reminisce. Somehow something in his life had gone wrong. What was it?

He remembered the first time he had cheated on his wife, the first time he had forgotten to pick up little Jeremy at baseball practice, the last time he had criticized his daughter Hazel for her chubbiness. He remembered how he had neglected his parents in the years before they finally died. He remembered the many times he had

yelled at his secretary, stolen items from the supply closet, blamed co-workers for his own failings.

“I am at the end of the line. If I could only have a second chance. I’ll be a good guy, I promise,” but only the birds and squirrels and chipmunks were listening. “I’ll be a better husband, a better father, a nicer boss, an honest guy. I promise.”

Then he heard a sound. It was the sound of a train. Marvin grabbed the briefcase and ran back to the station. His old ticket worked in the turnstile. The train

approached the station, but it was coming from the other direction. How could that be if this was the end of the line? He waited for the train to stop, and when the doors opened he jumped in. The doors closed, and he sat down by the window, hoping that soon he would be back in the city. ❖



“FREEDOM”

by SHAINUR ULLAH

Ed. Note: Welcome to episode seven of our serialized short novel *Freedom*. In this story, alien beings feed and survive off the freedoms of humans, who can only combat them by restricting their own rights, even to the point of slavery. See episodes one through six in our 2020 issues to catch up and...enjoy....

Episode 7

I took the necessary equipment to make sure to get out of there, the creatures did not even approach me, they knew that they could never reach me, not if I had the necessary materials to fight them, or at least to repel them, so I felt even more confident. From what I had come to that place, I took the way back, and surprisingly it had gotten shorter, when I got to the forest, a rescue team was already there, waiting for me, so I did not have to deal with giant snakes or other animals that could be found in that place, I got into a helicopter and again headed to England, the place I had abandoned with fear and hopelessness, but that would receive me with a better face and a completely different attitude.

I got on the helicopter and plunged into my thoughts, the team believed that maybe more crewmen were coming, however I told them that this time it would be

only me, and that we should come back at some point to find out what had happened with these men, who they accompanied me during the expedition, I slept a little, with my backpack embraced, I took it firmly, I did not want anyone to find out about its contents, I did not want anyone to be able to reveal the secret. I had to think very well about the story I had to tell, since my colleagues at the end knew the truth of the material and if they returned they would surely demand part of the piece to protect themselves and their loved ones. Who would not want to have an anti-alien shield? Who did not want to keep their loved ones away from this undeserved threat? I think that no person would say that they did not need this.

I slept during the time the trip lasted, and I thought a lot about everything that happened and the disappearance of all my colleagues, but in particular I thought about Samuel's death, and that if he had chosen a smaller number of companions for the expedition, this would not have been successful in any way. For the first time I felt that it was my destiny to carry out that expedition, because what possibilities existed that I was the only being that could read all the inscriptions of the stone through Noah's amulet ?, quite small, I began to believe that perhaps it was That

my destiny, and that would be my contribution to society, but there would be certain issues that still tormented me too much, my dream - premonition in which I already knew the shape of Andrew Bradley's amulet, and being in the right place and time with the necessary people to be able to find the way to extract the precious material.

I arrived at the Bradley Expeditions building, and tried to keep calm, when they entered I was asked for the backpack so that I did not have to take its contents, nevertheless I refused in a very polite way, I went directly to Andrew's office, this was waiting for me expectantly, he could see that he sensed it, he knew that the search had been a success. I entered and took a seat, I had not realized how tired I felt until I remained in the armchair inside the office, in silence.

A few minutes passed until Andrew broke the silence, "How much?" asked this man who looked shining today this morning, and I took my backpack, opened it and with a quick movement I managed to unwrap the stone, which now in the environment from the office and with the desk in the background it looked much bigger and more imposing, we were in the presence of the key to help humanity to fight that evil that for centuries afflicted us.

"Do you intend to make amulets to ward off these disgusting creatures, or perhaps you intend to go further and create weapons? that is, for the first time we have the opportunity to fight them face to face, and definitely we cannot miss it", I said to whom I considered my friend, and who had been a mentor to me during all this

time in which I had worked for the company.

He looked at me, he was hesitant, he looked insecure, "we will never have an opportunity like this," I said looking him straight in the eye. For the first time this man did not know what to do, but I always considered him a brave and intelligent man; at this moment the balance was tilted in our favor, for the first time since the appearance of these beings, so we decided that the material would be divided, we would try to make some kind of weapon with one, and with the other some pieces that would serve as protection. It was more than clear to us that it would not be the first time I would travel to this faraway land in search of this material, of which we did not know the name, but we would need to extract as much as possible in order to face these horrible creatures.

