



Ireland

Folk

Tales

Will Kavanagh

Love is the realisation of life's serialisation

Content

Jez's journey of the mind	3
Jez's return to the valley	67
Ego ergo I go	135
I know therefore I am	174
P.S. Alms	222

Jez's Journey Of The Mind

Introduction

Once upon a time, in the shadow of Death Mountain lived a young shepherd boy called Jez. He lived at home with his father, his mother dying of fever when he was only seven years old. An only

child he often got lonely because nobody lived for miles around. He was twelve but looked more like ten because of his small stature. He had light brown hair brushed (when it was) across his forehead and a very unkempt appearance. He was a withdrawn sort of child who often preferred to be by himself. He had a passion for day dreaming while he was looking after the sheep. He would often while away the long boring hours creating various destinies for himself.

It was a hot summer afternoon in the middle of July as he lay there on the arid sparse floor. The sheep were trying to make a meal out of the little grass that was there. There were only six of them and they did not look too healthy. The terrain around him was very rocky and the little grass that was there was dry and not very nourishing. His dog 'Jock' sat next to him keeping a watchful eye over the sheep although they were not going anywhere.

Jez had heard stories of wolves in the mountain and sometimes he had even thought he had heard howls, but he had never seen one. He took a certain amount of comfort from the big stick that he always had with him. Jock was also with him to warn him of any danger so as he lay there the thought of wolves were a long way from his mind.

The warming Sun was awakening new ideas in his imaginative young mind. It was one of those rare days that he craved for company.

He thought to himself, "What am I doing here on a day like this? I should be out fighting pirates on the high seas or shootings Indians or ... or ... what's the use. I'm stuck here looking after a few scrawny sheep. It's not fair." and then a second later and more slowly, "It's not fair." then he drifted off into the dark recesses of his mind.

Chapter 1.

The distant howl of a wolf awoke Jez from a deep, restful sleep. He opened his eyes but the sight in front of him made him regret that he had. The sheep or what was left of it lay dead in front of him. The blood lay drying on the hot rocks around it. Another one lay nearby with its throat ripped out and blood still draining on to the near barren soil. Two more lay unrecognisable as sheep, in a heap of dead meat and bones. Jez did not know which part went with what animal not that it mattered really. The head and carcass of another sheep lay further away, what little meat that it had on it had been picked away by hungry wolves. The last sheep was nowhere to be seen, not a trace of it was found. May be it had had the sense to run off.

How had he managed to sleep through all the carnage? Why had he not heard anything? Then another thought came upon him. What was his Dad going to say or more to the point what was he going to do? He was a violent man who would often give Jez a slap with little provocation. Most of the time Jez would try and keep out of his way especially at night when his father had been drinking 'the rare old mountain dew'. The stench of the dead sheep in the hot Sun had started to crawl up Jez's nose bringing home another worry, "What if the wolves are still around? I'm only little, what could I do?" Thoughts of fighting pirates and shooting Indians had turned to thoughts of running home as quick as his little legs could carry him. What about his father though?

Another howl broke through his chain of thoughts and brought him back to reality again. Looking around he saw his big stick lying on the floor so he went over and picked it up. His sheep dog had disappeared, probably ran home.

"The little coward," Jez said aloud but if the truth be known he was thinking of doing the same. He did, however, feel slightly braver with the stick in his hand. Once his panic had slightly lessened he began to think more rationally. The distant howl of the wolf was too far away to concern him too much. There was nothing he could do now but to go home and face the consequences. He could not tell his father that he slept through it; he would have to tell him that he fought his best but there were too many of them. Anyway his dog had run off and left him, probably gone home. His father would be along soon to see what happened once he had seen Jock. "Yes," he thought, "I'll tell him that."

Jez started to powder dirt over his body mixing it with some of the sheep's blood to be on the safe side.

A voice started him. "What are you doing?" It said. He knew it was not the voice of his father but there was nobody living for miles around. He turned around to see an Old Man with grey beard. He was dressed in Green. What really surprised Jez was that he was a lot smaller than him and Jez was only four feet tall himself.

"Who are you?" Jez asked out of surprise because he felt no fear of him.

"My name is Colin and I travel the worlds," the figure said and bowed his head sharply to Jez.

"I am Jez and I live over the hill," Jez said and pointed his arm to the left, "I don't know what to do, wolves have killed all dad's sheep and I slept through it." Jez stopped and thought for a moment.

"What do you mean you travel the worlds? Surely there is only one world?"

"Your world is the outer world and mine is the inner world. Sometimes I travel into your world," Colin answered but this seemed to leave Jez even more perplexed.

"Where is your world?"

"My world is all around you yet you can't see it because its entrance is in that mountain." Colin pointed up towards Death Mountain.

“But my father told me never to go up to Death Mountain because it is full of ghosts and evil spirits.”

“Be not afraid of that you can’t see for what you can’t see is seldom there anyway,” Colin answered mysteriously.

“What do you mean, why talk in riddles?” Jez said still perplexed.

“Look into yourself to find the answer. While you call it Death Mountain and fear for what it stands for your ancestors could live in our world and could cross between it and back again.”

“Would I be able to go to Death Mountain?” Jez asked brushing off some dirt from his clothes.

“It is harder for you to cross into my world than for me to cross into yours if you’re strong enough though you will make it.”

“Is it far?” Jez asked, curiosity getting the better of him.

“It is the journey of a lifetime or the trip of a foot depending on who you are.”

Jez was getting quite used to Colin’s riddles although he could not understand them they sounded quite good. “What is in your world and why have you come into mine?” he asked.

“Riches beyond your belief lay waiting in my world but it will all be gone soon. I have come over to your world looking for somebody to help save it...” Colin answered vaguely but then carried on, “Somebody like you.”

“Like me,” Jez answered in surprise, “But I am little and young, what can I do?”

“Your youth is your strength and your imagination is my existence.” Colin answered still talking in riddles.

“But what’s in it for me?” Jez asked rather selfishly which surprised Colin slightly.

“The riches of well being and the strength of a lion,”

“What does that mean?” Jez asked getting quite impatient.

“Believe in me and follow,”

“What about my father and the dead sheep?” Jez asked surveying the carnage once more.

Thoughts of his father came back to haunt him, the constant beatings and shouting echoing in his mind’s ear. Did he really want to go back to all that? There were no sheep now to shackle him down to his lonely life. He could be out fighting pirates, preferably only little ones and anyway there was going to be a pot of gold at the end of it for after all Colin was a Leprechaun.

Colin looked at him for he knew what he was thinking. Maybe Jez was not the right person for the job? His own world had started to tarnish him already. Maybe he should have picked someone younger whose only yearning for gold was that it was in their hearts? Colin was running out of time though. He had spent twelve years watching Jez suffer and suffered with him but now had come the time. He had no choice it had to be Jez.

Jez had made up his mind; he would go with Colin, even though he did not understand half of what he said.

Colin was making his way up to the mountain and Jez followed listening to him sing.....

There’s a man dressed in green he’s the size of a child
With a black Pot Pipe and a beard that’s grown wild,
He darts across meadows, over streams and through glade
Unseen by adults whose imagination has decayed,
Where does he go to and what is his hurry
And why so fast I mean he hasn’t a worry,
He lives in a land where they never grow old

A parallel land where time has no hold,
Should you ever revert back to the mind of a child
You would easily see him when your imagination runs wild,
If you're quick you may catch him but only if your bold
And if he doesn't fool you you can have his pot of gold,
But he very careful because he's very cunning
And if you let him go then he'll never stop running.

Chapter 2.

The Sun beat on the back of Jez's neck as he started the great climb. He had not eaten that day but that was not unusual. Sometimes he had not eaten in two days, depending what he could on rabbits and other things that he could find. Rarely was there food in the house for the father spent what little money they had on drink. The surrounding area was losing its sparse vegetation to sand and rock. It must have been the hottest day of the year and there was he stuck on a dusty mountainside. Maybe it was not a good idea to follow Colin. Maybe he would have been better off facing his father but a picture in his mind kept him going. It was a pot full of golden coins and it seemed to drag him upwards towards the top.

Colin was still ahead of him, he never seemed to tire, he seemed to get stronger as time went by. In fact he seemed very agile as he jumped from rock to hard place.

"Is it far?" Jez shouted after Colin.

"Not far now, just over the next ridge," Colin shouted back as he skipped another step.

The day wore on and the landscape got more and more steeper. Hunger had started to creep in and the Sun seemed to get hotter. Jez was starting to tire now but the pot of gold was still on his mind though the image seemed to appear less now.

"Is it far now?" Jez shouted up again.

"Not far now, just over the next ridge," Colin shouted back.

"You said that before," Jez shouted up again.

"And I'll probably say it again," came the reply.

"Stop a while. Let me rest. I'm getting tired," Jez said and sat down on a rock.

Colin turned and went back towards Jez and joined him.

"It will soon be dark we may as well rest here and start again in the morning," Colin said.

"Just how far is it anyway?"

"It is not long now, but you will need your rest to build up your strength" replied Colin, lighting his pipe.

"I am hungry but there is nothing to eat," Jez said in desperation.

"Fight it, it will soon pass," Colin said as he puffed on his pipe.

"It's easy to say," said Jez with a sigh.

They looked at the sky and started to watch the Sun set. It was getting cooler now much to Jez's relief but it was also getting darker. The tales he had heard about Death Mountain had started to resurface in his mind. Many years ago a child had gone missing never to return. He was about Jez's age at the time. Other stories seemed to come to his mind creating a fear that seemed to grow with the darkness.

Colin had picked up on his fears and looking at him said, "Be not afraid Jez, trust in me."

For some reason this seemed to dispel the fears slightly and when Colin lit the fire that he had just

prepared the fears had virtually gone.

“Tell me about your world,” Jez asked as he looked at the fire.

“My world was once your world when your people used to obey the old law. You know at one time you used to live at peace with all the animals. You spoke the same language and looked after each other. Over time you drifted apart. Greed taking its toll. Tell me, why, have so many shirts when you can only wear one?” Colin asked.

Jez thought for a while but the question did not really register with him because he had only one shirt.

“I only have one shirt,” he answered afterwards.

“I see inside you. Tell me, what would you do with the gold if you had it?” Colin asked looking at Jez.

This stopped Jez because he did not know. He had never thought in his wildest dreams that he could have had a pot of gold before today. Would he replace the sheep and give the rest to his father so that they would live in a big house and want for nothing. That would not work he thought for his father would probably drink himself to death before long. Maybe he could travel the world and fight his pirates. That seemed to lose its appeal when he found out that he could actually be doing it. When confronted with the reality of the situation his imagination disappeared.

“I don’t know..... I never thought about it before,” Jez said with a shrug.

“Maybe I could offer you something better than gold.” Colin said mysteriously.

“What could be better than gold,” Jez said in surprise.

“When you find that out, then you will be ready to help me,” said Colin not answering Jez’s question.

“Why don’t you ever give me a straight answer?” Jez said impatiently.

“The answers are like your strength, they come from within. They vary from person to person. What maybe be right for one is not necessarily right for another,” Colin said, filling his pipe with a pinch of Tobacco from a pouch in his pocket.

“I am not sure, but I think I might have understood that. But how do I find these answers, what could be better than gold?” Jez sighed looking into the fire.

Just at that moment an owl hooted in the distance and Jez looked around.

“Do you hear that owl?” Colin asked, “What use has he for gold? He can’t carry it around for it is too heavy. But does he go hungry, has he not a home and a family. That’s his answer now tell me Jez what’s yours.”

“I don’t know. All my life seems to revolve around is looking after sheep and hiding from my dad. I see nobody for days on end. There’s got to be more than that,” Jez said almost in despair.

“You will find whatever you are looking for,” Colin said sympathetically and thought to himself that maybe Jez was right for the job after all.

“You must sleep now, morning comes early.” Colin said and as if by magic Jez felt tired. His hunger had passed slightly and the warmth of the fire had taken away the fear of the mountain completely. His mind was still asking itself ‘what could be better than gold’ as he drifted off. He found himself outside a huge castle that seemed to stretch up into the clouds. He was a bit wary but not really afraid. In front of him was a huge set of double doors made out of oak with brass studs set in a pattern of twelve. There were three rows set out on each door. He saw the great brass handle and it took him all his strength to open it. He looked into a huge hallway with a stone floor. Oak doors lay to the left of him and to the right of him was a long corridor. He walked past them as

he seemed to be attracted to the great stone staircase in front of him. It seemed a huge thing that must have been twelve feet wide and thirty steps high. It had wooden handrails on both sides and he held on to one as he started his climb. He seemed to feel lighter inside, the higher he climbed. By the time he reached the top he almost felt that he could float. In front of him stood an old oak table and by it was an oak and leather chair. He felt tempted to sit on it but instead looked to his right and saw a dimly lit corridor. On both sides of the corridor lay doors vaguely lit by candles in their holders fixed to the walls. At the end of the corridor he was faced by another door and he seemed to be drawn to this. As he got to the door he put his hand on the knob and looked to his side. He saw another corridor going to the left and at the end of it was another door. This door seemed to have a light behind it and automatically he would have gone to it but Jez sensed that the door he was at was the right one for him. He did have a certain apprehension about going through the door but something inside him told him it must be done. Slowly he opened the door and entered into the darkness. As the door shut behind him he realised just how dark it was. He could not see in front, behind or to the sides of him. It was total darkness but he knew that there was no turning back. He was frightened now but he just seemed to float on. Voices came into his mind, his father shouting at him for stealing an apple but what could he do, he was hungry. His mother's dying words telling him that she was going to a better place, then his father saying that it was his fault that she died. His mother answering saying that in his heart he would always be with her. Other voices came in saying that nobody liked him, he was lazy and that was why his father drank. The fear inside him grew and grew, voices to the left of him, voices behind him, voices to the right of him. Louder and faster they talked as his fears grew. Suddenly he saw a spot of light in front of him. As he floated towards it the light got bigger and the voices grew softer and soon they disappeared. The light had turned into a door and as he walked through it the feeling of relief that spread across him was unbelievable. It was as if he had been cleansed of all his doubts, all the troubles that had burdened his mind were gone. He felt like he was dancing on clouds. He was free.

Jez looked around into the brightness. His eyes took a little time to adjust but when they did he saw a door. Almost with a spring in his step he opened the door and went in. He had walked into a Library. Book cases were all around the walls and there was another desk in the middle. He walked towards the table and he saw a book on it. He picked up the book and read the title 'Jez's Journey of the Mind'.

Excitement gripped him as he read his name and he had to open it. He opened the book but it only had four lines inside it:-

From the ends of the Earth to the closeness of a smile
From the heart of the country to the heart of the man,
I travel the world growing stronger as I do
Once you have me I will always be true.

Chapter 3.

As Colin had said the night before morning did come early and Jez awoke to a bright new day. The warming Sun seemed to re-vitalise him not that he needed it. He awoke with a lightness and a spring in his heart that he had forgot that he ever had. He did not even feel hungry, he just wanted to start the day.

Colin was up and waiting. "Had a good sleep Jez?" he said but he already knew the answer. "Yes, I had this wonderful dream." Jez told him all about the dream and as he did Colin had a smile

on his face and a tear in his eye. Colin thought to himself, "Now I know he's the right one."

Colin's smile seemed to trigger of Jez's mind. He remembered the lines in the book once more and a voice inside him seemed to say "Will you be my friend?"

Colin looked at him and said, "I have always been your friend and always will be. You will have many others soon. When people see the gold in your heart it will mean more to them than any pot of gold."

"Do you think that I am ready now," Jez asked already knowing the answer.

"Yes," said Colin standing up from the rock, "We must get off now."

"Is it far?"

"Not far now, just over the next ridge," Colin answered but this time Jez knew that he was telling the truth.

As they climbed up the ridge the thought of gold was far from Jez's mind. The top of the ridge seemed to come easy to Jez. The thought of the adventure seemed to urge him on. He did not even know what it was yet. He was just about to ask Colin when he saw it. It was the entrance to a cave. It seemed dark and unwelcoming to Jez's mind. He stopped a while to study its entrance. It was about six feet tall and about the same in width. Colin had picked up on Jez's fears and said to him, "Don't be afraid, we'll soon be there. But first I'll tell you the story."

"The story, you mean why I'm here?"

"Yes and then you must tell me if you still want to do it."

"Is it dangerous?" Jez asked nervously.

"Yes. But if you feel strong enough then you will succeed." Colin replied as he sat down to relate the story.

Jez sat down beside him and Colin carried on, "Many years ago when our two worlds were one we all lived in harmony. Nobody took more than they should and the balance seemed perpetual. The two worlds were held together by a Magic Eye which was owned by the Queen of the Inner World. With this eye you could travel from one world to the other without fear or hindrance. This was called the First Age of Enlightenment and lasted for many lifetimes. That was until along came New Man. He was different from Old Man he was greedier. He thought that he could conquer the outer world and bring it to his bidding. There were great wars and many were slain. In time Old Man died out and New Man come to power. New Man did not know how to live in the Inner World or live at peace with his surroundings. He started to capture and enslave the animals around him. His cruelty was unsurpassed by anything ever seen and the Giant Gate Keeper stole and hid the Magic Eye from New Man so that he would never find it. Without the Magic Eye Man was blinded by the pursuit of gold and lived a life solely to amass as much as he could.

"What did he want with it all?" interrupted Jez.

"Who knows? He could not bring it into his next life for he could not carry it," Colin answered with a shrug of his shoulders.

"What do you mean next life? I thought that you only had one life," Jez asked in surprise.

"No, you may come back many times, learning a bit more with each lifetime,"

Jez did not believe him and Colin saw it in his eyes.

"The first place that I will take you to is the Pool of Enlightenment and it will explain it all,"

"So what happened to the Magic Eye?" Jez asked, getting back on the subject.

"The giant hid it in the dark recesses of the Inner World and will not release it until Man is ready to come back into the light,"

“The light. What is this light?”

“The light is everything. It is the real inner peace that New Man should be trying to attain. It is always there, even when we are in darkness. It is the sense of harmony between man and beast. It is everything.”

“How will he know when New Man will be ready?” Jez answered not really liking the idea of fighting a giant.

“You will have to prove it to him. Just as you have to prove it to yourself,” Colin answered looking seriously at Jez.

“How?” Jez asked slightly bewildered.

“And that is your quest. You will not be fighting pirates but you will certainly be having an adventure. So what do you say Jez,”

Jez thought for a while. What did we have to lose? He had nothing really to go back for. He nodded his head and smiled at Colin.

“That’s my boy,” Colin said, “Well let me show you the Pool of Enlightenment,” and led Jez into the dark opening of the cave.

Once inside Jez soon got used to the darkness and it seemed quite bright. He looked around the walls. He saw inscriptions but he could not recognise the languages. There were many different inscriptions and they covered all the walls. He studied them hard before asking Colin what they were.

“Signatures from a bye gone age, they are signatures from the old days. It was considered lucky to sign your name on the door, so to speak. “Colin answered looking around the walls.

“What sort of people were the old people,”

“They were a good people. They did not just live off the land, they lived with it. They only took what food they needed and never any more. They had special powers because of this. They could cure illness with herbs. They could travel freely into the Inner World. They could talk with the animals. They were good men,” Colin said with a sigh.

“Do you think that I could sign my name on it just for luck?”

“Yes, that might be a good idea,” Colin said and handed him a nail from one of his pockets.

Jez thought it odd that Colin should have a nail in his pocket but said nothing. Colin looked at the nail and then at Jez and said, “Very useful nails. You never know when they’ll come in handy.”

Jez took the nail and started to look for a space on the wall to put his name. This was a hard task because the wall was covered with signatures. All of a sudden he came across one in English and said to Colin, “Look, there’s a name here that I can read,” and Jez read “David O’Neill, 1810. Hey that’s only 30 years ago. Is this the boy that never returned?”

“Yes that’s Davy. He’s still in there. We must find him. Maybe he could help “Colin answered.

“He’ll be an Old Man by now. Could that happen to me?” Jez asked looking at Colin.

“You never grow older in the Inner World, just happier,” Colin answered.

Jez liked the idea of not growing old and started scratching his name on the only space he could find Jethro Molloy 1840.

“There that’s finished,” Jez said as he stood up and followed Colin down a dark corridor.

Chapter 4.

The passageway was quite narrow but Jez could easily manage to walk down it. It seemed to go down at a slight angle and as he followed it the thought of the giant came into his mind. What would he have to do to prove himself? He hoped it was not a test of strength as he was somewhat lacking in that. He was not quite sure about his courage either. He seemed calm though and this surprised him. The passageway seemed steeper now and he seemed to be going quite a long way down. He was having thoughts about ending up in the centre of the Earth when Colin said, "Here we are, it's just through here" and pointed to a large opening to the side of the passageway. Jez followed him inside and took in the sight. It was a large cavern about twenty feet long and thirty feet wide. It must have been fifteen feet high. It was quite bright inside but the only thing that he could see was a pool. This was circular in shape with stone footings around it and about four feet in diameter. He looked at it and said to Colin, "Is this the Pool of Enlightenment?"

"Yes," Colin answered as Jez approached it.

"It's not very big is it?" Jez replied peering into it.

"That pool contains the knowledge of many lifetimes, all united together for you to tap into it."

"But how do I do that?" Jez asked still peering into it."

"Just look into it and empty your mind of any thought and it should soon appear," Colin said looking into the pool alongside Jez.

Jez looked into the pool once more. He let his mind go blank and saw his and Colin's reflection in the pool. As he looked into it the reflections seemed to disappear to be replaced by another. It was a huge almost frightening head that seemed somehow familiar to Jez. It was a head of a man in his late thirties with long straggly hair and matching beard. He must have been a big man, well over six feet tall and almost as wide. He seemed to have an air of menace about him. Not a man to fall out with Jez thought to himself.

They looked at each other for a while. Jez could not work out where he knew him from but he was stopped dead in his thoughts. The figure spoke to him. It had a quiet unassuming voice that did not seem to match his face. "Do you not know me, Jethro Molloy?"

Jez looked at him, studied him hard but he could not place him," Who are you?" he asked in the end.

"I am you and you are me. Look inside yourself to find me for I am there."

"What do you mean look inside myself? How can I do that?" Jez asked getting slightly confused.

"Think of the pool as a memory bank for the previous times that you've been here. Look into it and find the knowledge of many lifetimes. We are all here to help you," as he spoke the face disappeared and in its place stood a wooden cradle. "My name is Taig O'Connor and I was born in the Province of Connaught in the year of our Lord eleven hundred and thirty eight. "The picture changed into a burning village with dead bodies strewn around it, "It was a turbulent time with many clans involved in power struggles. My third cousin Turlough O'Connor, King of Connaught, was trying to be High King of all Ireland. I lost two brothers before I was even born." the picture changed again. This time it was a large stone fireplace and standing next to it was a tall slim lady." I was twenty years old when I met and married Clarissa. She seemed to make my life worth something. She was worth fighting for and when she told me that she was carrying my child my heart leapt for joy. Times were still bad. Turlough had died two years previously. Supreme power had passed to the King of the UI Neill, Muirchtech Maclochlainn and his ally the King of Leinster, Demot Macmurragh. These were enemies of ours and we were led by our new King Rory

O'Connor. We just seemed to be fighting all the time but not really getting anywhere."

The picture changed once more. This time there was a large four poster bed with Clarissa lying motionless on it. At the foot was an empty cradle. "My world was over. My wife had died giving birth to my still born son. I turned heavily to drink and raging tempers seemed to erupt from inside me." A huge dining room table appeared but Jez seemed to be in this picture. He seemed to be inside Taig's body and found himself getting up off one of the chairs and walking past the stone fireplace towards the large door. At his heel were two large shaggy hounds that sprang up from beside the fire when he got up. He opened the door and followed by the dogs, walked towards a saddled horse. There seemed to be an anger inside him that he had never felt so strong before. He mounted the horse and off it galloped. He was frightened at first but this soon subsided. The horse sped faster and faster. The dogs followed as if they were on a hunt. Trees seemed to fly past on either side of him. His heart beat faster. His stomach tightened. Faster. Faster. Dogs barking. Still faster. Trees flying by. Jumping hedges. Faster. Faster. On they went. The exhilaration soared through Jez's blood. Faster. Faster. And then he saw them, there were seven of them. He did not know them. He just knew that they were the enemy. He knew what he had to do. The horse galloped closer and closer. The barking dogs had attracted their attention but it was too late. He felt his hand lift the sword from the sheath. In he went. Slice, slice, slice. Faster and faster his sword carved into them. Kill. Kill. Kill. Die. Die. He heard himself shouting. Anger seared through his veins. He felt good. He knew that he should not but he could not help it. Slice, slice. Blood spurting, arms flying and then it was all over. Bodies lay all around. He felt relieved. His anger had subsided slightly but it was not fully quenched.

He felt himself leaving the pool and going back into his own body. From there he looked at the carnage. The voice came back again, "How did feel?"

But Jez said nothing. He was out of breath. His heart had slowed down to normal and he got his breath back.

"Who were they?" he asked.

"They were UI Neill's Men," the Head appeared in the pool once more, "How did it feel?"

"I don't know, it's hard to explain. It was scary and yet exciting. What happened in the end?"

"We fought on until 1166 when Maclochlainn fell. We drove out Macmurrrough and he fled the land. He went to Henry II for help, who sent Richard Fitzgilbert De Clare, Earl of Penbroke and some other Barons over. We fought on. I was killed in 1170 by an archer's arrow."

Jez went quiet for a moment. He did not know what to say. What could you say to a dead man?

The voice carried on, "I am afraid I didn't gain much knowledge in my lifetime. Once thing though. Don't be afraid of anybody. Keep the thought of your galloping on horseback. It may help."

The face disappeared once again. Jez and Colin's reflection reappeared and Jez said, "Is it done?"

"Do you want to see some more?" Colin asked and Jez replied that he would if there was some.

"Look into the pool once more," Colin said and they both peered in and waited.

Chapter 5.

Their reflections disappeared once more and in their place was a face of a man in his fifties. He looked about five feet seven and he had a very thin stature. He had a thin mustache and was going bald at the front. Once again the face seemed familiar to Jez but still he could not place him. "Do you know me Jethro Molloy?" The voice said in a voice with a southern English accent. Jez looked again but it was no good. "Your face seems familiar but I'm afraid I can't put a name to it."

The voice carried on, "My name is John Aldridge and I was born in Windsor, England in the year of our Lord 1240."

"Are you another of my lives?" Jez asked still looking at the face in the pool.

"Yes, although it was not as exciting as Taig O'Connors." John answered, "But everybody has a part to play, no matter how big or small."

"And what was your part?"

The face disappeared from the pool and in its place stood a wooden building. It looked quite well kept and fairly large next to the houses in which it was situated. The houses were all close together and it seemed quite claustrophobic with all the smoke and dust. "I was born into a large family, having five brothers and three sisters. I would have had another two brothers but they died at birth. We weren't wealthy but there was always food on the table. My father was a tailor by trade and I was to follow in his footsteps."

The picture changed again. This time to a cramped room with about six people working in an area no more than ten square foot. All the people were about fourteen years of age except a big fat man who was standing over them and watching. His face was red and he would shout at anybody not working up to speed. The voice went on, "That was Uriah Johnson. He was a hard task master and would beat us senseless if he thought we weren't working quick enough. Many a time I was battered for no reason."

'That sounds familiar' thought Jez to himself. The voice carried on, "As I slept above the shop I thought to myself that I could never be like him. We worked from dawn to dusk with hardly anything to eat but after my apprenticeship was finished I was a Tailor."

The picture again changed to the outside of a shop. It was a small shop in the middle of a row. "I went to work with my father after that. My family had thinned out by then. My brother Davy had died abroad fighting in one of the Kings wars. Steven had been struck down by fever and Mark went on the road. Some people said he became a highwayman but I don't know. My sister Anne had married a Carpenter in London and my father disowned her thinking that she had married beneath her station. My other two sisters, Helen and Jane, helped around the shop until eventually they married and moved out of the area. My last two brothers Paul and Andrew had took the King's Shilling and we rarely saw them. We got by well and money started to come in."

The picture changed once more. This time it was a rather plain woman with mousy brown hair and quite severe look about her. "I met and married Angela. She was the only child of John Garner, Master Tailor. It was my father's idea and I was too weak to argue. I never loved her. In fact I grew to loath her. She was a spoilt child, too used to having her own way. After her father died we moved above his old shop and traded from there.

My mother had died by then. My sister Helen had married a Yorkshire Squire and we rarely saw her. Jane had also married. She married a Clerk in London and moved there to be with him. My father died a lonely man. I suppose I resented his interference in my life and very rarely saw him. I

was too busy trying to build up my own business. Angela was the real drive behind me. She was a lot more ambitious. She was in charge and made sure I knew it. After all I only married her for the shop as she constantly reminded me.

We did manage children. My eldest son John followed me into the business. He was a son to be proud of. He was strong and had an air of confidence sadly lacking in me. Then came our daughter Angela but she died at an early age. She was frail child who never made it to the age of four. We had no more children after that.

As time went by we got fairly wealthy and respected around town. John came of age and wanted to marry the daughter of a local farm hand. Angela wanted to stop him. She wanted him to marry someone who was not beneath his station. This was a final straw. I found myself actually standing up to her. I was not going to let his life be ruined like mine was. We argued and it got quite violent. I had years of resentment. The constant beating by Uriah Johnston, my over bearing father, the constant belittling by my wife. I found my hands around her throat, squeezing tighter and tighter. Taking the air from her very body. And then she was no more. I stood trial and hanged somewhat later.” The voice finished and the face reappeared in the pool.

Jez was stunned. What could he say? His mind was in turmoil. Had he once strangled somebody? It seemed so cold, so callous. He looked at the man with a mixture of hatred and disgust.

“Don’t hate me for being weak,” the voice said.

“What could you possibly teach me?” Jez asked in a tone of disdain.

“You must learn by my mistakes. Stand up for yourself. Don’t let hatred fester inside you. It does no good.”

“But you did stand up for yourself and look what happened,”

“I left it too late. I had bitterness and resentment inside me. It made me irrational. I should have stood up to my father in the first place. I let everything build up. I should have been stronger with Angela, she might have respected me. It didn’t have to get that far. I let it, you must not.”

The face disappeared and Jez and Colin’s reflections came back. Jez looked at Colin and said, “I still don’t understand.”

“You must be strong enough to take your own life in hand. It is your life after all. Don’t do anything that will make you unhappy just because other people tell you to. He saw that but it was too late. He never wanted his son to end up like him. Mind you his son was strong enough to stand up for himself. Maybe he never needed to do it. Resentment is a bad thing, it makes you feel bitter and you don’t think straight,”

“Is there any more?” Jez asked. He was cold. Maybe he saw too much of himself in John Aldridge. Maybe he should stand up to his father instead of hiding all the time.

“Look into the pool once more,” Colin said. He had read Jez’s thoughts but never answered them. This was one thing Jez had to do for himself.

Chapter 6.

As they stared into the pool the image changed once more and a large round fat face with laughing eyes stared back at them. He looked about forty and had dark greasy straggly hair.

“Hello Jethro remember me?” he asked with broad grin that almost filled the pool.

Jez looked. The face seemed familiar again. More familiar than the others but he still did not know him.” No, sorry I can’t place you.”

“You can’t do? Not even with the knowledge of two lifetimes,” he said jokingly, “Then let me help

you.”

The face's head disappeared only to be replaced by a busy street scene. Jez did not recognise the place though it seemed familiar. It was dusty and hot and the untidy wooden shops seemed to bustle with life. “My name is Steven Davidson. I was born in London, England in the year of Our Lord 1370 but to you 1350. As you might have gathered I was a shop keeper. In fact I was a butcher as my father had been before me. We were a large family, four brothers and a sister. I was the eldest so I got the most food. Being a butcher we always had meat on the table. Two of my brothers died young but that was quite common at that time. We weren't rich but we were better off than some,” the picture changed once more. It was still the same street but there were a group of children chasing each other. They were running in and out of the shops and across a dusty road. In the corner, sitting with his back leaning against the wall, was a small lad with black hair. “No prizes for guessing who that was,” the voice said.

“Why didn't you play with the other children? Didn't they like you?” Jez asked curiosity mixing with pity.

“Oh no it wasn't that in fact I was quite popular. No I just couldn't be bothered.” The picture changed into a couple. Jez recognised the man as Steven Davidson but he was a lot younger. He must have been about twenty then. The woman was quite an attractive lady about the same age. She was slightly overweight but then again so was her partner. They looked happy together. “That was me and Julie just after we married. I had a couple of son's and a daughter. We were happy together on the whole. We had our rows, most people do, usually about me being too lazy, but I was doing a job. I ran the Butcher's Shop after my father died and I was putting food on the table.” The scene changed once more, this time into what looked like a Public Bar. It was crowded; Jez could almost smell the ale. In the corner was a table and four wooden chairs. It was on one of these chairs that Steven Davidson sat with three more figures on the others. They were drinking heavily and laughing loudly. The other fellows were very shabbily dressed, about forty and not the people you would like to meet late at night. “They were few friends of mine. The tall thin one with the shaggy beard, that's John Partridge. He was hanged for sheep stealing not long after that. The other two were brothers Andy and Neil Hopkins, we all grew up together. Many nights I'd while away the hour's drinking and talking about old times. Sometimes I never got home but when I did there was always a meal waiting. Julie. God Bless her. Andy knew a man who could get meat quite cheaply as long as I didn't ask too many questions. We were getting by alright. I didn't really need the money but maybe it would be useful. I mean I wouldn't have to get up early to go to market. I could go out more often. Well maybe not, I mean I was out most nights already. But in the end I got some anyway. Things were going alright. They would bring the carcasses late at night and I would butcher them first, well second thing in the morning. Sometimes the meat was old. But you had to take the rough with the smooth. Julie didn't know but it didn't really concern her.”

The picture changed once more. This time it was the inside of a shop but Jez could hear noises outside. It felt like he was in there with them. It sounded like a large mob of people outside and then the door swung open. Men came flooding in. There must have been at least twenty of them. They came towards the front of the picture. They were angry. They were shouting loudly, “Davidson, Davidson, sells bad meat by the tonne.” Jez seemed to get frightened but Colin said, “Fear not, they can't harm you. Not physically, anyway.”

Jez's mind was racing. He did not even hear Colin's last words. He felt fear, dread. But it was not his own. He heard a voice say, “What What do you want?”

“Your blood. To go with the bad meat you sold my Helen. She was ill for days.” A large balding man with a face as red as his rage shouted. This seemed to excite the crowd into even more of a frenzy.

“I don’t sell bad meat,” he heard the voice answer but there was a feeling of desperation in its tone. Something that made Jez know that this was a lie.

“Liar, liar, that means you’ll hang higher,” came a voice from the back. This was soon taken up by everybody. The horde came close. Jez could feel the danger in the air. Then something inside him said ‘run’. It came again but louder ‘run’. And then it shouted ‘run’, and he fled. He went through the slight gap that seemed to open in the crowd. Some how he got through and he was at the door. Slamming the door behind him, his heart beating faster all the time he ran and ran, but he was sluggish. His body started to tire almost immediately. Ten yards away but already they were nearly upon him. He felt himself trying to push his heavy legs forward but it was no good. “I’ve got to get out of this body,” thought Jez in terror. He was gasping; his chest seemed to have tightened up on him. It hurt. He fell, chest tight, gasping and then more pain, it was a kick in the head, again and again.

“Jez come out. Jez come out,” a voice said softly beside him. Jez recognised it as Colin’s. He seemed to drift away. Away from the pain. He drew back. Soon he could just see the pool.

“Are you alright?” asked Colin with a look on concern.

“Phew that was strange,” Jez said with a sigh of relief, “Yes. Yes, I’m Okay.”

The head had reappeared, “Well Jez what do you think,” it asked.

“I felt like I was in your body,” Jez answered.

“Yes, heavy wasn’t it. Did you learn anything or was it waste of a life?” Steven asked without his usual smile.

“Look after your body so you can get away quicker?” Jez asked almost as a joke.

“You don’t know how close you are,” the figure said as it disappeared.

“What does he mean?” Jez said to Colin after the figure had gone.

“Who knows? It may mean different things to different people. But the real thing is what does it mean to you?” Colin asked looking at Jez.

“I dunno. I suppose it means, look after your body. Don’t be lazy. No it’s more than that isn’t it? His laziness caused his trouble but because of his laziness he couldn’t get away from his troubles. Is it more to do with a healthy mind than a healthy body?” Jez asked.

“Maybe or maybe both, maybe one leads to another,” Colin answered. A slight pause happened and Colin went on, “Ready for some more?”

Chapter 7.

The pool changed again as Colin and Jez looked into it. This time the face, seemed a lot sterner almost puritanical. He was a man, about fifty with short grey hair brushed down to a fringe. He looked a very ill tempered man and frightened Jez a little.

“Do you know me Jethro Molloy?” he bellowed out almost as a shout.

Jez looked at him but with no recognition, “No Sir, I’m sorry,”

“That’s like not recognising yourself boy,” he bellowed on. His face disappeared to be replaced by green rolling hills and a little Cottage set amongst the trees. “My name is Isiah Johnston; I was born just outside Derby in the year of Our Lord 1620. We were fairly wealthy but my strict father disliked spending it. Originally a large family but three of my brothers and two sisters were wiped

out by disease leaving only me and my brother Jeremiah. We tended the fields from dawn to dusk with the help of Our Lord and the guidance of our father. We attended Chapel regular which helped me to get through the toil of the day.”

The picture changed to a small Chapel made of stone and surrounded with people. They were all dressed in black and the men wore large black hats. The women had white bonnets and everyone seemed not to be relaxed. “It was there that I met Sarah and we married soon after. She was a good wife to me and mother to our five children Isiah, Stephen, Sarah, James and Claire. She was a comfort to me in my hour of need when my father died. We moved into his house and looked after my elderly mother as well as tending the fields.

Life was a struggle in the early days. Crop failures and the fever took away my brother Jeremiah and my sons Stephen and James. Sarah married young and moved to Ipswich.”

The face had reappeared in the pool and was looking straight at Jez and Colin. “My Lord stood by me and was a constant source of help. We got by and soon we even prospered. My upbringing taught me how to be strong and unfeeling. At the time it seemed right. I was strict with our children and brought them up in the eyes of Our Lord. My daughter Claire was strong willed and we would often argue. Things came to a head when she would not marry Samuel Davies. He was a devout hard working widower. He was older than her but would make her a good husband. She had met a local farm worker called Andrew Thomas who was not of the faith. She said she loved him and would always be with him. I forbid her to see him again and she packed and ran away. My wife Sarah blamed me for her departure and things were frosty between us ever since. My eldest son Isiah was supposed to look after the farm after I had gone but he had other ideas. As soon as he was eighteen he left and I never saw him again. My relationship with my wife went downhill even more. My temper grew worse and I even lost my respect for Sarah and treated her worse than any dog that I ever owned.

I was always brought up to speak my mind even if it would hurt some body’s feelings. I mean what are feelings compared with the truth? Feelings change day by day but the truth goes on forever. I still attended Church regularly but my heart was less and less in it. I was quick tempered and rather aloof with everybody. We were getting wealthy by then and I had people working for me on the land. This went against the grain for me but there was too much to do for one man. They were good workers and it surprised me how they put up with my constant rages and lack of respect for them, I mean they were working for me. I was paying them their wages. I put food on their families’ tables. Why should I show them respect?

As I had said earlier it went against the grain to pay somebody to do a job that I could do myself but it was too much for me. Maybe if Isiah had been here it might have been different. Sarah had tried to help as much as she could but looking after my mother was taking its toll. She started to look older and I must admit other women started to turn my head.

I started to take more time off the farm work. After all I was a wealthy man now I could pay people to do my work for me so I relaxed more. I started going to the local Inns and sampling their wares. My father had always forbidden us from touching alcohol, the demon drink as he used to call it. I must admit that I did not like the taste of it at first but it was hardly the Devil’s Water. Sarah stood by me in my drunkenness but that was more out of duty than love. I think our love disappeared long before I started paying women for their services. After all I could afford it.

It must have been late July 1665 or around there. I was about 45 then. Pestilence was all about. People were dying but I was in a world of my own. It was a world of drunken womanising and

spending money like there was no tomorrow. I was coming home very unsteadily when I fell. I laid out on the dusty pathway by the fields on the way back to my house; I wasn't hurt I just wanted to rest a while.

A voice woke me up, "Isiah Johnston get out of the gutter" I looked up, "Do I know you Sir?" I asked for I did not know the man.

"I do not believe that I was bothered enough to get acquainted with you sir," the voice answer with a mock emphasis on the last word.

"Who do you think that you are addressing?" I asked, my temper rising.

"I am addressing a drunk and a philanderer sir." the voice answered and this set my rage off.

"I am a man of God," I shouted, "I am a wealthy man of God. You will show me the respect that I deserve."

"That you deserve sir?" the man came forward and I looked him over. He was about five feet ten with a trimmed well kept beard. He looked distinguished in his cloak, "That you deserve sir. You have to earn respect sir."

"Who are you sir and why do you bother me I am a busy man?" I asked once again.

"My name is Peter and it is not I that bother you. It is you sir who bothers people with your arrogance and short temper."

"Look I'm a busy man sir. State your purpose," I said. I was shaken. Only my father had ever spoken to me like that and it brought back bad memories.

"Busy sir. How are you busy? Your farm hands do the work around the farm and your wife does the rest. The only thing that you do is mistreat them all. What happened to the marriage vows that you made in the eyes of God? To love, honour and obey. Your lack of faith to Sarah is only surpassed by your lack of faith to Our Lord." Peter replied.

"You talk to me like I am a child sir, or a dog." I said, my temper falling and curiosity creeping in.

'Who is this man' I thought to myself, 'How does he know so much about me?'

"How does it feel sir," Peter replied, "How does it feel? How does Sarah feel when you talk to her like that? What about your work force? How do you think they feel? Don't you think that their work is hard enough without your attitude?"

"I pay them. I give them money to feed their families do I not?" I replied.

"You buy their labour that's all sir. They are not dogs to be kicked around at will. They earn you a lot more than you give them sir. They are an asset that wants looking after or they may leave," Peter answered.

"Plenty more people would want to work for me," I answered but I knew that it was a lie. Most of the farm hands had fell victim to the plague and labour was in short supply."

"A drunk, a womaniser and a liar," Peter answered, "My, what a man you are Isiah Johnston."

"I've told you before sir, I am not a child to be talked down to," I said but I knew that he was telling the truth.

"The truth hurts sir does it not?"

"It's not the truth that hurts sir, it's the tone that I object to," I answered.

"How does it feel sir," Peter asked, "Do you think it feels worse for you than it does for Sarah or Mat your Shepherd?"

"Who are you?" I said in almost desperation, "I demand to know who are you?"

"You demand of me sir. You, a drunkard, demand to know me," Peter said but relented slight,

"You have strayed too far from the path and I am here to try and put you back. Our Lord looks

down at you and is displeased with the way you look down on others.”