I told him what had happened to the rest of the team, and we needed to know what it meant for them to become "warriors" and disappear in the blink of an eye. Andrew asked me to keep the amulet of Noah for me, because if we were going to fight a battle, I would be a primary volunteer, one of the first warriors who would join this cause, I felt comfortable in this skin, I was born to be a warrior Although I did not understand why I had been chosen to play this role, I had the conviction that I would dedicate my life to face these creatures, even if I had to die in the attempt...

Liberius, 3000 years later...

He had already been on various planets, this plague had started on a small planet called Earth, the Liberianus decided for

various reasons, travel to various planets to distribute their teachings and cause chaos and fear around the planets best known in the galaxy.

I had had a long life, a little confused, I had memories of past lives, and the ways in which I managed to get out of these alive, survival was strictly necessary for me, my engine, what drove me, the lifestyle that I had been practicing for so long, and even though I had known several of these, I had definitely never had as much fun as before, I was fully living my life as a warrior.

I had a mission in mind and I had to fulfill it, who would ever think that I would end up as a protector, when at the beginning of my life I was supposed to devote myself to other things? No one knows the destination that is marked, until it is presents irreversibly, to change completely, to become another being, someone who completely ignored, someone you never tried to imagine. Today it was quite difficult to consider that someone had a fixed course for life, beings changed constantly, it was almost impossible for them to reach their destinies, they lacked will and they existed, they did not live.

This led me to think about those days in which I still did not know my purpose in this galaxy, when I came to think of a much less glorious future, my memories were of extreme bondage, and of poverty, I grew up in an adoptive home, never I met my real parents, apparently they were from the land or something, which I did not believe, because I considered that I had skills that were not linked to human life, although sometimes I felt that this could be true, because they had told me My adoptive par-

ents through books, humans had an unbreakable spirit, and were the first to discover the material that was able to keep the Liberianus away from their lives, as these apparently made constant attacks on their planet.

The Liberianus were reputed to be quite practical, to live without emotions but also to be ruthless, apparently these had been dedicated to impart their way of life through various places, from several planets, many of these managed to fully adapt to their systems and functions, and these led them to believe that they were perhaps a race superior to all the others, for this reason they started a kind of massive conquest, to indoctrinate the whole universe and thus achieve total control of everything known, and also they would reach the unknown. For years they devoted themselves to training one by one the races of beings that possessed some powers, or rather, some skills that they considered useful, those who did not meet these requirements were simply ignored by their supreme authority, and were qualified as unfit to receive any instruction from them. However, these beings did not waste anything, and sought to conquer the lands with beings without powers, apparently these were dedicated to feed on their essence of life.

They came to impart their bad habits and thirst for greed through various areas, and implemented a kind of training center on a not too distant planet called Sokoria, where they were known to have more abilities than the rest of the creatures. The Sokorians were known for being warriors, for having great strength and for being able

to travel through space and time, that is, they could walk the entire universe at will; the Sokorians were indoctrinated by the Liberianus, who managed to implant in them a terrible hunger for vital essence, they needed this "substance" since it was the only means through which they could travel, using the soul and body of many beings.

If at some point someone came to think that the Liberianus were cruel and terrible, it is because he had not yet known what the Sokorians were capable of. Once I was wandering through distant places in a star near my home planet, and the Liberianus decided to try the Sokorians' training, in a couple of days they had convinced all beings to voluntarily surrender their lives and as a consequence of all this chaos and terror, they almost managed to extinguish that race, I never felt any kind of influence on the part of the Sokorians, and there were also other creatures that were immune to their spells, and although it seems wrong, these were the ones that would be most persecuted. Because they fed them better than those who gave their lives with ease, or at least that was what the rumors said, of course he believed that there were more powerful reasons to want to kill those who could not react as they wanted.

But there were still inhabitants who made use of their skills for good, it was said earlier that Sokoria was a prosperous nation, who were only interested in the sciences and the technological aspects that these could give the universe, they dedicated all their intelligence and magic to create an atmosphere where knowledge and magic

merged into the most wonderful and magnificent mixture of knowledge in the entire universe. This was the typical behavior of the Sokorians, however, due to their great intelligence, they began to receive threats, other nations indicated that they should submit to the whims of many of the most outstanding and terrible leaders of other planets, these refused to deliver truths and abilities to beings who were not worthy of this, many nations declared war on them, for which they had to create a strategy of protection for all.