Before I could answer the figure disappeared leaving me in my drunken stupor. I started to think of all the times that my father had treated me that way. Surely I was not like that? Maybe I was but I could change. I remembered the love that myself and Sarah used to have and missed it terribly. Maybe it was too late but I must win her back. I went home with a spring in my step only to be faced by Sarah’s frosty tones. I knew it would take time for it was only just dawning on me how badly I treated her. I never touched the drink after that and was up the next day at dawn working on the farm. We worked hard that day and every day afterwards. The men eventually took to me. There was a deep mistrust amongst them at first though. My relationship with Sarah did get a lot better and we were happy for the last years of my life. I died when I was 50 maybe the drink had its effect.”

The voice went quiet for a while. Jez said to it, “Treat others how you expect to be treated yourself.”

“Yes Jethro,” Isiah said kindly, “It may sound obvious to you but it took me nearly a lifetime to learn it.” The figure disappeared again and Jez said to Colin, “He wasn’t a bad man Colin.” Silence came as they looked into the pool once more.

Chapter 8.

The reflection changed once more. This time to a man in his forties. He had a rounded face and jet black hair brushed to the left side. He looked a healthy man. He was small in stature only about five foot six but he was quite stocky. As Jez looked into his deep blue eyes, he recognised him. He had seen him before but it was in Jez’s dreams. “I know him,” he said to Colin, “I think I’ve dreamt about him.”

“Maybe you were reliving a past life without knowing it,” Colin said and this triggered Jez’s memories about the other faces.

“Yes... Yes. It must be.” Jez answered. “No wonder I seemed to be recognise them.” The face spoke to Jez in a broad Irish accent. “So do you remember me Jethro?”

“I’m afraid I don’t know your name sir, only I’ve seen you in my sleep,” Jez answered looking at the face.

“Well let me refresh your memory,” the face said as it disappeared.

In its place was a white stone cottage with a thatched roof set by a large lake that stretched towards the mountains behind it. The fields around it were lush green and dotted with orchards with heavily laden apple trees. ‘This looks like paradise,’ Jez thought to himself and to him it did indeed look like heaven.

“My name is Martin O’Reilly,” the voice said, “And I was born in a house not far from Armagh City in the Orchard County in the Province of Ulster. I was born into a turbulent time but I was lucky not to be involved. It was 1730 when I came into this world. My father was a farmer as his father was before him. My two brothers had left the farm stead and traveled the land. One sought his fortune over in England working on the land and the other got involved with revolutionaries trying for independence. I’m not sure but I did hear he was hanged. It was hard work especially as we were Catholics but we got by. We weren’t wealthy but we were happy.” The picture changed again, this time into a strikingly attractive girl, about twenty, with long wavy black hair and deep blue eyes. “I met and married Elizabeth Kelly when I was twenty. She was the light of my life. We were extremely happy together and when our first child Rose was born that was the icing on the

cake. We had two sons, Declan and Brendan, after that and they grew up into fine strong lads.” The picture changed once more, the lush green fields and orchards were there but the lake had disappeared. The figure of Martin O’ Reilly walked along the country lane but on his arm was another woman. Jez guessed that Martin would have been about forty then and the woman beside him was in her early twenties. She was pretty and well dressed but she could not hold a candle to Elizabeth.

“What happened to Elizabeth? Where is he?” Jez asked. He was surprised to see Martin with another woman, “Did she die?”

“No Jethro ... I don’t know what really happened but let me explain what I can. Anyway we were tremendously happy. Sure the work was hard but I was young and strong at the time. I took great comfort from Elizabeth and the Church. I kept the commandments and stood with Elizabeth through thick and thin. The lads were growing up and helping more and more around the farm. Things were getting easier and I used to relax more and enjoy the fruits of my labour. I must have been in my late thirties by then and used to take long walks by the banks of Lough Neagh. Maybe I was afraid of getting old. I don’t know. Elizabeth had started to age but she was still a fine looking woman. Well anyway it was on one of these walks that I met her. She was young and fresh and she liked me. I couldn’t believe it.

Her name was Charlotte and she took my heart. She was married to one of the local landlords called Smythe an elderly man who used to strut around the town with the arrogance of an English man. He was sixty and she was twenty two and I fell for her lies as deeply as I fell for her. She told me that she was forced into a loveless marriage by her money grabbing father. She told me she was beaten regularly by Smythe in his many drunken rages. To me she was like a butterfly trapped in a bottle and she soon talked me around to releasing her. She promised me everything. And God strike me down but I fell for her. Smythe was a wealthy man who thought he was king of all he surveyed. We had our arguments and I must admit that I did not like the fella but what Charlotte suggested went beyond dislike. To me life is sacred. After all thou shalt not kill. I had seen enough of death to last a life time. She lured me on promises of wealth and flattery that made me feel good inside. Eventually I relented and she quickly drew up a plan. If I was thinking straight then the speed of the drawing up of that plan would have made me wary but I was totally gone by then. Smythe often went for walks himself and would regularly walk past an old barn not far from where I lived. It was to be on a Friday at around seven o’clock that I was to see him. The time came and the deed was done. I stabbed him through the chest and stomach but took no pleasure from it. As he fell before me the sound of loud voices distracted me. I turned to see Charlotte and four soldiers approaching.

She pointed and shouted, “Look he has slew my beloved” and almost collapsed. She was a good actress. Mind you she did fool me. I fled and lived the life of an outlaw, that was in July 1752 but I lasted until June 1754 before I was finally caught.”

The picture changed back to Martin again. Jez looked at him but was silent. “Which upset you more, losing the love of Elizabeth or killing that man?” he asked eventually.

Now it was Martins turn to think.

Jez looked at Colin and said, “Always be true to the one you love and always be true to what you believe in.”

“There’s only one more,” Colin said as the picture disappeared again.

Chapter 9.

As they looked into the pool once more their reflections disappeared. A thin gaunt face appeared. It was a man in his fifties, balding slightly at the front. He was not looking at Colin nor Jez but kept his eye lowered as if he was looking at the floor. He looked up Jez recognised him immediately. The face had often appeared to him when he slept. Usually he had a particular bad day when he saw him most clearly. "I know you," Jez said before the face had chance to speak, "You seem to appear to me when things are bad."

"Maybe I'm the one who can help you the most," the face said, "As long as you don't follow my example."

"Tell me about yourself," Jez said almost as an order. Colin had noticed a slight change in Jez. He seemed to be getting his confidence now but alongside it an arrogance was also forming. Maybe he was getting too much knowledge too quickly. Maybe he was not ready to take on so much knowledge without learning humility. He had seen it happen before. The fine line between confidence and arrogance could easily be broken and if it was then Jez would not be up to the test. The voice spoke as the scene in the pool changed, "My name is Harold Pearce and I was born in the year of Our Lord 1804." The scene in the pool was that of a large room. Book Cases seemed to cover the walls. The only things left uncovered were the two large sash windows that let the light stream through. A large round man dressed in a long black jacket and waist coat stood over a small child glaring down at it. "I was born in Dublin, the only son of a wealthy Lawyer. My mother died not long before that scene? I was only a child then about eight or nine, I don't exactly remember."

"What was your father saying to you?" Jez asked interrupting him.

"He blamed me for my mother's death. She never really recovered when she had me and was ill until the day she died. He told me that I was no good and that I would make nothing out of my life. He never hit me. He did not need to. He had a tongue that was as sharp as any sword. I rarely went out but spent long hours reading and gaining knowledge. Still my father belittled me. Nothing I could do could make him change and in the end I thought I'd never make him happy. He died when I was eighteen, his last words that he was ashamed of me. I was working for Hugh O' Hanlon at the time. He was a hard task master who paid me a pittance but I still had money coming from my father's Estate. I was a clerk in O' Hanlon's office and worked long hours.

The hours didn't bother me for I had nothing to go home for and the work never taxed my brain. By the time that I was twenty five I knew how to run the office myself but I never sought promotion. I still had my doubts. Maybe I was no good. I should just have been happy that O' Hanlon employed me."

The picture changed again. This time it was a Lady in her twenties with shoulder length black hair and deep blue eyes. The voice carried on, "I was in my thirties when I first met Jennifer. I was still working for O' Hanlon doing the same jobs. I had watched people climb the ladder to success all around me. A friendship had grown between O' Hanlon and myself and we would occasionally go out for a drink together. I asked him once why I had never been promoted but he said I only kept my job because of our friendship. I was sent to a widow woman called Mrs. Dougan to fetch some paperwork. It was during a legal battle over her departed husband's Estate. He was a soldier who fought and died in battle and his family were contesting the will because they were only recently married.

I knocked on the door and was shown in by the Parlour Maid. It was then I saw her. She was all any man could ever want. The deepest blue eyes and pale porcelain skin. She looked divine.

I've come for the paperwork Ma'am. I said nervously, not wanting to catch her eye. She seemed distraught. So fragile. I wanted to hold her in my arms and tell her everything would be alright. But she was too good for me. I was only an Office Clerk. What little money from the Estate was gone. Maybe if I had sought promotion it would be different.

Do I know you sir? She asked looking at me. It turned out we went to the same Church and a conversation was struck. I was to see her again and again for the Legal battle was to drag on for four years. We grew quite close in the time but only as friends. Maybe she wanted more but a little voice inside me held me back. O' Hanlon on the other hand had no qualms about courting her and started to woo her as soon as he could. At first she spurned his advances but he was persistent. Eventually she consented and they were married. He even asked me to be his best man but I declined. I carried on working for O' Hanlon until the day I died and it used to grieve me to see them together but what could I do?"

The face returned to the pool and Jez asked him, "Was I once like you?"

"You were me once," Martin answered looking straight at Jez, "And maybe you're still me every time you hide from your father."

Jez thought a while. Was he once a strangler, a drunk, a knife-man? What sort of lives' were they to lead?

The voice interrupted his thoughts, "You have to believe in yourself Jez because if you don't nobody else will believe in you."

The face disappeared in the water. Jez looked into the water but there was no reflection, none at all. As he looked the pool started to swirl around and then there was a blinding flash. He had to cover his eyes but when he opened them he could not believe the sight in front of him. A rainbow seemed to leave the pool and touch the ground about four feet away from him. He had never seen such a small rainbow.

"Look!" he said to Colin, "What's happening?"

At the end of the rainbow there was no pot of gold but a transparent stone about five inches long. It had six sides and came to a point at one end.

Jez picked it up and studied it, "Just a rock Colin," he said showing it to Colin.

"No it's more than that," Colin answered, "It's the knowledge of six life times if you know how to use it."

Jez was quiet. He had thought he had known it all but he was realising he was only starting to learn. Maybe he would not be good enough to face the giant. Colin picked up on his fears and said, "You have come far Jez. With the crystal you have the knowledge of six life times."

"But how do I use it?" Jez asked with a slight tone of despair in his voice.

"We must go and see the Teacher and he will tell you," Colin answered.

"I don't know if I'm ready yet Colin. I seem to be getting big headed and that can't be right."

"Yes but now you know it you can change that," said Colin relieved.

"Tell me why did the other boy fail?" Jez asked worrying a bit. "Did he go big headed?"

"He was not ready for the knowledge. He could not cope, it gave him a false sense of superiority," Colin answered.

"This Teacher. Does he live far away?" Jez asked.

"No not far. It's on our way anyhow," Colin answered, "Shall we make a start?"

Jez put the crystal in his pocket and followed. At the back of the cave was another entrance. Jez was sure that it was not there before for he had not seen it. Over the entrance was a sign. It said,

“This is the Land of the Ever Young, to enter here you must be strong.”

The entrance itself was about five feet high and three feet wide and led to a passageway of about the same size. This was a lot darker than the other passageway but Jez had no fear. He followed Colin into it and let him be the guide. After about twenty yards the passageway started to climb. It was not sharp and Jez barely noticed it.

“Are we going back out again?” Jez asked. He was not sure where he was going. He was not even sure if they were to stay underground.

“No, not to your side anyway,” Colin answered, “I am taking you to what will appear to be a strange land. Very few people have seen it recently but it was almost a pilgrimage in the old days.”

“Just out of interest Colin” Jez said, “How old are you?”

“I am as old as the hills but as young as my heart,” Colin answered with a grin that Jez could not see because of the darkness.

“You talk a lot of riddles Colin,” Jez said with a sigh.

Chapter 10.

As they proceeded further into the darkness Colin said to Jez, “I’ve got another riddle for you. Do you want to hear it? It may pass the time.”

“Alright,” Jez answered thinking to himself that it still must be far. Colin said “Without me riches are worthless.

Without me life is mirthless,

When I’ve gone to pot

What else have you got, what am I?”

Jez pondered a while. The darkness seemed to help him think. Without me riches are worthless, could that be friendship again? No it was something more than that. Without me life is mirthless, but that must be friendship surely? When I’ve gone to pot what else have you got? It’s got to be friendship but what about riches are worthless? Maybe if you had the money it would be worth nothing without friendship. He thought more. It seemed to add up but something inside him told him that it was not friendship.

The more he thought the more he was convinced that it was not friendship. When I’ve gone to pot what else have you got? If you lose a friend it’s hard but it’s not the end of the world so it must be more.

He closed his eyes and saw the picture of an Old Man sitting in a large room. He was on a luxurious leather chair. The room itself was decorated with ornate paintings and statues. He looked a wealthy man but he was not happy. He was trying to get out of the chair but something was holding him back. He was too frail to lift himself and had to rely on others to carry him to the large sash window behind him. The picture faded and Jez opened his eyes. Surely riches were worthless to him? He seemed to take no pleasure from them. He wanted the beauty of the countryside but he was too weak to go out. He wanted to be strong. He wanted to have his health back. Life is mirthless. Yes it must be for him now he’s lost it what else has he got.

“Colin,” Jez said, “I think I’ve got it. Is it health?”

The speed and humility of Jez’s answer surprised Colin. He was coming along quickly and was now able to enter the Valley of the Ever Young. Just as he was thinking a light in front of him came into view.

“Yes, you’re right Jez, it is health,” answered Colin, “Just in time too as we are nearly there.”

They proceeded towards the light until they came upon the entrance.

“Here we are,” said Colin, “Don’t be afraid and believe in everything that you see.”

The entrance came out onto a lush green hillside. Jez needed a few seconds to get used to the light. He looked out at the valley below and its beauty nearly took his breath away. The green seemed so vivid it was almost calming. “I could live here,” he said to himself gazing over the scene below.

“It’s so peaceful,” he said to Colin, “so tranquil.”

“Why don’t you sit down a while,” Colin said, “And take in the view. I must go and see if the Teacher is at home.”

“Can I not come with you?” Jez asked, not really wanting to be left on his own.

“No you must stay here,” Colin answered, “Don’t worry, you’ll be safe.”

Jez sat down and watched Colin walk down the hill. Soon he was out of view so Jez looked around the valley. It was breath taking with its vivid fields and hedgerows and with the warming Sun he felt quite elated. He sat there for about five minutes just studying the sight below. There were a few houses dotted around but they were lost in the grandeur of the landscape.

“Hello,” he heard a voice behind him and turned to look. There was nobody there only a little rabbit. He looked at the rabbit expecting it to run away but it stood its ground and spoke again,

“What’s your name?”

“My name is Jez, I didn’t know that rabbits could talk.”

“All animals can talk, but only to those who listen, my name is Justin, what sort of animal are you?”

“I am a man, or will be soon.”

“A man, what does a man do?” Justin asked because he had never seen one before. He had heard stories and should have been afraid but his youthful curiosity had got the better of him.

“What does a man do? I don’t really know. Er work to get money to buy food, I suppose,” Jez answered but he was not really sure.

“That’s silly. There’s food all around you all you have to do it eat it. Where’s the work in that?”

“Men don’t eat grass.”

“What do you eat then?” Justin asked as he came closer.

“All sorts of things really,” Jez answered but he did not want to say rabbit, “Potatoes, turnips, carrots, cabbage loads of things.”

“They grow on their own don’t they?”

“We have to plant them and look after them. We eat a lot more than you, you know.”

“Oh, I see. What’s money then?”

“Money,” Jez said in surprise, “Its pieces of paper and coins made out of metal. Everybody knows that.”

“I don’t. But what good are pieces of paper and bits of metal and why will people give you food for them?”

“Its not just food you can get. You can buy clothes and furniture and houses and loads of things,” Jez answered getting slightly flustered.

“What are clothes and what do they do?”

“These are clothes,” Jez said pulling at his shirt and trousers, “They keep you cool in Summer and warm in Winter.”

“I don’t need them, for I have fur. Why don’t you have fur?”

“I don’t know,” Jez answered getting even more flustered, “Because we have clothes instead.”

“Oh alright, but what is furniture?”

“Chairs to sit on and tables to put your food on. That kind of thing.”

“I don’t need them for I sit on the floor and eat all around me. Why don’t you?”

“Because Because we don’t that’s why,” Jez answered getting even more flustered than he was before.

“Oh, alright, but what are houses?”

“Houses are where we live. Where we shelter from the rain and cold. Just like your burrows really,” Jez answered and thought to himself, ‘Let’s see him give an answer to that one.’

“So you give people money to make houses. We make our own shelters from the cold and rain. We don’t need to work to get money to pay people to build our burrows. We build them ourselves so we have time to play. Do you play?” Justin said and started to turn around Jez.

“Yes sometimes I play. When I’m happy,” Jez answered as Justin skipped around him.

“Are you happy now?” Justin said, still racing around him.

“Yes I’m happy now,” Jez answered and wanted to join Justin and run about and leap and jump.

“Do you want to play then?”

Jez wanted to play but he knew that he must wait for Colin to return.

“No, I can’t, for I have to wait for my friend Colin to return. He won’t be long.”

“You mean Colin the Leprechaun. How do you know him?” Justin asked, he had stopped playing now.

“I am going to help him to get the Magic Eye back off the giant,” Jez said surprised that Justin had stopped playing.

“What does he want with the Magic Eye?”

“He is going to give it to the Queen of the Inner World so that Man can come back to the Valley of the Ever Young.”

Justin had heard that men eat rabbits and made animals slaves and he did not want them in the valley. He was scared that they might eat him.

“Where is Colin now?” he asked trying to sound calm.

“He has gone to see if the Teacher is in. He won’t be too long,” Jez answered noticing a slight change in Justin’s manner.

“But the Teacher lives miles away. It will take days. You have plenty of time to play. Come on Jez; let’s play by the wishing well. It’s only a couple of miles away,” Justin said trying to tempt Jez. He was going to get Jez to lean over it and then push him in.

“No, I must wait for Colin to return. He won’t be long,” Jez said but he was tempted if the truth be known.

“You can have anything that you want at the wishing well. You only have to ask,” Justin said because he could see that Jez was tempted.

“No, I must wait for Colin,” Jez answered half heatedly.

“You can have more clothes than you could ever dream of,” Justin said trying his luck.

“I have enough clothes already,” Jez replied for he did not want clothes, “One set is enough for me.”

“You could have ten or twenty sets, imagine it.” Justin said for he was persistent.

“I am happy as I am just as you are happy as you are,” Jez answered referring to the fact that Justin only had one coat himself.

“You can have furniture, as much as you can carry, imagine it. Chairs, tables anything that you want,” Justin said trying a different way.

"I have furniture at home. I need no more," Jez replied for he did not want furniture.

"You could have bigger and better furniture. Imagine it," Justin said persistently.

"I am happy as I am just as you are happy as you are," Jez answered referring to the fact that Justin sat on the floor and ate where the food was.

"You can have houses as many as you want," Justin said. He was starting to get desperate.

"What need have I for another house for I live in one already," Jez said. He noticed the change in Justin's tone and it made him slightly wary.

"You can have a bigger and better house," Justin said but he knew the answer already.

"I am happy as I am just as you are happy as you are," Jez answered. It was starting to become a bit of a game to him.

"You can have as much money as you can carry. You can buy anything that you want, imagine it," Justin said, desperation was starting to show in his voice.

Jez was tempted. He was wary though for he thought that Justin meant him harm but what harm could a rabbit do? Jez had eaten enough of them in his time to have no fear of them. He could go to the well and be back in an hour. If Colin was going to be gone for ages he could nip back through the cave and be back home in a day. He would be a very rich man indeed. He was starting to give way to the temptation and Justin had seen it.

"Come and play Jez. We'll be back soon. You don't really want to fight that giant now do you? Imagine all that money," Justin said, the desperation had left his voice for he thought that Jez would now come.

He was about to say yes but a voice inside him told him no. "No I have to wait for Colin. He won't be long."

"Forget about Colin, imagine all that money instead," Justin said almost in anger.

"He's my friend," Jez answered almost shouting.

"Wouldn't you rather have all that money instead?" Justin asked trying to sound reasonable for he noticed that Jez was getting angry.

"No, his friendship means more to me than any pot of gold," Jez said. His voice had calmed down slightly.

"I'll be your friend," Justin said, "I will show you how to get money as well. All Colin wants to do is get you killed fighting a giant. You do not want that do you?"

"Colin's not like that," Jez said slowly, trying to keep his anger from erupting, "He's my friend."

"Come on Jez. I've heard that all you men are greedy and yearn for money. Imagine it, as much as you can carry," Justin said. He knew that Jez would not come now and desperation made him talk without thinking.

"What do you mean all men are greedy, you told me when we first met that you did not know what a man was," Jez said, "So how do you know that all men are greedy?"

"It is well known amongst all the animals the greed of Man," Justin said almost in a mocking tone.

"Oh yes and what else is well known?" he said as he grabbed Justin.

"No please, don't eat me," Justin said in panic, "Or make me a slave."

"I am a man. I am not greedy. You better be careful for I do eat rabbits though," Jez said but he meant only to frighten Justin as he was not hungry.

"Please let me go," Justin said timidly.

"Not until you tell me why you mean me harm," Jez said holding him firmly; he heard a noise and looked down to see Colin approaching. His grip on Justin relaxed and Justin ran off as quick as he

could. Jez was laughing to himself as Colin came to him.

“What was all that about?” Colin asked.

“That rabbit talks you know,” Jez said not answering Colin’s question.

“Justin. Yes he does rattle on a bit doesn’t he,” Colin replied jokingly.

“No, I mean he’s a rabbit and he talks,” Jez said not understanding Colin’s humour.

“All animals talk in the valley. Didn’t I tell you?”

“I thought that was long ago well before I was born,”

“That’s only in your world. You’re now in mine,so what did he want anyway?”

“He wanted to play with me. He wanted to take me to the wishing well. He promised that I could have anything that I wanted all I had to do is forget about you and the giant. I think he wanted to do me harm.”

“You told him about the giant then?”

“Yes, was I wrong to tell him?”

“No, but you have to be careful. I’m sorry; I should have told you earlier. Some animals don’t want Man to come into the valley. They don’t remember Old Man only the stories of New Man.”

Colin answered and sat down on the grass alongside Jez.

“Are we that bad?” Jez said in surprise.

“Some are I’m sorry to say. But over the years stories get exaggerated and some of the animals are afraid. They don’t realise that it is only when Man gets compassion and loses his yearning for gold is he allowed to enter into the valley,” Colin said lighting his pipe,” It might be a good ideas to throw away your stick though for it may help to ease their fears.”

“I don’t know about that Colin for it helps to ease my fears having it.”

“You have to believe in yourself Jez.”

“Yes, you’re right Colin,” Jez said throwing the stick away, “Did that Rabbit mean me harm?”

“Yes, I think that he did, but his fear came from ignorance. If he had got to know you then it would have been different. He does not know what’s in your heart. Only you know that. Remember the only thing that will harm you here is greed. Oh and maybe arrogance.”

“I will try and remember that, especially now I have no stick.

“Fear not Jez the crystal will help you,” Jez had forgotten about the crystal. He took it out of his pocket and looked into it.

“Yes I forgot about the crystal,” Jez said still looking hard into it, “But how will this help me more than my stick will?”

“It will help you to believe in yourself. It will help you to rely on yourself instead of the stick,”

Colin said looking out over the valley. He was quite tired as he had traveled many miles in a short space of time. The warming Sun seemed to recharge him and it was not long before he was able to travel again. He was getting older though and with the Magic Eye gone his strength was sapping. Jez was his last chance now. For him there could be no others. Over the centuries many had tried and failed. Most had not even got as far as the valley. He had great hopes with the last one but Davy had failed at the last step.

It grieved him because he could not help them. It was something that they had to do on their own. Jez seemed able though. He was learning all the time. He had passed all the tests so far.

“Was he in?” Jez asked rousing Colin from his thoughts.

“Yes, he is expecting you. But rest a while for it is a long journey,” Colin answered as they both looked over the valley.

Chapter 11.

They sat there a while without saying anything. Jez was too busy looking clear over the valley and Colin absorbing the Sun's warmth. It seemed to send energy from his feet up his legs and into his body. It was Jez who spoke first. "Why has no-one discovered this magical place? Surely over the centuries someone would find it by accident?"

"You have to know what you're looking for. You may pass it a thousand times and still not see it. Greed can be the worst form of blindness," Colin answered. He was still quite tired but he knew it would soon pass. It seemed to take a lot longer than before though.

"But how did the stories about Death Mountain start? They must have come from somewhere and how did it get its name?" Jez asked as a gentle breeze cooled him down slightly.

"Old Man started the stories of Death Mountain for he knew that if New Man could get in then there would be mass desolation. Over the centuries this was passed down and the stories grew. New Man is afraid of the unknown for his rational mind cannot accept it. It instills a fear inside him, that is why he'd try and destroy it. The death in Death Mountain actually stands for the death of avarice but New Man thought it had a more sinister meaning." Colin said and lit his pipe once more. Jez thought a while before he spoke again, "But I am from New Man. What good could I be to you?"

"Old Man and New Man both had the knowledge but New Man lost it. It is still inside him but he does not know where to look. Old Man didn't at first. It took him many lifetimes but he had been here a lot longer than New Man. Recently though it is starting to re-surface again. Some of your kind has evolved enough to start to receive it but they need the Magic Eye to open up theirs for you all have one." Colin said as he puffed on his pipe.

"You mean I have one as well?" Jez said in surprise for he still did not really understand what was going on.

"Yes but centuries ago it was blinded by greed and the Giant Gate Keeper stole the Master Eye to protect the valley. Without the Master Eye all the others won't see and the longer it's gone the less chance there is of regaining the vision." Colin said

"It sounds like a good idea that he took it in the first place." Jez said not wanting to see the valley ruined.

"Oh, it was at the time I must admit," Colin said, "The giant is only holding on to it till he thinks that New Man or Man I may as well say for Old Man has long gone, is ready for it."

"And how must I convince him of this?" Jez asked.

"I'm afraid I don't know for I will not be with you," Colin said with a sigh.

"What, you mean I must face him alone," Jez said with a mixture of surprise and horror for he had expected Colin to be with him.

"I'm sorry. I can only take you to the Edge of Darkness and then you must finish the journey alone." Colin said as he saw the look of terror in Jez's eyes. He felt sorry for him but he knew he could do nothing. It was something that Jez must face alone.

Jez thought it over for a while and said, "Yes. I think you're right. Mind you I wish I'd kept my stick." and looked towards where he had thrown it.

"No, you will not need it. I believe in you. Now you must do the same," Colin felt better for he really did believe that Jez would make it.

"Do you think he knows I'm here?" Jez said looking back at Colin.

"Knowing Justin I think the whole valley must know you're here." Colin answered laughing. His

laugh must have been contagious because Jez started laughing as well.

“Why do you call the giant the Gate Keeper?” Jez asked changing the subject back again.

“He used to guard the gate between the outer and inner world. He also looked after the Magic Eye and his job was to filter it into the outer world,” Colin answered tapping his pipe on the floor to empty it.

“Filter it through. What do you mean?”

“Man could not take the full power of the eye all in one go. It had to be released a bit at a time for it was too powerful to have all at once.” Colin said letting the pipe cool down a bit before he put it back in his pocket.

Colin’s tiredness had completely gone now and he was ready to carry on. The journey would take a lot longer now because Jez could not go at Colin’s speed. That was not unusual though because no man alive could travel as fast as Colin. Colin stood up and looking at Jez said, “Are you about ready?”

Jez answered “Yes,” as he scrambled up on his feet. The journey down the hill was hard going for Jez because of its steepness. There was no pathway or if there was it had been swallowed up centuries ago. Jez nearly slipped on several occasions but in the end he got to the bottom. Colin was waiting for him when he arrived, “We have quite a long way to go so if you get tired just tell me and we’ll rest a while.”

“Alright,” but thought to himself that it could not be long as Colin was not away for a great length of time.

They walked across the field towards the pathway at the other side of the hedgerow. It was a pleasant day. The birds were singing heartily. They sang “Watch out, watch out there’s a man about.”

Jez heard them and understood what they were singing. Turning to Colin he said. “This is truly a wonderful place. When I go back will I still understand their singing?”

“Not straight away but maybe when the eye has filtered enough power and you enter the Second Age of Enlightenment you will,” Colin said as he slowed a bit to let Jez catch up.

“Maybe when we all reach that the birds won't need to sing that anymore,” Jez said as he caught Colin up.

“I don't think they fear you as much now but there will be mistrust you for some time,” Colin said and called out to the birds, “Come forth little ones and meet your first man.”

Within seconds about 20 birds had landed all around them. They were chattering excitedly to themselves. They all kept an eye on Jez through the endless chatter though. The biggest one that sat closest to Jez spoke first, “So you are a man then” It was not a question but more a statement.

“Yes, my name is Jez but I'm not really a man yet. I will be soon though.”

“So you are a man chick then,” the biggest one said laughing and this set all the others off. After they stopped the biggest one spoke again, “My name is Brian and these are all my family.”

“Pleased to meet you. How did you know I was here?”

“Justin told me to spread the word around and keep away for you will surely eat us,” Brian said cautiously.

“But you came when Colin called you,” Jez said in surprise.

“Well Justin does exaggerate a bit and besides if you’re Colin’s friend then you’re a friend of ours.”

“Thank you,” Jez said and meant it, “So what’s the song about?”

“Oh we have sang that ever since living memory. I think it’s just a song for we have a lot more to

fear from Kim the Cat than you.”

Another bird had jostled forward to speak. All the birds went quiet on hearing her name.

“She kills for fun more than food,” Colin said to Jez and at that moment the birds scattered creating a lot of noise.

“Yes and maybe you’re next,” a voice hissed from behind Colin and Jez. They turned around and saw a large black cat. It was much bigger than any of the domestic cats that Jez had seen and it was quite frightening. Jez cursed himself for throwing the stick away.

“I see you bring vermin to the valley Colin,” the voice hissed again as it looked at Jez.

“I hope that’s not me you’re talking about,” Jez said in a loud voice that surprised him. A voice inside him had said remember the galloping horses.

The large black cat approached Jez in a threatening manner, “We don’t want your sort in this valley, you’ve ruined your world but you won’t ruin ours,” it hissed. Jez was worried but he knew he could not show it for Kim would sense it.

It was Colin’s turn to speak, “He had been invited in by the Queen.” But Kim stopped him before he said anymore.

“What does the Queen know? She sits in her Palace and does not see anything. Man will never change it is not in his nature.”

“What do you know about my nature?” Jez said. He was starting to get angry now. Maybe he did not like the way Kim talked to Colin he did not know for sure. The anger soon drained out the little fear he had. “Who do you think you are anyway? You don’t speak for the valley.”

“The other animals in the valley may fear you but I don’t. You may have enslaved my kin in your world but you won’t in mine.” Kim said as she backed off slightly.

Jez came forward for he knew out of all the animals man had kept the cat was the least one you could call a slave. “What do you mean enslaved your kind? There is no cage around them. They can come and go as they please but they choose to stay. They stay because we feed them and they take our shelter.”

“You kill for no reason, it is a well known fact,” Kim said trying a different approach for she knew she was losing the argument.

“You’re one to talk aren’t you? You instill fear in all the birds and mice of our world but you don’t need to kill for you get fed by man.” Jez said. There was a hint of sarcasm in his tone.

“It is the nature of all animals to kill,” Kim said but before she said anymore it was Jez’s turn to interrupt.

“Yes but only to eat. Maybe you don’t like man because you see too much of yourself in us?”

“Well said,” Colin interrupted.

“You can shut up,” Kim said menacingly. She knew that she was losing face and was desperate to regain it. The birds had been watching, albeit at a safe distance, and what ever happened now would be all over the valley soon.

The fury inside Jez erupted, “That’s the last time that you will speak to anybody in that tone while I’m here. Now go away before I do you some real harm.” As he spoke he walked towards Kim.

Kim saw his anger and was frightened. She ran about ten yards and turned a safe distance away and shouted, “I won’t forget this. You’ll never stay in the valley while I’m here.”

Jez started to run after her but she was gone. He came back to Colin who was silent. The cat had frightened him slightly for cats and leprechauns have never got on. He had not anticipated the cat’s reaction to man coming back into the valley and maybe it would cause a lot of trouble.

Jez's job would be difficult enough without any complications.

"How ever did that get into the valley?" Jez said to Colin when he had got back. Jez had sensed Colin's fear and it surprised him but he never mentioned it. He had thought to himself that if he had been frightened he would not like others mentioning it. Colin had read his thoughts and was touched by them. Jez was definitely coming on.

"I'm afraid that nature reflects in the valley as it does in your world. Kim's damage is more of an inconvenience than real trouble but be careful for she can be real trouble."

The birds' singing had started again but this time to a new song, 'Kim watch out Jez's about, Kim watch out Jez's about'

Colin laughed and said, "It looks like you have made your mark on the valley at last."

Jez laughed and they both carried on their way. At the end of the field was a hedgerow and beyond it was a pathway.

"It should be easier walking now," Colin said as they reached it.

"I hope so," Jez replied "As its hard going across fields in this heat."

As they got onto the path the journey became a lot easier. It was about six feet wide with a flowered hedgerow on each side. The birds were chattering in excited tones all around them. They were talking too fast to make much sense to Jez but he was sure that he heard his name mentioned a few times. With the warming Sun, the smell of the flowers and the chattering birds the journey was quite exhilarating.

They seemed to lap up the miles and the hours flew by but Jez did not tire. He was caught up in the euphoria of his surroundings and could have walked for many more miles but a lone figure ahead made him stop.

"That's Eddy the Mouse and he looks upset," Colin said to Jez as they approached. The mouse was in considerable distress and without speaking to Colin said, "Are you Jez the man Chick?"

"Yes, but I'm a boy, not a man chick. Are you alright you look a bit upset?" Jez said compassionately.

"It's my family. They have been trapped in their burrow by that Kim. She's put a large stone in front of the entrance and I can't move it. I'm afraid that they might suffocate," Eddy said in a panic.

Colin knew what her game was. She was trying to slow them down. She must know that Colin was running out of time and did not need any distractions like that. Jez did not know that Colin was running out of time and quickly offered to give him a hand.

"Do you want me to try? I'm not sure if I'm strong enough but I don't suppose it would be too heavy if Kim can move it," Jez asked. His last statement was not said as a boast.

"Yes please, but I think that we had better hurry as they are running out of time," the mouse said as he scurried off. Colin and Jez quickly followed him and very soon they were there.

The rock was a lot larger than Jez and Colin thought it would be, "Kim must be a lot stronger than she looks," Jez said as he put his hands around it. It must have been three feet wide and two feet high. He grasped it firmly and took the strain but it did not move. He pulled as hard as he could and it moved, but only a fraction. He heard the pitiful cries of the mice inside and it urged him on. He pulled and pulled with all his might. The cries were getting weaker. He knew he must be running out of time and this made him angry. Why was he so weak? The anger ignited his adrenalin and spurred him on. He pulled one more time and it moved enough to let some air in. The air flooded in revitalising the dying mice and with another tug the rock was clear from the

entrance.

“I don’t know how we’ll ever thank you,” Eddy said as his family flooded out into the warm Sun.

“Don’t mention it; we’re not all bad men you know. Even the chicks.”

Colin laughed at this and thought that Jez was even learning his humour.

“Your must stop and let us entertain you,” Eddy said.

“Thank you for the offer but I’m afraid we must be on our way to see the Teacher,” Jez said and Colin and him said their goodbyes.

“You know that you will always be welcome here,” Eddy shouted after them. They made their way back to the path and set about on their way again.

“Where ever did she get the strength to move a rock that size. It took me all my strength just to budge it,” Jez said to Colin as they walked along.

“It was a lot easier for her than you think,” Colin said taking his pipe out. He started to clean it with his nail that he took from his pocket. “See” he said showing the nail to Jez,” You never know when it comes in handy.”

“How do mean easier than I think?” Jez said with a puzzled expression.

“If I remember right the rock was above the entrance. All she had to do is roll it down the slope,” Colin said as he filled the pipe.

They walked for a few more miles before the Sun set. The birds had stopped singing. As it got darker Jez seemed to tire.

“We must rest here for it will be soon too dark to travel,” Colin said and picked a place by the hedgerow to settle down.

Jez sat next to him and said, “We have traveled all day and are still not here. How did you manage to travel so quickly?”

“Ah,” said Colin cleaning his pipe once more, “I travel nearly as fast as speed of thought.”

“Sorry, I don’t understand, what do you mean the speed of thought?”

“I just think about it and I’m nearly there,” Colin said filling his pipe once more.

“I think that I would like to be able to do that,” Jez said stretching his legs,” It would save a lot of time.”

“Maybe you will one day,” Colin said lighting his pipe, “Who really knows the power of the crystal?”

“We’ll find out when we reach the Teacher,” Jez said as he yawned.

“I’m surprised that you have not asked me how far it is,” Colin said as he puffed on his pipe.

“You’ll probably say it’s just round the corner,” Jez said laughing as he remembered Colin on the mountainside.

“Not long to go really but you need plenty of rest to keep your strength up,” Colin said. He was tired as well. This never used to happen but his power was slowly being eroded.

“You must sleep now for morning comes early,” Colin said.

As if by magic Jez felt tired and dropped into a deep, restless sleep.

Chapter 12.

Darkness surrounded Jez. He looked for Colin but could not find him. Why had he left him? Surely they were not at the Edge of Darkness? He had not even seen the Teacher yet. What was he going to do? He found himself drifting into the darkness being drawn to something. A light had appeared and he was heading towards it. He could not turn away. He was powerless. The light got bigger

the nearer he got to it. Soon he could see it was an entrance. Above the entrance was a sign which said.

“All who come do in dread, for the Giant Gate Keeper will take your head.”

He tried to turn but could not; he was drawn as if by a magnet, through the entrance into what looked like a court room. Benches lay on both sides. These were filled by howling hungry wolves who went quiet when they saw Jez approach. They looked at Jez and he went cold. How he wished he had brought his stick, but anyway there were too many. What was he going to do? Must remember galloping horse's he thought to himself but it did no good. In front of him was a high table. It was huge. It must have been twenty feet high. Towering above it was the giant. He was about thirty feet in height with a sneer to match. His long straggly black hair was taller than Jez and his beard was nearly the same. Jez put his hand in his pocket. The crystal was gone. In its place was just a rock. What was he going to do? He would not know how to use the crystal anyway. Maybe Justin was right. Maybe he should have gone to the wishing well instead.

“What do you want?” bellowed the giant loudly. His voice was so loud it shook Jez to the very bone.

“I want the Magic Eye,” Jez said meekly as he looked at the ground.

“Speak up boy,” the giant said glaring down at him, “I can't hear you.”

“I want the Magic Eye,” Jez said slightly louder but his eyes never left the floor.

“You want the Magic Eye yet you can't look me in the eye yourself,” the giant bellowed and the wolves howled with laughter.

Jez was scared. He'd been scared before but never like this. The countless times he had hid from his raging drunken father. How he wished he was back home. He wished he had not slept while the sheep were slaughtered. How he wished what's the point, it was too late now. Much too late. Think of the galloping horse, think of the galloping horse. He looked at the sneering giant and said, “I want the Magic Eye.”

“You,” the giant said, “You,” he shouted, “You want the Magic Eye. How dare you a mere human,” he said like a snake spitting venom, “Come to me and demand the Magic Eye.”

Jez thought a while; he knew he must convince the giant, but how? The snarling wolves created fear inside of him. He could not think properly. What could he say? What could he do? How would he convince him? A voice came from inside him, “Man has changed now. He wants to come back into the valley. Please,” he almost pleaded “Please let me have the Magic Eye.

“Man has changed has he,” the giant sneered, “We'll see. Call the first witness,” he shouted.

The door to the right hand side of the giant opened and in walked a rabbit. The wolves snarled.

“Quiet,” shouted the giant, “Court in session.”

Jez recognised the rabbit. It was Justin. He stood in the witness box.

“Tell the court, in your own words, what happened,” the giant said softly to the rabbit.

“I ... I... I was just playing I was. Minding my own business when he appeared and said that he wanted to eat me. I was lucky to get away in time.” Justin said meekly.

“Liar,” Jez shouted. The anger had got the better of the fear.

“You will be quiet in my court,” the giant shouted, slowly emphasising every word.

Jez's fear came right back and he stood there silently listening to Justin's lies.

When he had finished the giant said the Jez, “Did you threaten to eat him?”

“Well” Jez said quietly looking down at the floor, “Not exactly.”

“What do you mean not exactly? You either did or you didn't. Which one?” The giant shouted.

"I, Err was joking," Jez said in panic and immediately regretted it.

"You can joke about taking an animal's life. You haven't changed one bit," the giant shouted.

"But But" Jez stammered.

"Silence in my court room. I will have silence in my court room," the giant shouted, "No more questions," he said softly to Justin, "You may go."

"But don't I get to question him?" Jez said quietly.

"I am the judge here in this court not you. Next witness," the giant shouted.

The door opened and in walked Kim. 'Oh no,' Jez thought to himself. She stood in the witness box and sneered at Jez.

"Tell the court, in your own words, what happened," the giant said softly to Kim.

"I was walking down the Teacher's pathway on my way to see Brian when I heard a noise. I looked over and saw him and Colin moving a rock and blocking Eddy's burrow. I was scared so I hid and watched. After they had left I tried to move the rock but it was too heavy. I went looking for help but by the time that I found it, it was too late. They all died," Kim finished and looking straight at Jez said, "And he killed them."

The wolves snarled and growled in uproar. "Silence," the giant shouted, "I will have silence in this court room."

He glared down at Jez and said, "What do you have to say to that?"

"It was not like that, it was not like that at all."

"So tell me, what was it like?"

"Me and Colin were walking down the Teacher's pathway and Eddy stopped us and asked for help. He told us that Kim had blocked the entrance," Jez was interrupted at this point.

"Do you really expect us to believe that this frail young female," the giant said, looking at Kim who was smiling, "This frail young female could move a rock. You sir are a liar."

The wolves snarled again and a voice from the back sang, "Liar, liar, the consequences are dire." and soon they all sang it. 'This is it,' Jez thought, "Why did I come here?"

"Silence in court," the giant shouted and the wolves went quiet, "You sir came here to take the Magic Eye and that makes you a thief."

"No," Jez pleaded, "It's not true."

"Silence," the giant shouted, "You sir came here to eat a rabbit but it was only by good fortune that he got away. That makes you an attempted murderer."

"No," Jez begged, "It's not true."

"Silence," the giant shouted, "You sir came here and blocked Eddy's home causing his wife and family to die. That makes you a murderer."

"No, no," Jez said in panic, "It's not true, believe me it's not true."