They decided to create a strong enough army and very clever in the art of war, and of the strategies, they would surely defeat, the wisest were not in agreement with this army being created, in the end they were Sokorians and they would definitely share something of superior intelligence, it was madness to endow a being with so much intelligence and power; the pleas of the elders were not heard, but as a symbol of protection, they put a kind of warning in their minds, they could not take the lives they wanted if they opposed, that is, who did not surrender of their own will I simply could not die at the hands of these creatures.

Apparently this was meaningless, but in reality, these beings were endowed with a great power of conviction, they were very intelligent. Under these specifications hundreds were created and I feel of Sokorians "improved, only thus would they protect their kingdom; and so it was for years and years, every enemy that faced the army was harmed, they were never conquered, their strategy had worked, but one day the warriors began to think that their purpose in

their world could be bigger than to overcome with ease a and again to everyone who challenged his power.

So these decided to take the reins of this world, calling themselves "oppressors", the superior and predominant race of all Sokoria. They were thirsty for power, and at the height of their revolution, they ran into the Librianus, the creatures who would teach him the darkest of all worlds.

This was how the Sokorians became the number one enemies of the entire galaxy, it was very difficult to fight them, however I had heard that there was a method to defeat them, and I decided that it was necessary to find one or soon we would all be victims of the constant attacks and we would also be on the verge of extinction, and as I saw it, this could be soon, we needed to unite and make a plan that had to travel the entire galaxy, we all had to join forces, many planets were being subdued and nobody could do much about it . I rented a ship and prepared to reach the kingdom of the Librianus, if I was looking for some way to defeat them, in the beginning I would undoubtedly find answers and all the useful information about these warriors so thirsty for death and freedom.

I had to take the trip, I felt now that it was my duty, I had reasons to assure that it was so, since a series of events had indicated it to me, we should get rid of that evil, and I hoped that many other warriors would also support this feeling, it was nothing easy to face alone. That same afternoon I undertook the trip to meet the creators of these disgusting creatures. I entered the planet by roads and places that were not

guarded, it would be easier for me to get where I wanted to if I passed for a kind of outlaw who came in search of answers about my past life, I knew it would not be easy cheat a Sokorian magician, but it was the best option he had until now. I walked through markets and among the crowd, unlike other similar places, here the citizens who had been marginalized by the warriors, were educated and respectable beings. I walked a few blocks further into the depth of this colorful and lively market, full of products you would never find anywhere else, and libraries in the middle of the street, so that everyone who wanted to acquire knowledge in certain areas felt free to do so.

I entered through a corridor, and crossed it completely, and when I reached the end, it darkened a little more and more, until I was completely covered in the gloom, but at the end of the corridor a light shone, it was the door I wanted to see, the one I had visited so long ago, even though I had no knowledge of this.

I played a couple of times and I was attended by a sage, who did not even ask why I was there, so I assumed that I knew what questions I wanted answered, of course that would be, however I was only invited to spend , sit down and drink an infusion, this would help me "clarify my thoughts". These Librianus did not look like the others, in fact they had a rather friendly appearance, unlike those who were consumed by madness, greed and power, these had become so ugly that they caused terror, and like the Sokorians, while the more they fed, the more horrendous they became, it was a characteristic shared by

these races. Evil definitely caused great harm in all beings from all over the universe.

The sage allowed me to converse with him, and in a very respectful way I indicated that he was looking for answers from my past, that he needed to know my identity, this as an excuse for him to immerse himself in my thoughts so that in this way he would be the one to approach this subject, without feeling pressured. The truth is that I had gone before with that excuse, but, as a really strange event, they were the ones who could not put their thoughts in order to give me a clear idea of who I really was. I always believed that I belonged to the world of shapeshifters and that for some book I had read, I had become fond of humans and then my power to change had been blocked, leaving my human aspect, without being able to reverse it.

The wise man approached me, and put one of his tentacles on my head, "Oh, sure, it's you, and you've come at a very appropriate time, we've discussed your case in the council, and we've already determined what your identity is, we know who you are, and it's just that you know it too. " This affirmation of the wise person was something that I did not expect, however I could have a dose of reality being there, I had no problem knowing who I was, although it was not an answer I wanted to know with anxiety, it would never hurt to know where I came from and what is my mission in life.