"I will have silence in my court room. Both you and Colin will suffer for this. Where is Colin?" he shouted.

Kim spoke up meekly and said, "He is dead."

"No," Jez shouted, "He's my friend."

"Silence," the giant shouted and looking at Kim said, "Go on."

"He attacked me for he knew that I was coming to tell you about the mice. I had to kill him." Kim said and started weeping.

"I understand," the giant said softly." It is not your fault. Don't upset yourself."

The giant looked down at Jez and shouted, "It is all the better for him that he is. I bet that he did not

tell you the consequences if you fail. I bet that he did not tell you about the other one did he? You see if you fail then I'm afraid that you must die. After all the wolves needed feeding."

Jez tried to run but his legs seemed to be stuck to the ground. "No," he shouted as they approached him. "No," he shouted as they came closer snarling and growling and gnashing their teeth, "No" he shouted.

"Wake up Jez" a voice said softly, "Wake up." it was Colin, "You were dreaming."

Jez was sweating badly. Through his panic stricken eyes he saw Colin, "I can't do it," he said softly, "I just can't do it."

The look of disappointment was evident on Colin's face. Jez saw it but what could he do? He was not up to it. After all he was just a boy. Maybe he could go back. Yes that's right. Maybe they could go past the wishing well. Maybe the next person would be better than him. Maybe Man was not ready for it yet.

"You must do what your must," Colin said but as an afterthought said, "Maybe see the Teacher. He might help you."

"Alright," Jez said softly. He did not want to let his friend down. He'll give it a try but he did not really see the point. At least it was light as they got up and started walking.

"It's just around the corner," Colin said light heartedly. He was trying to cheer Jez up. It was to no avail though. Jez was still shaking slightly from probably the worst nightmare that he had ever had

Chapter 13.

They talked little as they walked along the pathway. The birds were still singing about Jez and Kim but he was not listening. The warming Sun did cheer him slightly but he still wanted to go back.

The smell of flowers wafted under his nose but he had a lot on his mind and took no notice.

As they turned the corner the path that they were taking branched into two. One went towards the Teachers and the other went toward the wishing well. Jez and Colin stopped at the junction and waited. It was Colin who spoke first, "It's your choice Jez, the Teacher or the well."

Jez thought a while. He did not really want to let Colin down. After all he was the only real friend that he had had in his short lifetime. He could go and see the Teacher and afterwards go to the well. It was worth a chance; after all it was just a dream.

"Alright Colin, we'll go to the Teachers."

They followed the path until it became a track. The track led to a large cave which surprised Jez completely.

"The Teacher lives in a cave?" Jez said more as a question than as a statement.

"Yes," Colin answered and shouted, "Are you at home Great Teacher?"

"Yes Colin," a voice shouted, "Come on in, don't be shy."

Colin and Jez walked through the entrance into a large Library. Books were everywhere. All the walls from top to bottom were covered with books. Books were stacked on floors and tables. Jez looked at the titles but could not understand them. Some were written in languages that he had never seen before. Some he had seen though but that was only at the walls of the cave.

"Well he's certainly got enough books," Jez said to Colin, "Maybe I will learn something after all."

"He has the knowledge of generations. It took many lifetimes to accumulate it," Colin said and then, "Shall we go into the next room?"

"Yes," Jez said and followed him in.

The next room was pretty much the same as the first one except it had a large table in the middle. A

voice came from behind a door to the left of the table, "Sit down, I'll be in in a couple of minutes." Colin and Jez saw two chairs to their right and dutifully took their seats.

Jez said, "He must be a very clever"

He could not finish his sentence for the sight in front of him made his blood run cold. A large wolf had entered the room, it was the biggest wolf he had ever seen. It must have been the same height as Jez. It did not notice Jez's fear at first for it greeted Colin with a warm smile.

"How have you been Colin? It's good to see you again. I don't see you in thirty years and then you come twice in two days.

"Fine, Great One," Colin said warmly, "Allow me to introduce a very good friend of mine Jez."

The wolf looked at Jez and noticed his fear. "I'm very pleased to meet you Jez, I've heard a lot about you. You could say a little bird told me," he said trying to make Jez feel at ease. He could see it was not working though so he said, "Fear not Jez for believe it or not wolves have more to fear from man than the other way round."

"But you killed my sheep and got me into the mess in the first place." Jez stammered out.

"Well Jez," the Wolf said calmly for he did not want to frighten Jez anymore. Not that that was possible. "For a start it was not me. It was one of my kind though. The wolves in your world are struggling to survive; they have been forced into the mountains where there is little or no food. If they had had a choice your sheep would have been safe but they must eat."

"I can understand that," Jez said remembering the rabbit he had eaten, "But why my sheep. It has ruined our family livelihood?"

"Nothing personal Jez but they have to get their food where they can. Anyway should you really be making a living out of the enslavement of animals? How will that convince the giant about your worthiness to have the Magic Eye?"

Jez went quiet for a while. His eyes lowered as he said, "I don't think I can face him."

"Why ever not?" the wolf said in total surprise, "From what I hear from Brian and Eddy you don't seem that far away from you quest."

Jez told him his dreams and the wolf listened attentively. He allowed Jez to finish before he spoke, "Maybe your dreams are also your fears. The size of the giant is the size of your fear. The crystal became a rock because you did not know how to use it properly. I see from your reaction to me you have a fear of wolves. Get to know me for we are not that bad."

Jez listened. It seemed to make sense to him. "Well you seem to make sense and you haven't ate me yet. What about the rabbit and the cat though?"

"The rabbit is well known for his wild tales and the giant knows that for I know him well. He is a fair man and would love to see Man back in the valley. He remembered Old Man with fondness and looks forward to when New Man comes back into the fold because the valley is not complete without him. Oh and by the way he knows it was Kim who blocked the entrance and he is not pleased."

The relief to Jez was immense and the wolf could see it, "There is only one thing though. What happens if I have the dreams again?"

"The dream will be different Jez believe me, for a start you have met me and I hope lost your fear of me. When I tell you about the crystal that will help you as well."

"I hope so because it really scared me." Jez said. Thoughts of returning home diminished slightly.

"Please tell me about the crystal,"

"The crystal, ah yes the crystal. Where do I begin? It has as many uses as it has faces. For a start it

is your personal crystal. It is your record. At the minute it has on record the knowledge and wisdom of all your previous lives. As you come into the light your knowledge will grow accordingly. Soon you may actually travel into these lifetimes. Who knows the real power it has. All my reading is still not enough compared to what knowledge you can get from that crystal. I've heard old stories of how Man could turn into birds and fly. I've heard stories about men who are tired recharging themselves with it. It can do anything you want it to do. Just believe in it."

"Can you tell me how to use it or what you know about it anyway?" Jez said taking it out and looking into it.

"As your power grows you will be able to look into it and read the symbols it will show you. All you have to do is empty your mind of all thoughts and let it take you where you need to go. Hold it to your Magic Eye and it will give you advice from previous lives."

"I am sorry to interrupt you but do you mean it will talk to me?" Jez said politely.

"Not in words Jez but in symbols. You will understand them with time though. I'm sorry but that's all I can tell you."

"Thank you Great One you have eased my fears a bit," Jez said to the wolf.

"You're going to do it then?"

"Yes I think I am,"

"You'll go far Jez, further than you could possibly dream."

Jez got up and said to the wolf, "It was nice meeting you Great One but we must go. You wolves aren't all bad."

"Nor are you humans, good luck Jez but I don't think you're going to need it."

Colin and Jez walked out of the cave and back to the roadway. The branch to the wishing well had disappeared but Jez had not noticed it.

"Why did you not tell me he was a wolf?" Jez said to Colin as they walked along.

"Now if I'd told you that you would never have met him," Colin said as they stopped by the hedgerow. He got out his pipe once more and started to clean it.

"He wasn't a bad animal was he," Jez said waiting for Colin.

"No" Colin answered, "He has been a good friend to me over the decades."

"Oh no," Jez said in surprise.

"What's the matter?" Colin said in panic.

"I could have asked him about the castle," Jez said referring to his first dream.

"The castle is the castle of your mind. It has many rooms and corridors. When you climb the stairs you climb to your Higher Self." Colin said and waited for Jez to interrupt him.

"My Higher Self, what's that?"

"In the old days when Man was at one with nature he could use both sides of his mind. For the sake of argument let's call them the rational and the spiritual sides. When he lost the Magic Eye he tended to use the rational side more and more and the spiritual side got lost. You are lucky enough to have found it again. When you climb the stairs you climb into your spiritual side or your Higher Self as it is called."

"You mean that I can do that without using my Magic Eye?" Jez said in surprise.

"As you evolve you can. Maybe in the trip up the mountainside you took the right path and lost your greed for gold. This might have opened it slightly for the journey up the mountain takes as long as your greed remains."

"Is that why you said 'the journey of a lifetime or the trip of a foot?'"

“Yes, for some men never lose their yearning for gold. You were still young enough not to be caught in the net.”

“But what are all the rooms for?”

“The rooms that you walked into were your fears. It was hard to go through it but when you did the relief at the end of it was worth it. The Library is your knowledge that has been hidden from you and it helps you to find out what is right.”

“But doesn’t my rational side tell me that also?”

“Yes, well to some extent anyway. But it can only go on the limited knowledge at its disposal. The Library in your mind has the knowledge of all your lifetimes. The other rooms you’ll have to go through yourself to find out,” Colin answered and started to fill his pipe.

“Where to now then?”

“I think you know the answer to that one already,” Colin answered and lit his pipe.

“The giant, I don’t think I fear him as much now that I’ve met the wolf.”

They walked along the road again. The birds were chattering loudly and this set Jez at ease. The miles seemed to fly by as he walked with a spring in his step. He was a lot happier now. After all it was just a dream wasn’t it? He would not really know what it would be like.

“Colin,” he said.

“Yes Jez,”

“Have you ever met the giant?”

“No, never,”

“The wolf thinks that he is a fair person.”

“Then he must be,”

“Excuse me” a small voice came from behind the hedgerow. They both stopped and turned around. It was a rat. Jez had a deep distrust of rats and was wary of him.

“My name is Mick and I need your help,”

Jez thought to himself, ‘Why should I help a rat, they bring diseases and are vermin.’

“What do you want?” Jez asked in an icy tone.

“I know your kind hate me and maybe have every right to. But I’m desperate. Kim has caught my wife Jenny and is hurting her real bad,” Mick pleaded.

Maybe that’s good thing, Jez thought but after all a life is a life. He should help him really for he was a fellow animal. Besides he was starting to really dislike Kim now especially after what she did to Eddy’s family.

“Where is she? I’ll come along.”

Colin and Jez followed the rat behind the hedgerow and down a small track. They said little as the rat was in a hurry to get back. They turned into a small forest but were stopped in their tracks.

“Oh no,” The rat wept, “My Jenny, my poor Jenny.”

In front of them lay a pile of bones and fur.

“Why,” the rat wept, “Why?”

Colin and Jez stood quietly, what could they say? What could anyone say? It was pointless.

“I’m sorry,” Jez said eventually. He actually meant it, “There’s nothing that we can do now. Do you want us to help you bury her?”

“No, thank you but I think that I want to be left alone now.”

“I understand,” said Jez, and he and Colin backed away, “I’m very sorry.”

They walked back in silence for a few minutes. It was Jez who finally spoke, “She’ll pay for that,”

he said with menace in his voice.

“Oh more than you know Jez more than you know. She has broken the first rule of the valley. No animal can take another’s life. She is finished here.”

“No animal can take another’s life, but how do they eat?”

“We don’t need food in this valley for we never hunger,”

Jez thought a while. It was true. In all the time he had been there he had never once thought of food. “What will happen to her?” Jez asked but he knew what would happen if he got hold of her.

“She will be expelled. Forced to leave and never return,” Colin said but this did not seem enough to Jez.

“She deserves more than that. Don’t get me wrong, I’m not partial to rats but I could not do what she has done,” Jez said to Colin as they carried on their way.

“You’re not partial to rats, why ever not? Surely they are too small to do you any harm?” Colin said in surprise.

“I don’t know. I suppose it’s because they live in squalor and carry disease.”

“Yes, but surely it was Man who made that squalor and rats like the wolves are just doing what they can to survive,” Colin said to Jez’s surprise.

“How can you compare a rat to a wolf?”

“Rats, wolves, humans. We’re all part of nature. Man can’t change the environment and expect everything to be the same. Other animals have the right to survive.”

“I suppose you’re right but the thought of rats send shivers up my spine,” Jez said with a shudder.

“As much as the thought of wolves?” Colin said going back to the Teacher.

“I suppose I never really got to know Mick like I did the Teacher. That Kim’s got a lot to answer for.”

“Yes Jez, but so do we all,” Colin answered mysteriously. Jez went silent. Maybe Colin was right he thought to himself, maybe we do all have a lot to answer for, if not to others then to ourselves. Jez’s thoughts went back to Mick once more. How we had disliked him and his kind yet he had never known him. “Yes Colin I think you’re right,” Jez said as they carried on their way.

Eventually Jez said to Colin, “Where will Kim go now?”

“She’ll have to go back into your world now,” Colin answered scratching his beard, “But I don’t know how she’ll get on because she has spent too much time in the valley.”

“Well she made her choice and now she must suffer the consequences,” Jez said indifferently.

“Well,” Colin said changing the subject, “How are you feeling about facing the giant?”

“I don’t know, because I don’t really know what to expect.” All of a sudden a noise from above distracted them.

“Colin ... Jez ... Colin ... Jez,” Brian shouted excitedly as he swooped down and landed on Jez’s shoulder.

“Yes Brian,” Jez said warmly, “What is it?”

“It’s the Queen,” Brian said excitedly, “She would like to meet you and see Colin again.”

Colin said to Jez. “My Jez you are honoured.”

Jez said to Colin, “How far away does she live?”

“Straight down the road, about a mile away,” Colin answered and said to Brian, “Thank the Queen and tell her that we will be along straight away.”

Brian flew off saying goodbye as he left.

They soon covered the mile and came to a large gate which led to a field. In the middle of the field

stood a large oak tree.

“Here we are,” Colin said opening the gate.

“Here, there is nothing here.”

“Follow me,” Colin said going through the gate. Jez followed and shut the gate behind him.

They walked towards the large oak tree and Jez thought that the entrance to the Palace must be behind it. When they got to the tree Colin did something that surprised Jez. He leaned his forehead on the trunk and hugged it with his outstretched arms.

“Whatever is he doing?” Jez thought to himself but said nothing. Colin must have stood there for about five minutes before he returned to a surprise looking Jez.

“Your turn Jez,”

“What?” Jez said in shock.

“Just do what I did and see what happens.”

Reluctantly Jez walked up to the tree and put his head on the trunk. His arms stretched around the tree as far as he could stretch them. He felt foolish at first and wondered if anyone was watching him.

“Let your mind go Jez and take in the energy,” Colin said picking up on his thoughts, “Everybody does it. It’s as natural as walking.”

Jez emptied his mind of all thoughts and in his mind he heard a voice.

“Hello, you must be Jez the man Chick,” it said.

“Colin,” Jez said as he drew back quickly from the tree, “It’s speaking to me.”

“Well answer it back and be polite. That’s the Queen of the Inner World that you’re talking to.”

“How?” Jez said looking at Colin.

“Just think your answers, there is no need so speak,” Colin replied, Jez put his arms back around the trunk and leaned fore-ward.

“Hello your Majesty, I’m sorry that I jumped back but you surprised me,” he thought.

“Don’t worry Jez. I bet you didn’t know that trees could talk.”

“No your Majesty, I never did.”

“I’ve heard about you Jez. You’re doing fine. The birds talk about you all the time.”

“I am honoured your Majesty,” Jez answered humbly.

“I have heard about Kim and that is what I have summoned you for.”

“Your Majesty?”

“She has broken the first rule of the valley Jez. She has taken another’s life. She it to be expelled from the valley but I fear she means you harm. She has so vowed it. We have had a council of all the animals. A lot of them want Man back in the valley because of your example and have come to a decision. You may if you need to take Kim’s life. It will not affect your standing in the valley for she has killed once and there is nothing to stop her trying to kill you.”

“Thank you, your Majesty,” Jez thought humbly.

“Now the next thing. We in the valley think that Man, if they are all like you, deserves to come back into the valley and will help you all that we can. We did not take this decision lightly as all of us to one extent or another has suffered under Man. Myself alone has lost millions of my kin and cousins to your saws and axes. So I give you a little rhyme that may help you in your quest.

Remember it well, it goes

I am the giant in me the giant in me is me,

While others perform I progress,

While I transform they transgress.

Remember it well Jez and take the blessing of the valley with you,” the voice said.

“Thank you your majesty I will,” Jez said and stepped back from the tree.

“Are you alright?” Colin asked.

“Yes thank you Colin. I finally think that I am ready,” Jez answered with a smile that told Colin he was.

Chapter 14.

As they walked along Jez said, “That’s unusual isn’t it Colin, having a tree as the Queen of the Inner World.”

“Only to you and your kind for in our world the importance of the tree is well recognised.”

“In what way?” Jez said in surprise.

“Well for a start it takes out the bad air and replaces it with good. It provides shelter for the birds and even in your world it plays a part. It provides wood to keep you warm at night and shelter from the rain. Yes Jez it has many uses.”

“Yes, I can understand that, but surely that doesn’t make it important enough to be Queen.”

“It has its roots into the ground for security and yet it can still branch out into the light. Now surely that makes it good enough to be Queen. There is in fact an awful lot to be learned from the Queen. In your search for the light keep yourself firmly rooted to the ground,” Colin answered looking straight at Jez.

Jez said nothing for he remembered well how he had become quite egotistical when he had started to gain a little knowledge earlier in their travels.

Colin saw Jez’s sheepish look and wished he had not said his last statement. Jez was a good lad Colin thought and he was coming along well.

“I’m sorry Jez that was uncalled for.”

“No, you’re right Colin; I still have a lot to learn.”

“We all have Jez, don’t worry.”

“So how long has she been Queen?”

“As long as I can remember Jez.”

They talked a little as they walked but nothing of any real importance. The hours passed along with the miles and soon it was getting dark again.

“We may as well rest here for the night,” Colin said and picked a good spot to sit down.

The birds had already stopped singing and Colin was getting tired once more. He seemed to be getting worse. Maybe time was running out for him? What could he do for he could not tell Jez? His life was unimportant compared with the Second Age of Enlightenment. If he had told Jez that he needed the Magic Eye to save himself then it would panic him and distract him from his quest.

“Are you alright Colin?” Jez said for he had noticed that Colin had gone quiet.

“Oh sorry Jez,” Colin said snapping out of his thoughts, “I was miles away”

“Were you traveling at the speed of thought?” Jez asked half jokingly.

“No, not this time, my thoughts were a lot closer to home.”

“Are you worried about me?” Jez asked for he had noticed a strange look on Colin’s face earlier.

“No Jez, you’ll do fine.”

Colin took out his pipe once more and started to fill it. After it was full he rested against the hedgerow and lit it. It soothed him slightly.

“What’s the matter Colin?” Jez asked for he had seen his distress and would not let the matter drop. “Oh don’t mind me Jez,” Colin answered with a smile, “Put it down to the ramblings of an old man.”

Jez said nothing for he himself had a lot on his mind. He knew that he would be visiting the giant when he slept and was still a little shaken from the last time. Colin had read his thoughts and said, “Don’t worry Jez; it will be different this time. You know a little about the crystal.”

Jez took it out of his pocket and looked at it once more, “Who’d have thought that a little thing like this would have so much knowledge, so much power,” Jez said to himself.

“Look after it well Jez for it will certainly look after you” Colin said and took a puff on his pipe.

A rustling noise in the hedgerow made them both turn and look. Jez looked to where the noise was coming from but could not make out what was making it, “Who are you?” Jez said defensively.

“I am Joe,” a voice answered from the middle of the noise “I mean you no ill.”

“Come forward Joe,” Colin said, “And meet my friend Jez.”

Joe finally broke through the hedgerow and came towards Colin and Jez. He was an old hedgehog, quite big as hedgehogs go.

“Hello Colin, what are you doing back in the valley?” he asked because his solitary lifestyle meant that he had missed of the chatter of the birds.

“I have brought Jez back,” Colin answered pointing at Jez, “To fetch the Magic Eye.”

Joe looked at Jez and said “Are you a man? I thought that they were a lot bigger.” He had heard stories about Man and his cruelty but felt protected under all his spines.

“I am a boy but I am growing every day.”

Joe looked at Colin and said, “Are they ready to enter the valley yet?”

“I think so, but I am afraid that it is not my choice.”

“Oh, the Giant Gate Keeper,” Joe answered remembering, for it was a long time since he had heard the story. “I have met the giant,” Joe said proudly to Jez, “but it was a very long time ago.”

“What’s he like?” Jez asked because he still did not really know what he was up against.

“He is a fair man,” I am afraid that is all I can remember for it was a very long time ago.”

“The Teacher told me that,” Jez answered slightly disappointed for he wanted to know all about him.

“You have met the Teacher then.” Joe said but not as a question.

“Yes,” Jez answered, “Earlier today. Just before we met the Queen.”

“Well with the Teacher and the Queen behind you you’ll certainly do well” Joe answered.

“Any news from the valley?” Joe asked Colin, “For I don’t get about as often as I should.”

Colin told him about Kim and the mice and how she had killed Jenny the rat. Joe did not like Kim for he remembered how she used to roll him about when he was in a ball.

“So she is to leave the valley then?” Joe asked Colin after he had finished.

“Yes, the Queen held council and that was the verdict.”

“Well she broke, the first rule of the valley, she brought it upon herself” Joe answered, “Anyone who kills in the valley knows the consequences.”

“The Queen said that I could take her life if necessary for she is out to harm me.” Jez said but this brought out Joe’s inner fears. Joe himself distrusted Man.

“Yes, you’re good at killing aren’t you,” he said to Jez in an unfriendly tone. Jez picked up his tone so he replied, “Only if necessary.”

Colin interrupted for he could see how the conversation was going, “If it is the will of the Queen

then so be it,” he said to Joe who relaxed slightly.

“Yes you’re right, who are we to argue,” he said to Jez and left it at that. They talked a few minutes more and Joe said his goodbyes and left.

“I don’t think that fellow likes me,” Jez said after he had gone.

“The damage of centuries takes time to heal. If he had heard the full story about you then it might have been different,” Colin answered and lit his pipe once more.

“Do you think so?” Jez said for he was getting angry that he had to justify himself all the time. He was not like the other men who caused all the desolation. He was not even born when most of it happened. Why should he be the one to get the blame for it?

“Don’t despair Jez,” Colin said reading his thoughts, “The stigma of Man is disappearing fast. All the animals want you back in the valley.”

“What about Joe,” Jez said looking at the figure in the distance.

“He does not know the full story for his lifestyle makes him a loner. He rarely sees the other animals and has heard none of the gossip. If he had things would have been a lot different,” Colin replied. This eased Jez’s temper a lot. Jez himself was a bit of a loner and realised how much he was missing out by being so.

“I guess we must sleep now for morning comes early,” Colin said as he tapped his pipe on the floor. Jez was reluctant at first but tiredness soon caught up with him. Darkness surrounded him once more. He looked for Colin but he had disappeared again. ‘I must face this on my own,’ Jez thought to himself. He felt himself being lifted up onto his feet. ‘It’s only a dream,’ he thought to himself, ‘it can’t harm me. ‘He found himself drifting in the darkness. It was not as frightening as before. He looked for the light but could not find it. He was a lot calmer this time. He was even starting to enjoy the floating feeling and then he saw it. The light had appeared in front of him and he was heading toward it. He was a bit apprehensive at first because he remembered the last dream. ‘It’s only a dream,’ he said once more to calm himself, ‘Remember the galloping horse.’

The light got bigger the closer he got. It soon became an entrance way. The same size as before but above the door was a different sign. It read, ‘You are entering the domain of the Giant Gate Keeper turn back if you don’t feel strong.’

Jez was tempted but he knew that he must face it. Besides he could not turn round anyway for he was powerless.

He drifted through the entrance. He expected to see the hungry wolves but they were not there. The benches on either side of him were empty. This brought a huge sense of relief to him. The high tables in front of him were only half the size that it had previously been. The giant sat behind it but even he was smaller. Where he was once thirty feet he was now only ten.

That was still big enough to scare Jez though. He fished around in his pocket and found the crystal. Holding it in his hand he took it out. The giant sat there motionless looking at Jez. He seemed different to the last one. Not just smaller but a lot less fearsome than before.

Jez put the crystal to his heart and repeated the words that the tree had told him, “I am the giant in me; the giant in me is me.

While others perform I progress. While I transform they transgress.”

He felt energies running up and down his body and then it started. He felt himself growing bigger. His feet seemed to be getting further away from his body. His chest seemed to broaden immensely as he shot up. Soon he was six feet then he was seven, eight, nine and ten. He stopped at ten feet and walked towards the giant. The giant had got up and moved to the front of the table. He looked

into Jez's eyes and studied him. Jez was about the same height as the giant; he looked back and said, "I have come for the Magic Eye."

"Who are you and how do you know about the crystal? I have not seen that done in many a lifetime."

"My name is Jez and I am from the outer world. I only know what the Teacher has told me about the crystal."

"You have met the Teacher then. He must believe in you to tell you about the crystal. How did he know the ancient rhyme for that knowledge along with most of the teachings was lost in the last battle of the outer world?"

"The Queen of the Inner World told me that rhyme and it seemed natural to put the crystal to my heart when I said it," Jez said putting the crystal back in his pocket for safe keeping.

"Oh so you have spoken to the Queen as well. What did she say?" the giant asked. He was surprised at the influence that Jez seemed to have.

"She wants Man to return back to the valley for without Man the valley is not complete. She held a council of the animals and they all, well most of them anyway, agreed with her," Jez answered still looking the giant in the eye.

"I too want Man back in the valley. I remember them well. The valley seems empty without them," the giant said and Jez detected a tone of sadness in his voice.

"You have the power to bring them back. For you have the Magic Eye," Jez said in reply.

"I know, I know. But I have seen the destruction that they can inflict. They are not what they used to be like. No not men. They are more like savages" the giant answered and Jez detected a hint of despair in his voice.

"Men are changing. They are not as bad as they once were," Jez answered, a slight comforting tone in his voice.

"I can't be sure. Yes alright I've heard stories of you and your kindness but not all men are like you," the giant said defensively.

"Most are nowadays," Jez answered but he knew that this was a lie so he said, "No, you're right, I cannot be sure for I only know myself. But surely they would not get into the valley with thoughts of greed, Colin told me so."

"When the Magic Eye starts to work then it will be easier for them to get in. You only got in because Colin took you. It is very difficult to get in at present as you must know," the giant answered, he had made a note in his head about Jez's honesty and forthrightness.

"But when the Magic Eye starts to work then surely men will change with it. Soon the inner and outer worlds will be the same once more. Wouldn't you like that?"

"Yes I would like that but I don't believe it. I have seen the carnage of your kind and it is frightening."

Jez was getting angry, "Why do you hold me responsible for the destruction of my ancestors. I was not even born then. You are as bad as the rabbit, the cat and the hedgehog. I am different to them. I do not kill for sport of pleasure. But I do know that where there is one like me then there will be others. Man must be changing otherwise I would not have got into the valley in the first place. Is that not true?"

"Yes you did well to get into the valley. And as you say where there is one then there must be others. But how many? Nobody can be sure. There may be only one or two out of the countless millions that live in the outer world. I still hear stories of cruelty in the outer world. You still have

animals as prisoners and chop down trees by the forest full. What is to stop you doing the same here as on the other side,” the giant asked and saw the Jez had no answer.

“I have no answer to that for I can only speak for myself and not others. I know that I have changed, by coming into the valley it has made me a lot better person. I want everybody to be like that for in the end it will have to be,” Jez finally answered and the giant could see the truth in Jez’s words.

“It is certainly true that Man has moved on over the centuries but I can’t take the risk. And a risk it certainly is. Maybe in your next lifetime you will be ready for Man might have changed even more. We will just have to wait and see,” the giant answered with a sigh.

“Time is running out. The Magic Eye has been away for too long. Soon it will be no good, for Man has been without it for too long,” Jez answered almost in panic.

“It was Man’s choice to forsake it. He has to take the consequences,” the giant said almost angrily.

“Maybe he did forsake it but how do you know that it was not out of choice but ignorance. And anyway what gives you the right to hold it against the Queen’s will,” Jez answered, he himself was starting to get angry.

“I have the right as Gate Keeper to the Two Worlds. The Queen let me look after it until times have returned back to normal. She would not allow you to have it without proving your case to me,” the giant said not as angry as before.

“But the Queen gave me her blessing, surely that counts for something?” Jez said in exasperation.

“Yes it counts for a lot but the final word is with me for I am the Gate Keeper,” the giant said smugly.

“They told me that you were fair man. But it sounds to me that you are guilty of ignorance,” Jez said, there was a marked tone of disappointment in his voice.

“You are asking too much. I cannot put the valley at risk,” the giant answered and walked away from Jez.

Jez turned and walked back into the darkness.

Chapter 15.

The warming Sun awoke Jez from his sleep. He looked around to see Colin already awake.

“How did you get on?” Colin asked him. A look of concern spread over his face as Jez told him.

“Oh,” he said after Jez had finished, “How do you feel about it?”

“It was just a dream Colin, But I am happy that there were no wolves there,” Jez answered. Colin could see that Jez was shaken so he said, “You did not fair that bad you know.”

“I did not get the Magic Eye though,” Jez answered in a disappointed tone.

“No but you know a bit of what to expect the next time,” Colin answered trying to cheer Jez up.

“Yes but I won’t really know. Not until I actually see him,” Jez said and started to get up.

Colin followed and they both walked down the road. They walked for miles but heard no birds.

The Sun and the aromas around them were still working their magic and Jez was feeling a lot better. He was worried about the absence of the birds though.

“Where have all the birds gone?” Jez asked Colin.

“I don’t know Jez. I can’t remember hearing one all day,” Colin answered. It was a mystery to him as much as it was to Jez.

As if on cue they were distracted by the constant flapping of an approaching bird. It came upon them and rested on Jez’s shoulder. It was Brian’s friend. Jez and Colin recognised him immediately.

“Hello little one,” Colin said, “You look unhappy, what’s the matter?”

“It’s Brian, the bird said in Panic, “Kim’s got him. You must help us for she will surely kill him.”

“I thought Kim was expelled from the valley,” Colin said to the little bird.

“Yes, but she won’t go. She has taken Brian prisoner and threatens to kill him if you don’t leave the valley,” the bird said quickly for it was still panicking.

“She has killed once,” Colin said, “That means she will surely kill again”

“Not while I’m here,” Jez said angrily for he liked Brian and would not see any harm come to him. They followed as the bird flew off and circled around them to show them the way. They left the path and came across another track. They followed it for about a mile until they came to a cluster of trees.

“Over there,” The little bird shouted, still in panic.

“Kim,” Jez shouted, “I’ve come for Brian.”

“Help,” a little voice came for inside the cluster. They recognised it straight away. It was Brian’s and it sounded scared.

“Shut up.” a voice hissed. It was Kim’s and it sounded mean. She appeared from the cluster and came straight towards Jez. Jez stood his ground. He was a bit wary of her but he was not frightened.

“I want Brian back and I want you out of the valley,” Jez said in a slow angry tone.

“I will never leave the valley for I do not want to end up in your world. While I have Brian as a prisoner nobody can make me go,” Kim said almost spitting.

“You made the choice when you killed Jenny. You know the score. No animal can kill another in the valley,” Colin said looking straight at Kim.

“It was an accident. I was just playing and I got carried away,” Kim answered for the look in Jez’s eyes made her feel uneasy.

“Tell that to Mick and his family. No don’t bother,” Jez answered angrily. “For you are leaving the valley.”

“Not while I have Brian. If you come any closer I will not be held responsible for what happens to him,” Kim said with a surge of bravery that surprised her. She knew that Jez could not harm her while she had Brian as hostage and thought that he could not risk killing her for he would never get the Magic Eye.

“You cannot keep him forever,” Jez answered, “Why don’t you give up and leave. You cannot stay in the valley especially after that you have just done. You are as bad as Man. First you kill an animal for no reason and then you hold one as prisoner.”

The last statement made Kim angry, “I am not as bad as Man. Never in a lifetime. How dare you speak to me like that,” she hissed loudly at Jez and Colin drew back slightly.

“Your actions speak for themselves,” Jez answered himself getting angrier “Now let him go and leave the valley.”

“No never. I will never leave the valley. No one can make me. After all I have killed and can kill again. How would it look to the Giant Gate Keeper if you killed me? You would never be allowed into the valley again. What do say about that?” Kim said defiantly looking at Jez.

“Have you not heard, I have the Queen’s blessing to take your life if I so choose,” Jez answered.

“Liar,” Kim hissed, “The Queen could not give such a blessing. It would need a council of animals for that.”

“My you are behind the times,” Jez said in a mocking tone, “There has already been one. It has

been decided.”

Kim backed up slightly. She was not quite sure. There had never been a council of animals in her living memory. Mind you nobody had ever killed in her living memory either. “I don’t believe you.” She said defiantly, “You are like all your kind, liars and thieves.”

“And murderers,” Jez finished off her sentence for her but she did not see the irony, “So you’d better be careful.”

“I fear you not,” said Kim. At that particular moment she did not for she had nothing to lose. She had no way out. She was trapped in a mess of her own making. It was stalemate. A standoff. On one side was Kim with Brian as her prisoner. She had nothing to lose. She knew that she would not survive in Man’s world. On the other side were Jez and Colin. Jez was not frightened. He had the giant on his mind. How would he react if Kim was slain? The Queen might have given them her blessing but that counted little in the dream that he had had. Colin was frightened. Kim could kill him without a second thought but he was dying anyway. His only chance was in Jez’s hand. Jez needed to see the giant quickly but this was big distraction. The ball had to be in Colin’s court. It was Colin who moved first. He leapt to his right to circle behind Kim. Kim swung to her left to counter it. Jez saw his opening and moved forward. Kim swung back to the front again. She did not like her situation one bit. She was the hunted and not the hunter this time.

Her mind raced forward working out the options. She knew that Brian would escape anyway. She could easily kill Colin but that would leave herself open to Jez. He had already said that he would kill her and he was a lot stronger than her. ‘That’s it’ she thought to himself, ‘Let Colin rescue the bird and she would try and kill Jez. He was only a boy after all and when that’s done I will have the pleasure of killing Colin.’

She crouched on her back legs and leapt towards Jez. He must have been half expecting it for he moved at speed to avoid her. She caught his shirt but never drew blood. While this was happening Colin darted into the trees and released Brian.

“Looks like it’s me and you then” Jez said to Kim as she looked menacing at him.

“Your life but I’ll be happy to take it,” she spat out at him.

“You’ll have to do better than that last effort,” Jez laughed. He knew that if he could make her angry she would be a lot easier to fight.

“I will,” Kim said and leapt towards Jez once more. He was ready this time. He slapped her in mid air with his right hand and she fell to the ground. She backed off slightly to get her breath her eyes never leaving Jez.

“Is that it?” he said mockingly. The birds had gathered around on the branches and were laughing at her. “Look at her,” they said, “The terror of mice and birds.”

She heard them, anger rose inside her body. This man had caused her nothing but trouble. Now it was his turn to pay. She crouched back and leapt once more. Her claws were flying all around hoping to catch him. He was ready once more and slapped her again. She flew into the trunk of a tree. Her back was hurt but anger numbered her pain. The birds in the trees were laughing loudly. How they would pay when she had finished with the man. She leapt once more. Only to be batted back like a tennis ball. Again and again she leapt and again and again she fell.

Something suddenly occurred to her. Jez was playing around with her like she had played around with the rat. This made her even angrier.

“I’m going to kill you,” she spat out at Jez who just laughed at her.

This time she thought as she leapt at him. He grabbed her by the throat. Caught her in mid air. She

scratched and bit but to no avail. He was too strong for her and they both knew it. On and on she scratched but nothing could make him release her from his tight grasp. She felt herself losing strength. The life seemed to drain out of her. Jez knew that he had her now. His first thoughts were that of Eddy's family and Jenny the rat. Nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to take her life for she had done the same. A voice inside him told him not to for he would be no better than her. She was to leave the valley and so would he if he acted the same. He may have had the blessing of the Queen but it still did not feel right.

He loosened his grip slightly and let her breath. She was too weak to fight anymore.

"Now, you leave the valley," he said still holding her, "For if I come across you again then I will surely finish you."

He let her go and she fell to the floor in a heap. Colin had come back and said, "Well Jez I think that you are ready to fight any giant."

"I nearly killed her back then," Jez said not really hearing what Colin had said, "I came that close."

"I know Jez," Colin answered, "But you didn't and that is the main thing" they looked for Kim but she had sneaked off. "Do you think that that's it now?" Jez asked Colin.

"I think so. She has nowhere to go now. Nobody fears her like they used to. She will be welcome nowhere. She will have to go over to your world." Colin said and then, "Sit down and rest a while. Save your strength for a bit."

Although he was not tired Jez sat down. Colin filled his pipe and lit it. He was pleased that Jez had not killed the cat for he did not think that the giant would approve. The Queen might have given Jez her blessing but it was the giant that had the Magic Eye.

The birds had come from the branches and landed all around Jez and Colin. They chattered excitedly but it was Brian who spoke first, "I don't know how I will ever thank you," he said, "Anything I have is yours just ask."

"Thank you Brian," Jez answered, "But you gave me enough when you gave me your friendship."

"How could that be enough for what you have done? If you had not come then I would surely have died," Brian asked in puzzlement for he did not know how much friendship meant to Jez.

"A true friendship is worth more than any pot of gold," he was talking to Brian but looking at Colin when he said it.

"Maybe so but it means a lot what you did. I will never forget you Jez the man chick. We shall sing about you all the time, generation after generation. Your fame will last for many lifetimes. You can trust me on that."

"I don't know what to say," Jez answered but there was joy in his voice.

"They will never forget you Jez," Colin said as he puffed on his pipe.

"Nor you Colin nor you," Jez answered. His joy was almost overwhelming.

Colin was happy for Jez. He had completely forgotten about the giant. He would gladly sacrifice his life for Jez for he knew that Jez would do the same for him.

A bird came flying back towards them, "Its Kim." It cheeped, "She's on the way out of the valley as fast as she could go."

The birds all cheered and Colin gave a sigh of relief. "She's finally gone then," Colin said, "You will have no more trouble from her."

He was talking to Jez and the birds but it was Mick who had caught Jez's eye.

He was making his way slowly, rather sheepishly, towards them.

"How are you Mick?" Jez said with real concern in his voice.

“I’m fine thank you Jez,” he answered but Jez could still see his heart ache. It had never occurred to him that rats might have feelings. He felt guilty because he had been rather short with him the first time that they had met.

“Kim’s gone,” Jez said. “But I am sorry that it was too late for your Jenny.”

“Thanks, if not for Jenny then for the rest of my family for surely she would have killed again.”

“She nearly killed me,” Brian answered, “But Jez and Colin came and saved me from her.”

“May I ask you something,” Mick said because he had heard that men killed rats for no reason other than they were rats, “Why didn’t you kill her?”

“Yes, I would like to know that,” Brian asked. It has been on his mind but he did not like to ask.

“If I’d have killed her then I would be no better than her,” Jez answered and saw the look in Colin’s eyes. It was a look of pride and this pleased Jez.

“But,” Mick carried on, “I have heard stories how you kill for no other reason than sport.”

“I am afraid that some men do but I am not one of them. Life is a precious thing and should not be taken lightly. Whether it is a rat or a bird or even a cat. We all have our part to play, no matter how small in the world,” Jez answered and he believed it so much that he was happy saying it.

“How will Kim manage in your world?” Brian asked.

“She will probably love it at the moment for there is still senseless killing, but I hope those days will soon pass,” Jez answered. He believed those days were coming to an end and could see a bright future for Mankind.

“Who knows,” Mick answered, “But I am just glad that she is out of the valley for now.”

“Me too,” Brian cheeped in.

“Actually,” Jez said to Brian, “You could do me a favour.”

“Yes,” Brian answered, “Anything you want. All you have to do is ask. We owe you enough.”

“No,” Jez answered, “You owe me nothing. But if you could tell me what happened to another of my kind I would be grateful. He was another boy called David O’Neill about my age. He came to the valley many years ago.”

The birds looked at each other but nobody knew. It was Brian who spoke first, “I’m sorry Jez but we don’t know. One of our kind might know. She is Jane the Wise Owl. I could fetch her for you if you like.”

“No.” Colin said, “It’s alright, we have to pass her place on the way to the giant.”

“Well I’ll tell you what,” the bird who had watched Kim leaving the valley said, “I could fly over to her and tell her to expect you.”

“That’s a good idea,” Jez said, “For we want her to be in when we call.”

The bird flew off at speed and soon had disappeared from view. Mick was first to speak, “I better get back to my family. Goodbye Jez and thanks again.”

Jez said, “Bye Mick, I’m just sorry that I was too late for Jenny.”

Mick, who had gone a few yards, turned around and said, “You men are not all bad.”

“Thanks,” Jez called after him, “I’ll be careful how I treat rats in future.”

They walked a while and after about five minutes the bird returned from visiting the owl. He flew and landed on Jez’s right hand.

“I’ve seen her,” The bird said nearly out of breath, “She is looking forward to meeting you.”

“Then we must not keep her waiting,” Jez said standing up, “Are you ready Colin?”

“Yes,” Colin answered, “I am fit.” Colin had not properly recovered but said nothing for he did not want to concern Jez.

“Goodbye Jez the man chick,” the birds cheeped, “Goodbye Colin.”

Jez and Colin wished them all good luck and made their way back down the track.

“Well,” Colin said, “Even if you don’t make it you will certainly be remembered.”

Jez smiled and said, “I don’t want the Magic Eye for myself but for others that will surely follow me.”

“Very well said,” Colin answered. He had not the heart to tell Jez that he was the last chance. If he failed then there would be no one else to follow.

Chapter 16.

The track they were walking along soon took them back to the road. Once on the road the journey became easier and the miles started to pass quickly.

“So tell me Jez,” Colin said eventually, “Why do you want to see Davy O’Neill?”

“He might be able to help me with the giant,” Jez answered as they walked along together.

“Davy, but he failed,” Colin answered with a bemused expression on his face.

“Yes, but I can learn by his mistakes for this task means a lot to me and I want to be as sure as I possibly can. Maybe it’s too big a step for one man on his own.”

“Yes, you’re right, but when it comes down to it then you must face the giant on your own.”

“I understand Colin; I guess maybe I’m just after a little reassurance.”

“We will all help you as much as we can, it’s not far to where Jane is now.”

They followed the road, the hedgerows either side blocking most of their view. It was only when the road veered to the left slightly that they saw it. It was a ram shackled old barn made out of wood. The roof was heavily holed and looked in desperate need of repair. Jez was surprised when he saw it. “Does the Wise Owl live there?” he asked Colin.

“Yes, but don’t worry it’s quite nice inside.”