The wise men looked me in the eyes, they had two unlike the monsters that wanted to fight, who did not have a certain amount and were always changing (they were really disgusting creatures); they told

me that my past went far beyond my age zero in this world, and that I would always return, because once before a sacred witness I had sworn it. "Protecting everyone has been your duty, but you have imposed it on yourself, when you were much older thousands and thousands of years ago. Aquamarine eyes hide power and weakness, good or evil "these last words of course left me a little confused, that is, when is it greater? Thousands of years ago ?, the only creatures in the universe of which it was known that they could reincarnate (which was what I understood from this revelation) were the humans, and I of course was an undefined species, but I never knew that it came from the earth. "Aqua eyes", like mine, this was quite obvious, I think I was trying to say that this issue was about me, I was quite confused.

For a few minutes I kept my composure, I tried to digest all this new information, because it was not something easy to process, so I was quiet for a while, took a deep breath and asked them directly if it was from the earth, one of he answered "from your beginning of the land you went, and a mission you proposed, however at that time you did not count on your warriors for the mission to be successful. You came back to someone close to the mission and this time you fulfilled it, but in one of the combats life was lost, eternity is not something that humans know, not in a single body, but you did not stop trying, and your prayers were heard, you stayed in a low profile, because it was known that your life was desired, more than others, your conviction had given you a power that you did not possess before. You are an important

piece in this war, but you cannot do it alone.

To my mind traveled some images of what had been my trip around the world, and apparently it would keep coming until I managed to decipher what was really happening with this unfinished mission, however I had no weapons to face this army, and my mind I had arrived at the place where I needed to be, this was the real purpose of my visit, I needed to know if there was any weapon that was capable of hurting these evil creatures, because I did not know of any known weapon to face them successfully, all weapons failed, again and again, they were apparently invincible.

The wise men told me the story about the origin of these guardians, but this was a children's story for me, I knew it very well, in fact I believed that there was no book or document that I had not read about the existence of these beings. The wise men should have read my expressions, because they told me that they did not know the whole truth about these beings, that not everything was documented, that they knew a truth that they had kept for years, with the purpose of revealing it to the correct being and in the right moment, because it was very difficult to see that the universe was suffering and they could not do anything for any of its inhabitants.

But it was important that the right person came for this information, just as the prophecies had dictated. It was a crucial point that the chosen one handled the information that would be revealed next, because apparently he had already died in the past because of what they would tell me next.

"There is a precious stone found in a place on earth, we decided that it would be safe there, in the place where the warriors reincarnated, specifically in a place where the creatures, who were once our brothers, could not step on. This because this material made them vulnerable, the material was fed by greed, greed and all the evil in the world, stripping these beings of their existence, this only when it was a large amount. The leader of the warriors knew this, and managed, with the help of the Sokorians, to travel in time to find in all the planets the remains of this material, and thus they were able to eliminate all traces of these materials, expelling them to the immensity of the universe, of space, where nobody knew that this would be found. However we went ahead of all this, then we took all the fragments of the material that we kept in our houses and in the meeting place and we turned it into a single mass, which would soon be brought to earth. There we looked for a beautiful landscape, in a very distant and colorful land, for which we decided that we had to raise a sacred place, protected by charms and carved by the same stones, so the enemies would stay completely apart, and only the worthy warriors could enter the. You tried so many times, and we saw you fail life after life, your desire to end this situation led you to carry the whole mission on your shoulders, apparently you had already forgotten that you had more than one friend to be able to draw some obstacles that had to be presented to prove that he had understood the instructions that we left for you. "

"Did I ever get the material? Where did I keep it?" I asked very anxiously, if I had

already raffled the tests, it was assumed that the material should be safe, or at least it was what logic told me.

The material was right where these wise men had hidden it, and many died for this secret. Apparently the people who had done this expedition with me had mysteriously disappeared, but what I still could not understand was how the material had returned to the place from which it was extracted, and why I lost my life when I did it.

“The person in charge of assigning you this task was one of your descendants, who had clear indications that this material existed, a sample hung on his neck, a medallion that belonged to one of your mother in one of your lives, and this had happened to be owned by this relative. During the mission, my companions took a form unknown to humans, but for many it was known as a kind of trip between planets, however these beings were never seen on any planet, maybe they had been lost in

some gap in space. The important thing of this story is that once you fulfilled the mission, you were made to believe that they supported your ideas and tried to fight for many years, all your life you dedicated yourself to this, however, when you died, who had helped you, decided take the material and place it in its place of origin, retained the one he had inherited, so he would be the only person who would have the power to drive away these creatures.” This the wise men told me, and they indicated to me the exact place where to find the stone that would bring us closer to true freedom, not the one that these unpleasant creatures described and offered us. I knew that tonight I would have to go to earth, to find this material once again, this time it would be much easier, or at least I wanted to believe it. ❖

END TRANSMISSION