They left the road and made their way to the barn. Jez was a little worried that it would collapse with both him and Colin inside it. They picked their way past the various pieces of wood strewn in front of it and made their way inside. It was dark and seemed unfriendly to Jez. A rat scrambled past his feet but he did not jump.

“Friend of Mick’s?” he said to Colin who was standing next to him.

“Friend of Mick’s and all the animals now that Kim has gone.

“Are you there Jane?” Colin called out into the darkness.

There was a flapping of wings in a far off distant corner and all of a sudden a large barn owl stood in front of them.

“Colin, I’ve been expecting you,” she said warmly greeting Colin, “And you must be Jez,” she said looking at Jez, “I’ve heard so much about you. To tell you the truth I was expecting somebody a lot bigger.”

“Thank you,” Jez said bashfully, “I’m not used to people talking to me like that.”

“I’m sorry, talking to you like what?”

“You know, saying nice things about me.”

“Oh, so you’re modest as well, you should have no trouble with the giant.”

“Actually, in a way that’s what we came about.”

“Oh I thought that you were coming about Davy O’Neill, that’s what a little bird told me.”

“Yes it is him we came to see you about but he could help me with the giant.”

“Oh I see what you mean, last time I heard he was with the giant but that was five years ago.”

“What, the giant has him as prisoner.”

“No, that would be breaking the second rule of the valley”

“Would it?” Jez said in surprise.

“Yes Jez, no animals can enslave another.”

“How many rules are there in the valley?” Jez asked forgetting about Davy O’Neill.

“There are three rules. Rule one, no animal can take another life, rule two, no animal can enslave another, and rule three, this covers everything really, treat others as you expect to be treated yourself. Without these rules the valley would not survive,” Jane answered Jez’s question.

Remembering Davy O’Neill Jez asked, “So what is he doing with the giant if he is not a prisoner?”

“He was your predecessor you know. He, like you, wanted to take the Magic Eye from the giant, but he failed. Although he failed he said that he would rather work for the giant than go back to the savage other world. The last I heard he was helping the giant around the Gate Keeper’s house.”

“Oh, so he won’t be much good then?” Jez said more as a question than as a statement.

“I don’t think that you need any help, for I have heard great things about you.”

“I’m afraid that I don’t really know what I’m up against so I need all the help that I can get.”

“Look, let me give you a bit of advice. The more you fear him the bigger he gets. Remember it well.”

Jez thanked her but he had guessed as much because of his two previous dreams.

“I think that we’d better be off.” Jez said looking at Colin.

“Oh before you go somebody would like to meet you,” Jane said looking at one of the dark corners,

“Come forward don’t be afraid.”

A shadow moved from the corner that Jane was looking at. As it got closer Jez recognised it as the rat that had scurried across his path earlier.

“Hello,” Jez said in a friendly manner, “What’s your name?”

The rat shyly approached and said, “My name is Robert. Are you the one that slayed Kim?”

“No I never killed her. We just fought a little and she decided that she’d better leave the valley,” Jez said modestly.

“That will be something to tell my children, are you staying here long?”

“Not this time, but hopefully I’ll be back soon ... with the giants permission that is.”

“I used to live round his Castle. I have seen the boy that you ask after,” Robert said quite proudly.

“You have seen David O’Neill. How long ago was that?” Jez asked for maybe there was a chance that he was still at the giants.

“It was only about six months ago,” Robert answered shuffling about on his feet.

“So tell me, what’s the giant like?”

“He is a fair man. Maybe a little quick tempered but on the whole ... yes he is a good man.”

“No, I mean what does he look, like? How big is he that sort of thing?”

“Oh he’s not a giant in the way that you think. He’s only about six feet tall but in the valley they call him the giant because of his giant heart. He has jet black hair and an unkempt beard. He’s quite broad and very strong. Well compared to the animals in the valley.”

“So he’s only six feet tall. Why did you not tell me Colin?” Jez asked turning to Colin.

“I have never met the giant. He is as much a mystery to me as he is to you,” Colin answered truthfully.

“Mind you six feet tall is pretty big, plenty big enough to be a giant,” Robert answered.

“True,” Jez answered, “Anyway,” he said looking at Colin, “There is only one way to find out.”

They thanked Jane and Robert for their help and said their goodbyes. They picked their way round the timber once more and made their way back to the road.

As they reached the road Jez said, "What about David's family? Surely they'll miss him. It must be thirty years that's a long time in any lifetime."

"Well he must be happy here. He's staying of his own free will. He is not a prisoner he can go when he wants," Colin answered. His feet were starting to hurt him as he walked along. He had slowed down considerably now. He still kept pace with Jez and he hid his pain well for Jez had not noticed it.

"I know what you're saying Colin but thirty years is a long time," Jez said with a sigh.

"Well he's happy. He will never grow old. If you hadn't noticed the days go quicker in the valley. I bet the thirty years to him are no more than a blink of the eye," Colin said. His feet were hurting more now. Every step was starting to become an ordeal. It was like walking bare footed on stony ground.

'I don't think I can make it,' Colin said to himself. Another voice inside him said keep going it's not long. The first voice came back again I don't think I can make it followed by nearly there don't let Jez down.

"He must have a bad life on the other side," Jez said interrupting Colin's thoughts, "Worse than mine."

"Who knows Jez," Colin said with a sigh, "If he's found happiness in the valley then surely that is a good thing." The pain had started to climb up his legs and made him limp slightly. Still Jez had not noticed, his eyes were looking straight ahead at the open road.

"I don't think that I could stay for that long, mind you I'd love to come back here."

"Each to his own Jez," Colin said. The pain had risen to his stomach making it tighten. The voices inside Colin came back. No I can't make it. I can't make it, you must go on its not far.

"Yes your Colin, Colin are you alright?" Jez said with great concern. Colin had collapsed next to him.

"It's no good Jez. I can't go on," Colin answered weakly, "It's too much for me."

"Get up Colin. I will help you," Jez said. He was panicking now, trying to lift Colin back on his feet.

"Jez Jez I'm dying," Colin said pitifully.

"No .. No you can't. You're my friend. We're supposed to be going to the giant," Jez said still panicking.

"You must finish the journey for the sake of Mankind," Colin said through his pain.

"No without you the trip is pointless," Jez said. He was close to tears. His best friend was dying in front of him. His only real friend.

"No Jez you must finish the journey. Do it for me," Colin said but Jez would not go.

Jez was on his knees now, "Help," he shouted, "Help" again. His shouting roused Jane out of the barn and she flew up to him.

"What's the matter Jez, what's happened to Colin?" she asked in a panic.

"He's dying," Jez said. Tears were starting to appear in his eyes, "My friend is dying." He was a pitiful sight crouching over Colin crying and shouting his name.

"You must go to the giant straight away," Jane said almost as an order.

"No," Jez pleaded, "What's the point. My friend is dying what do I need with a Magic Eye?"

"It's not for you, it's for Colin."

“How will it help Colin?” Jez said in despair for he could see the life leaving Colin.

“When the Magic Eye is back Colin will never tire. He has only started to age because of its absence. He needs it more than you.”

“Is that true Colin?” Jez said through his tears.

“Yes I’m sorry Jez, if I’d told you that it might put more pressure on you. Here take the nail it might come in handy.”

“Look,” Jane said, “You’re running out of time. You must go to the giant now before it is too late.”

“How?” Jez said still in despair, “He lives miles away. I have no time Colin is dying now. He won’t last.

“You must fly.”

“Fly, don’t be stupid,” Jez said rudely. He was not thinking straight. “How can I fly?”

“You still have the crystal?”

“Yes but what good will that do?” Jez answered and then he remembered the Teacher telling him how men could once fly with the crystals help.

“How can I use it?”

“I don’t know, but you must go back to the castle and find out,” Jane said leaving Jez to wonder how she knew this.

“It’s a big place, how will I know?” Jez said. He was still in panic, he was not thinking straight.

A weak voice came from Colin’s direction, “If you are ready for it it will come to you. Just go with your heart.”

“But I dreamt the castle. It was only in my dreams. It is not real. “Jez said in confused panic, “It was only a dream,” he said the last sentence slowly and sadly.

“Just open your mind Jez,” Jane said, “Just open your mind.”

Jez tried but he could not relax enough. He had too much on his mind.

Colin’s picture kept coming into his head. “It’s no good.” He said sadly. “It won’t work. I can’t do it.”

“Relax Jez relax,” Jane said, “Deep breath Jez. Calm yourself.”

Jez breathed deeply. His heart beat slowed down. A calmness came upon him. And then he saw it. It was the great castle doors. He pulled them open and walked through. He made his way straight to the staircase and started to climb them. With every step he felt lighter and was soon at the top. He saw the Table at the top of the stairs. There was a book on the top. He recognised it. It said ‘Jez’s Journey of the Mind,’ he opened it and read the words inside it.

It has been said that if you’re to soar.

You first must go through the magic door.

He remembered the door with the light behind it. It was to the left of the door that he had went through earlier. He left the table and proceeded down the corridor. He turned to his left and saw the door with the light behind it. He walked up to it and put his hand on the knob. He turned the knob and opened the door.

Chapter 17.

Brightness flooded in numbing Jez’s eyes for a fraction of a second. Cold air rushed in alongside it cooling him down from the warming heat of the castle. His eyes settled and he took in the view. And what a view it was. He just saw clouds and open sky. ‘I must be miles up,’ he thought to himself. He looked down and saw a large cloud that came up to the door.

Something inside him told him that he must step on it. 'But it's a cloud' he argued with himself, 'It will never take my weight.' Gingerly he put his foot out of the door and let it rest on the cloud. It was solid. How could that be? He took a deep breath and stepped onto the cloud. He walked forward testing the cloud as he went until he came to the edge of the cloud. He looked down and saw the valley below him. The patchwork quilt of fields seemed to stretch for miles right up to the mountains on each side. It was certainly a view to remember. He could have gazed down forever but he had other things on his mind. Colin's time was running out. Why had he not told him earlier? He would have gone straight to the giant and not bothered helping the other animals. Maybe Colin knew that and did not want it to happen. Maybe helping the animals was part of his quest. It was too late to worry now. He knew that he must fly but how? He put his hand in his pocket and fished out his crystal. He nearly cut his hand on the nail that Colin had given him. 'What good is that nail to me,' he said to himself. He was about to throw it away but something inside told him to keep it.

He looked at the crystal and said aloud, "Now how can you help me?"

He looked into the crystal but saw nothing. He relaxed and looked again. A face appeared on the crystal. It was Taig O'Connor. "Remember the galloping horse Jez," it winked at him and disappeared. The crystal remained clear.

"Help me," Jez pleaded, "Help me. My friend is dying," he put the crystal to his heart and then it happened. He felt himself changing. First of all it was his chest. It seemed to expand rapidly. He could feel it growing and growing. He had never felt the sensation before. It was unusual. Yes it was painful but it was exhilarating with it. It grew and grew and all of a sudden it seemed to burst open. Feathers seemed to shoot forward. His legs seemed to get smaller and lighter. He looked down and saw a pair of legs but they weren't his. His face seemed to pull itself forward especially the nose and cheekbone. It seemed to stop at a point where his nose used to be. His arms seemed to get heavier and he looked at them he saw they had grown feathers. He shook his arms and it felt good. He had done it. He had changed himself to a bird. The wolf had been right. He felt good. Now what about Colin? He had thought little, in his panic, what he was going to say to the giant. But he did know that Colin's life depended on it and he would do whatever possible to get it. Jez knew that the next step he was going to take was going to be probably the hardest step of his life. He may look like a bird he reasoned to himself but that did not mean that he could fly like one. He looked down at the distant field below. It was a long way if he fell. They'd be nothing left of him if he failed. He knew that he must do it. He must do it for Colin's sake. He must do it for his sake too. If he went back inside then he would never know if he could fly. He looked back to the castle door but it had disappeared. 'Well' he thought 'that's one option closed.'

"It's now or never," he said out loudly though there was nobody to hear him. He took a jump, "Oh my God," he shouted as he left the cloud. He started to frantically wave his arms but it did not seem to do him much good. He was falling. The ground was rushing up to meet him. He flapped his arms but it was no good. His whole body was falling. Faster and faster. The ground was getting nearer. The sinking feeling became a plummet. If he had not been so afraid of dying then he would have probably have enjoyed it. Closer and closer the ground got. He thought that he was at the end. Arms flapping wildly but still the ground got closer. And then it happened. He did not know how or even why but he started to swoop upwards. The sensation of the lift was amazing. His whole body swung upwards like he was a spring. His stomach seemed to rise up in his chest. He could fly. Imagine it, he Jez the little boy who tended the sheep could fly. His father and the

sheep were far from his mind as he swooped upwards. He veered to the left and felt his whole body go with him. This had to be the best feeling he had ever had. He veered to the right and felt his whole body go with him. He swooped down once more and felt his whole body sink. He enjoyed it a whole lot more now that he knew he was safe.

"I can fly," he shouted out almost in song, "I can fly."

"Yes I can see that," a voice behind him said. He turned around and saw the barn owl, "Don't you think that you ought to be going to see the giant," she said almost as an order.

"Oh yes, of course," Jez answered. He had forgotten about Colin in all the excitement, "How do I get there?"

"Go straight on through the valley and you will come to a desert. They call it the Edge of Darkness," Jane said.

Jez had remembered Colin mentioning the Edge of Darkness. "Is it dark there?" he asked but it seemed a silly question.

"No," Jane answered, "Well only at night. They called it the Edge of Darkness because very little grows there. But anyway that's not important cross the desert until you come across the giant's domain."

"How will I know it?" Jez asked.

"Oh don't worry," Jane answered, "You will know it. Now you must be on your way. Time is running out for Colin."

She flew off leaving Jez on his own. Something inside him told him he must climb higher. He flapped his wings and started to climb. Higher and higher he went up until he felt himself being pulled along by the air. He stopped flapping and let himself float on the current of air that was all around him. The view of the valley was breathtaking. He was that far up he could see everything. The mountains that flanked each side and the dip that made it look like the shape of a 'U'. How he wanted to soar down and explore it. Maybe he could see Justin and surprise him for deep down he quite liked Justin and his happy go lucky nature. "No" he said to himself "I haven't the time." He knew he must save Colin. He tried to think of what he was going to say to the giant but it was no good. The view below him was distracting him too much. He saw a few houses dotted about "Who lives in them?" he thought to himself. "They must have been there a long time," for he knew that Man had not entered the valley in centuries. On and on he went. The miles seemed to pass quickly and soon he could see he was coming to the edge of the valley. The lush green fields had started to become patchy. He could see traces of sand below. And then all of a sudden the green had gone. He was now coming into the Edge of Darkness. Everywhere he looked was sand and dusty hills. There was no sign of life what so ever. If there was he was too high to see it. "I can't be that far off," he said to himself. He started to worry a bit now. What could he say to the giant? He had tried before. Maybe they weren't dreams, who could be sure in this valley? A voice came into his mind. It was Taig O'Connor. "Remember the galloping horses Jez." He was relaxed now maybe it was Taig's voice, maybe it was the view or maybe he knew that he was ready.

He traveled for mile after mile of desert. He never tired he just seemed to float along. He looked down at the sight below. He was looking for the giant's domain. He did not know what it looked like but Jane said that he would recognise it. All he could see was sand and a few small mountains. The giant would not live there he thought to himself. On and on he went. He knew he was running out of time. Maybe it was too late. Maybe Colin had already died. Who does that giant think he is anyway? What right has he to play with Colin's life like that? Does he think he is a God or

something? After all he did steal the Magic Eye from the Queen. She never gave him permission to take it. Alright she may have agreed with him when he took it but that was then. People are changing all the time. How would he know that for he is stuck out here in the desert? Jez's anger was starting to rise inside him. Maybe he felt guilty about playing around when Colin's life was in danger.

He looked down again. Searching but to no avail. All he could see was sand and mountains every where he looked. This was truly the Edge of Darkness, who would want to live in here. There was nothing for them. How did David O'Neill put up with this for thirty years? "No" Jez thought to himself, "He must be held here against his will. He would never be able to cross that desert on his own. It stretched for miles. It would have took him days. That's it he must be held as a prisoner." It seemed to make sense to Jez's angry mind. Maybe he was not thinking straight for anger does that to a person but it felt right to him at the time. Again he looked down but all he saw was mountains and sand. Mile after mile of sand as far as he could see, in every direction just sand.

The anger subsided slightly with time. Reason came into his mind. He must keep his temper. How could he prove that he was ready to go into the light if he behaved like a raging bull? He must calm down. He started breathing deeply. Exhaling the anger along with his breath.

Though he hated to think it he knew that he must put Colin to the back of his mind. Thoughts of Colin lying there and dying seemed to ignite his rage. He knew he had to keep calm and collect his thoughts.

All his thoughts were interrupted by the sight that came into view.

"This" Jez said aloud "Is the giant's domain."

Columns of rock seemed to stretch up into the sky like fingers on a hand. He could not see the top of the mountain for it was well above the clouds. It was breathtaking. A mat of cloud seemed to lie about half way up its structure. Well half way up of what he saw because he could not be sure how high the columns really were.

He swooped down to land on the hot sandy floor. He needed to get his breath back. The journey was a lot longer than he thought. He would have to get used to flying he thought to himself.

He looked around the hot desert floor. He could see vegetation but it was very sparse. "No" he thought to himself "Nobody could live here." And then he said it aloud.

A voice behind him spoke. "I live here." He quickly turned around for he recognised it. It was Kim but she did not know him for all she saw was a giant eagle. He could see that she did not recognise him but it would not matter anyway for this was one bird that she could not harm. He could rip her apart in seconds and she knew it. He had noticed a sadness in her voice. She was not the Kim he had known before.

"Why do you live here?" he asked for he thought she had left the valley.

"It was my own stupidity that brought me here," she answered, her head held low in shame. "A man came into the valley. He was not a bad man like the ones in stories. He was a good man but I never got to find out. I took an instant dislike to him and wanted to stop him seeing the giant."

"Why was that?" Jez asked for he was genuinely interested.

"I don't know. I have traveled many miles thinking about it. At first I blamed him for my plight but now I know that it was me and me alone who caused my predicament."

"What happened?" Jez asked. He knew the answer but he wanted to see if she had changed.

"I just wanted to slow him down at first so I blocked off a mouse's Burrow for I knew he could not let them die. After that I got worse. I broke the first rule of the valley."

“You killed another?” Jez said trying to put a surprised voice on.

“Yes to my shame I killed a rat called Jenny. I wasn’t thinking straight I took her life needlessly. That is something I could not forgive myself for. I was frightened for I have heard stories about men so I came here instead.” Kim said. Her head never raised from looking at the ground.

“But surely you’d be better off in the land of the man than in this desert.” Jez asked for he knew life in man’s world was not that bad for cats.

“Have you been to the land of man?” Kim asked looking up in surprise.

“Yes I fly everywhere.”

“Is it as bad as the animals say?” Kim asked for she knew that she could not live in the desert.

“Oh it’s changing all the time. There are good and bad men but you will know the good ones when you see them. More and more good men are coming forward. Yes. The world is definitely changing.

“I think I may go there,” Kim said and as an afterthought, “What brings you here anyway?”

“I have come to see the Gate keeper but I don’t know where abouts on the mountain he lives,” Jez answered looking at the colossal columns that stood in front of him.

“It is an awe inspiring thing isn’t it,” Kim said looking with him. “See the third pillar along. He lives on the top of it.”

“Well” Jez said to Kim, “Thank you for your help.”

“No, thank you. You’ve made my mind up. I will take my consequences in Man’s world.”

She turned and left Jez in his thoughts. It was truly a magnificent structure. Would we have the strength to fly up that far?

There is only one way to find out he thought as he took off.

Chapter 18.

Onward and upward he soared. He was glad he had stopped to rest. He certainly would not have made the climb without it. He was glad that he had spoke to Kim. She was not all that bad and to think that he nearly took her life. Still he climbed flapping his great wings to give the lift. The mountain's side seemed to stretch as far as he could see. How would she get on in the land of Man? No-one could know for sure. How would he fair against the giant? He would soon know that. Higher he climbed. His wings started to weaken, he was getting tired but he could see the first wave of clouds. This seemed to renew his strength. He soared passed them and carried on his way. He looked for somewhere to land, maybe rest a while. The sheer cliff provided nowhere for him. He must make it in one go. Onwards and upwards, his mighty wings lifting him with every flap. He could see the second wave of clouds now. He had not been able to see above them so he did not know how far he had left. “This flying is certainly hard work.” he said to himself.

He passed through the second wave and could see the top of the mountain. “Not far now,” he said aloud to keep his spirits up. Onwards and upwards and then he was at the top. He landed on a rocky outcrop and looked around him. Behind him he saw nothing only the clouds that covered the sky like a carpet. He turned to his front and in the distance saw a large stone cottage. It only had one floor and a grey thatched roof made it blend into the landscape. The ground around it was too rocky to grow anything and it looked quite windswept.

“That’s the place,” Jez said aloud and thanking Kim he proceeded towards the building. He found it hard to walk so he took the crystal out once more and looked at it. He could feel his chest getting smaller and smaller. His legs seemed to get heavier and his arms lighter. His face seemed to

withdraw back to his original shape. He looked to where his wings once were but in their place were his arms. He looked down to see his legs returned to their original shape. He was back to normal.

He thanked the crystal and put it back in his pocket.

He found it a lot easier to walk now and soon he was about half way there. A voice interrupted him, "Who are you?" it said rudely.

Jez turned and saw a boy about his age but slightly bigger than him. He had combed black hair that came down to a fringe and a neat appearance that surprised Jez in this windswept land.

"You must be David O'Neill," he said in a friendly manner.

"I know who I am. What I want to know is who are you?" the voice said almost as a shout.

Jez could feel himself getting angry but he kept himself in check maybe this was another test. "My name is Jethro Malloy," Jez answered, "And I don't like your attitude."

"Oh don't you," David said coming closer. He was trying to frighten Jez but after what Jez had been through recently he would have had great difficulty. "And maybe if you weren't standing on my land trespassing my attitude might be different."

"Oh your land is it now. And what does the giant say about that." Jez said slowly trying to keep his temper.

David could see that Jez was not frightened and it seemed to unnerve him slightly. "How do you know about the giant?" he asked his voice had become more friendly.

"I am here to see him," Jez answered, he had noticed the change in David's tone and his anger eased.

"Have you come for the Magic Eye?" David asked but he had already guessed as much.

"Yes, with the good will of the giant."

"I came once," David said sadly, "But I never got it and so here I am," and put his hand to his chest.

"What went wrong," Jez asked for he wanted to know as much about the giant as he could.

"It was me, I thought I was ready, but I guess that I wasn't,"

"I thought that you stayed of your own free will," Jez asked in surprise.

"Yes I did at first. But over the years I got bored. Don't get me wrong the giants a nice enough fellow but I miss my family," David answered, a tear nearly coming to his eye.

"But why don't you leave," Jez asked. "If you don't like it here?"

"It is miles to cross the desert. A journey of many days. And the valley itself, it is too big a journey for me," David said sadly.

"Won't the giant help you if you ask him?"

"No, the giant can't travel the Magic Eye keeps him here. He is afraid someone will steal it and so guards it night and day."

"Will you help me to get the eye off him?"

"No, I'm sorry, for in truth I fear him," David answered and Jez could see the look of terror in his eyes.

"I think you must leave here," Jez said on seeing his sadness.

"But how?"

Jez thought a while. He did not see a use for the crystal only in getting back but something inside him told him that he should give it to David instead. He took it out of his pocket and gave it to David.

"Here," he said, "This is how you use it," and explained it to David.

“Does that work?” David said in surprise.

“Yes, how do you think that I got here?”

David held the crystal to his heart but Jez interrupted him, “Oh I was wondering if you would fly over and see how Colin is first.”

“Colin?” David said nearly dropping the crystal, “Why, is he hurt?”

“He’s dying,” Jez said close to tears, “He needs the Magic Eye to keep him alive. He has been too long without it.”

“You mean that Colin needs the Magic Eye to live?” David said in amazement for in all his travels with Colin he had never mentioned it.

“Yes, and quickly.”

David put the crystal in his pocket and said, “Well that’s different, follow me. I know where he’ll be at this minute.”

Jez followed and they almost marched through the door. Before they knew it they were facing the giant. Robert had been right he did not look above six feet tall. He had straggly Black hair that went to his shoulders and a large unkempt beard.

“What is the meaning of this?” he bellowed loudly.

Chapter 19.

Jez went quiet for a moment. So this was the giant. His heart beat slightly faster. “Remember the galloping horse,” he said to himself, “Remember Colin.”

“Well,” the voice bellowed out.

Jez looked him straight in the eye and said, “I’ve come for the Magic Eye,” the giants tone changed dramatically, “So you must be Jez?” he said in a friendly manner.

“Er... Yes” Jez said. He was taken aback slightly by the sudden change in the giants tone.

“I’ve heard a lot about you my boy,” he said in a school teacherly sort of manner, “You’ve done well.”

“Thank you,” Jez said sincerely.

The giant looked at David and said, “Haven’t you anything to do David,” and beckoned him to leave.

“Er What about Colin?” David stammered out.

“Colin?” The giant said with a look of astonishment, “Who’s he?”

“He is my friend,” Jez said sadly, “But I’m afraid he’s dying.”

“Colin, is that the little fellow?” the giant asked seeing Jez’s distress, “What’s the matter with him. I thought that Leprechauns never died.”

“He needs the Magic Eye to keep him alive,” Jez said the distress had left his voice.

“Oh I don’t know about that. I don’t think that Man is quite ready to come back into the valley,” the giant said. His voice sounded sterner.

“It is not for Man I’m asking,” Jez said calmly, “But for my friend Colin.”

“I’m touched by your loyalty but one goes hand in hand with the other,” the giant said looking at Jez.

“Would you break the first rule of the valley? Jez asked or a voice inside him did anyway.

“What do you mean break the first rule of the valley?” the giant said defensively.

“The one that says no animals can take another’s life,” Jez said to the bewildered giant.

“I have never taken another’s life,” the giant said, his temper rising slightly.

“No but by withholding the Magic Eye you will surely kill Colin.”

The giant thought for a while before he said, “Do you have a crystal?”

“Yes but what good will that do?”

“It has been said that a crystal can recharge your energy,” the giant said as he looked around for something.

“The Great Teacher has told me that, but surely Colin has gone past the tired stage. He’s dying,” Jez said impatiently.

“No, he is a Leprechaun. They work different to men. Ah, here it is,” the giant said picking up a book.

“A lot of knowledge has been lost but this piece will help,” he said opening the pages, “You must put the crystal to Colin’s heart and say ‘give him life by the power of the crystal.’

That should be enough to recharge him for at least two of your lifetimes. David can take it to him for I think it is a journey that he has longed to make for quite a time now.”

David looked guilty so the giant said, “Don’t worry David. You must go where you’ll be happy.”

David turned to Jez and said, “I had better be going. We must be running out of time. What about the crystal? For it is yours Jez.”

“You must find me in the outer world and give it to me there,” Jez said shaking his hand.

David ran off leaving Jez and the giant together. “I hope it’s not too late,” Jez thought to himself. He had time to take in the giant’s room now that Colin was off his mind. It was a large room with book shelves all around the walls. A table and two chairs stood in the middle. It was a sparse room but that suited the landscape that it was in.

“You must read a lot,” Jez said in a friendly manner.

“Oh yes, I have plenty of time to kill.”

“Yes, but I suppose it must be lonely living up here well away from everybody.”

“Well, I must admit David was good company for me at first but I suppose he did not like the boredom of the place.”

“Well,” Jez said looking out the door to the barren land that was outside. “Thirty years is a long time. So tell me how long have you been up here on this mountain?”

“Oh it must be at least six thousand of your years,” the giant said with a sigh. Jez could see that he might be getting somewhere.

“Six thousand years, that’s a long time in any-bodies lifetime,” Jez said, “Why don’t you go back and live in the valley?”

“The Magic Eye holds me here. I dare not take it back to the valley for it might be stolen,” the giant said and bid Jez to sit on one of the chairs that was by them.

Jez took his seat and said, “By Man you mean. But surely Man cannot get into the valley.”

“There is always the chance that one might stumble across it by accident.”

“Oh there is that chance but I don’t think that they would know what it was for anyway,” Jez said shuffling in his seat.

The giant thought for a while and it did make sense to him. In truth he was lonely, miles from anywhere. He was in a prison of his own making.

“No, it won’t work,” the giant said dismissively.

“It won’t, why not?”

“Well maybe one of the animals would steal it,” the giant answered.

He did not really believe this it was just that he had been up the mountain for so long and he had

become scared of change.

“What would they want with it? They can leave the valley whenever they want.”

“This is some kind of trick to steal the eye, isn’t it,” the giant said getting angry. He knew deep down that Jez would not steal it. He saw that Jez was more like the men that he used to know.

“Now if I wanted to steal it I would not have come and seen you face to face,” Jez said getting quite angry, “I would have sneaked in like a thief in the night.”

“Yes, you are right Jez, I’m sorry. I can tell you are not like that. But tell me why the concern for you hardly know me? I’m nothing to you.”

“Maybe I was lonely once. Maybe I see you in me, who knows. But whether you feel that I’m ready for the eye is immaterial. I was just saying that you would be better off amongst your friends in the valley. Surely you can see that?”

“Yes” the giant said happily, “You’re right. I’ve been sitting here watching the world go by for far too long. The crystal would be as safe in the valley as it would be in the mountain.” He got up and offered Jez a drink but Jez thanked him and declined.

“So you’ve come for the Magic Eye then” the giant said getting back to the point of the visit.

“I’m not sure,” Jez answered truthfully.

“You’re not sure? You came all this way but you are not sure that you want it,” the giant said with a bemused expression on his face.

“At first I came here just to run away from my fears. It seemed like a good idea at the time. As the journey went by I seemed to change. I lost the little greed that I had as my friendship with Colin grew. I like to think that I’m a better person but only others can tell me that. In the end I wanted the eye to cure Colin but the crystal seems to have taken care of that,” Jez answered looking at the ground.

“So you don’t want it then?” the giant said getting even more confused.

Jez was about to say no when a voice inside him said remember the nail. This confused him so he took it out and examined it. The giant looked at him in a funny way.

“A nail,” the giant said, “What good is a nail?”

Jez started to speak but it was not him that was talking, “A nail is a very versatile thing to have. Think of the Magic Eye as a nail.”

“What are you talking about?” the giant asked, now he really was confused.

“Well,” Jez continued, “The Magic Eye holds the inner and outer worlds together, just like a nail holds two pieces of wood together. Do you see what I mean?”

“Yes,” the giant said patiently, “I can see that. Is there a point to this?”

“Yes, for without the nail the wood, where it was one, it is divided. Over time one part might be lost or damaged and without it the other one is not whole. Can you see that?”

“Yes I can see that, but still haven’t answered my question,” the giant said impatiently.

“The inner and outer worlds are like the wood. They need each other to survive. The inner world wants Man back into the valley if he has changed for we all know the consequences if he hasn’t,” Jez answered. The giant looked at Jez and saw the truth in his words.

“Yes, I can see that. I realise that the longer the eye is away the harder it will be to reunite the worlds. But the choice is with Man for he is the one that threatens the worlds.”

“Yes, that is the lynch pin. Man, I have to prove to you that we have evolved enough to be worthy of the eye. Now how do I do that?” Jez said looking at the giant.

“Well Jez,” the giant said looking back, “You’re looking for a test aren’t you?”

"I think that my journey was my test wasn't it," Jez said with a triumphant smile on his face. The giant was taken aback by this for Jez was talking the truth. He did not think that Jez would have been clever enough to work it out.

"Very good," the giant answered, "You've surprised me Jez. I'll be honest with you I did not think you would have realised that."

"I didn't realise it at first but it came to me in the end," Jez said humbly.

"So tell me Jez, how do you think that you got on in the test?" the giant asked studying Jez closely.

"As the examiner surely it is up to you to tell me," Jez said putting the ball back in the giants' court. He knew that if he had said that he thought he had passed that would have been arrogant of him because he did not even know if he had completed it yet. If he had said no then it would have been an admission of failure which he did not think he had.

"Very good Jez, maybe that was a trick question but you answered it well."

"I don't think that the test is completed yet is it?" Jez asked looking at the giant. The giant was taken aback by Jez's insight and thought that if all men were like him then the valley would be safe.

"Yes, you're right Jez, but I have one last question. Do you think that Man is ready for the Magic Eye?"

Jez thought a while, "That's a difficult question. I can only speak for myself really. Do I personally think that I am ready for the Magic Eye? The answer to that must be no."

"No" the giant interrupted in surprise, "No. Tell me why you don't think that you are worthy. You have done great things here. You have nearly taken the stain away from Man's name."

"I have learned a lot since I arrived in the valley. I know my limitations though for I am, when all said and done, just a boy. I have a lot more to learn. Maybe in this lifetime I will be ready. Maybe in the next. I have heard stories of the old men and how they were good. It would be a difficult job to emulate them. But don't forget that when Old Man first came he was just as bad as New Man. They changed over time just as New Man must," Jez answered the best way that he could.

"Yes," the giant said, "I have heard that too. You say that you are not ready yet and I know that you can't talk for others so it is not really a fair question but I would like an answer."

"Well," Jez said as if thinking aloud, "The Magic Eye if it was unleashed all at once would destroy Man would it not?"

"Yes," the giant said in surprise for he did not know that Jez knew that. "That's very true. Man could not take in that much knowledge too quickly for his brain could not handle it."

"Now to be honest I cannot really answer that question with the limited knowledge that I have. I see myself change. I think to myself that where there is one then there must surely be others," Jez said and waited for the giant to interrupt him.

"Yes, I see but the question would be how many for if it was only one or two then the valley is still in danger," the giant interrupted as if on cue.

"True, but the knowledge would grow with time. Word would soon get around. The numbers would increase as the word spread. Sure it may take a hundred years, it may take longer. Time here goes a lot quicker than time in my world. But the longer they are without the Magic Eye the harder it will be to change as you admitted earlier," Jez answered the giant but left his point open.

"Yes I did say that but my loyalties must rest with the safety of the valley and its inhabitants."

"Now if the outer world does not change then it will destroy itself," Jez carried on.

"Yes, but my loyalties are still with the valley."

"If the outer world destroys itself then the inner world would surely follow. You can't have one

without the other.”

The giant went quiet. He knew that Jez was right. What could he do? He had the power to destroy everything. It was in his hands. But if Man was not ready for it then the valley would be destroyed along with the outer world. “What am I to do?” he said looking pleadingly at Jez, “All these years I thought I was doing right.”

“But you were doing right at the time you took it, it was the right thing to do. You saved the valley from Man. He was not ready to enter it then.”

“But what about now? I’m in a no win situation,” the giant said in despair. “If I keep it we’ll all die. If I give it away and it’s too early we’ll all die.”

“Man has moved on. It’s not like the old days. True there is still senseless killing but people are changing. You have to believe in them. Why don’t you let some of the Magic Eye back and see how Man copes with it. If you move back into the valley you will be close at hand to check on their progress,” Jez answered and he could see that the giant was thinking the same way.

“Yes I could, it will work.”

Jez saw that he had won. He quite liked the giant really. He was a fair man. A sudden thought came into his mind. How was Colin? He had to get back to find out. Maybe he was too late. How was he going to get back? He had given the crystal to David. The giant might be a fair man but he could not see himself living there for the next thirty years. The giant saw the look of panic in Jez’s eyes.

“What’s the matter Jez?” He asked sympathetically.

“I was wondering how Colin was. I must go back to see him,” Jez answered quickly.

“I am afraid that your work is done here Jez. You must go back to your own world.”

“But what about Colin? Jez asked getting flustered.

“Go back.”

“Woof, Woof.”

Jez heard a dog bark.

“Go back.”

It was Jock, “How did he get into the valley?”

“Go back Jez.”

Chapter 20.

“Woof, Woof, Grrr.”

“What’s that,” Jez said to himself as he shook himself back to life. “I must have fallen asleep.”

“Woof, Woof.”

“Jock, heel boy,” he shouted at the dog. He was barking at a bush that seemed to be rustling in front of him. Jock obediently turned and came back to Jez. Jez got up. ‘I must have been asleep,’ he thought to himself. ‘Why can’t I ever remember my dreams?’ He walked towards the rustling bush and looked inside it. “Ah,” he said out loud. It was a little black kitten and it was mewling in fear.

“It’s all right little one,” Jez said as he picked it up, “We won’t harm you.”

There was something strangely familiar about the cat but Jez could not place it. He gently stroked it saying, “You must be miles from home. However did you get here?” The cat purred and it was then that Jez said, “You must come home with me.”

It was getting late now and Jez knew that he must be returning home. ‘I hope Dad has not been

drinking again, 'he thought to himself he walked back to pick his stick up. As he was leaning over to grab it something inside him said, "What do you need that for remember the galloping horse." Instinctively, for he did not know why, he left it there. He remembered that there had been a horse in his dream but he did not remember what it did.

"What do I need a stick for anyway," he said aloud as he, carrying the kitten, and Jock rounded the sheep up to take them back. As he walked alone he felt strangely different. Still stroking the kitten he said to it, "I think that I will call you Kim. I hope dad will like you." Then his thoughts went to his father, 'Why am I always hiding from him? It's not like I'm a little boy. I work around the house, I look after the sheep, I ought to stand up to him a bit more. I play my part so he ought to respect me."

It sounded good to him. He was happy as he walked down the hill to his house.

It was not much of a place. It could have done with repair. The roof leaked and the back gate was falling off its hinges but it was his home. They left the sheep in the safety of a field next to the house and Jock ran in. Jez followed him, still holding the kitten.

When he got inside the shock that greeted him nearly knocked him off his feet. Everything was tidy. The floor was swept and the dishes had been washed and put away. A smell of food wafted all around the house. Jez felt strangely hungry so he called out, "Dad, I'm back."

"Won't be a minute son," a shout returned. The voice itself was friendly and Jez was not used to it. He had not heard that tone in his father in as long as he could remember. A figure made his way towards Jez, a large man, over six feet tall with a stocky build and dark brown hair. It was Jez's father but he hardly recognised him. He was clean shaven, his hair was brushed and it smelt like he had had a wash. But the biggest surprise to Jez was that he was wearing a suit.

"Sit down son, dinner is nearly ready," he said, still in a friendly manner. He saw the kitten and said, "Oh you've got a kitten. Where did you find that?"

"It was on the mountainside. It was all alone. Can I keep it dad?"

"Yes, sure you can Jez. Look after it well, like I should have looked after you," he said the last sentence in a said voice.

"Dad?" Jez said in surprise.

"Look Jez," his father said sitting opposite him, "I am afraid that I have not been much of a father to you. I'm afraid I've been wrapped up too much in self pity since your mother passed away. I forgot my responsibilities as a father and for that you would not believe how sorry I am."

"You have not been that bad," Jez said lying to try and make his father feel better.

"I have Jez," his father answered, "I have. I have kept you up here, miles from anyone. I've become a hermit Jez and made you into one in the process. That's not right. There was no excuse for it none at all."

Jez remained silent. He did not know what to say. He had not expected this not even in his wildest dreams. His father was almost close to tears as he poured his heart out to Jez.

"Now Jez," his father went on, "I've been clinging too much to the past but that's over now. I won't be drinking any more for it was no good for my temper. I just hope you won't cling to the past of what I used to be like."

Jez was not sure about this for he had been treated badly, both physically and mentally, over the years. How long would the change last? Was it for a few days and then would it be back to normal? He said nothing and allowed his father to continue.

"I know you may be thinking how long will it last. Will I be back to my old self in a day or two. I

can't answer that for in truth nobody can but believe in me Jez. You are not a child now. You're nearly a man. Forgive me Jez for I have not been myself," his father said sadly.

There was something in his father's eyes that told Jez that he meant what he said. Jez did not answer, he could not answer. He himself was close to tears but these were tears of joy.

"Things will be different from now on, believe me Jez. I've met someone, her name is Charlotte. She is not your mother and could never be her but she means a lot to me. More than anyone, apart from you that is, she, like me, has lost the one she loves and has a son. He's about your age actually they're coming to meet you and stop for dinner. Hope you like her Jez, I honestly do," his father said looking at Jez.

Jez was not sure. He had fond memories of his mother. She was the world to him when she was alive and now he was bringing a strange woman into the house. On the other hand he had seen the change in his father. He had not been like that since Jez's mother had been alive. He must care a lot about her. Besides he would have somebody to play with. He realised now how lonely he had been.

"I'll try dad," Jez answered. He meant it.

"Thanks Jez" his father said, "They should be along soon."

Jez gave his father a hand to set the table and finish preparing the meal. He had never seen his father as happy in many years and it made him happy.

They were interrupted by a knock on the door. "I'll get it Jez," his father said rushing to the door, "That must be them."

His father opened the door and in walked Charlotte and her son. She was quite an attractive woman in her early thirties with light blond hair. She had a kind face and a warm smile. Jez took to her nearly straight away.

Jez's father introduced her to Jez and she said warmly, "Hello Jez. This is my son Davy. I hope you'll both be friends."

Jez looked at the boy and thought to himself 'I know him.' Jez was uneasy meeting Davy because he had become uneasy in company since he had become a loner. Davy was different though. He was more outgoing than Jez and he spoke, "Hello Jez, look what I've found when I was on my way up here." He handed Jez the crystal and his dream came back to him.

He looked to the window behind Davy and saw the face of a little man with a beard waving to him and smiling.

"Goodbye Colin," he thought for he knew that Colin could hear him.

Jez's
Return
To
The
Valley

Chapter 1.

It was a bitter cold wet December night that found Jethro Molloy on night watch. It seemed that he had been standing for hours as he surveyed his mud encrusted boots. His whole uniform was the same but what could he expect in this desolate place. The rain had left great mud pools on the floor and with the shell craters filling up it was getting quite dangerous. The chilling wind bounded off him hurling rain that made his eyes sting. His early years looking after the sheep had hardened him somewhat to the weather but he was not immune. He cursed himself and his misfortune as he huddled up trying to keep warm.

“What am I supposed to be looking for? Only a fool would come out on a night like this,” he said to himself and then with a slight air of humour. “Well that’s about right I suppose.”

He remembered how he had got in the predicament and it put a smile on his face. He and his step brother David had been out drinking heavily in the local town. Maybe it was too heavily for they were both rather drunk and they got into an argument with a couple of soldiers from the same regiment. It was about something or nothing but it ended up in a fight and they had been put on night duty as a punishment. Davy was further up the path out of eye-shot but Jez (as he was known to friend and enemy alike) knew he was there. Jez hated patrols for it meant that he had time on his hands. Time to think. He would often remember the bad times that had drove him and his family out of Ireland to seek his fortune in America.

Yes the summer of 1848 was definitely a bad time. He recoiled in horror as he thought about the tens of thousands that had starved to death or been struck down by the fever that seemed to come with it. Their emaciated faces had burned a hole in his memory. A hole that would never go away. “Urgh” He shuddered to himself remembering their pitiful dying faces. His own father had been a victim. Struck down by fever and too weak from the hunger to fight it. His anger was enhanced by his helplessness. There was nothing he could do. It was only good fortune that saw him, David and his stepmother Charlotte on a ship bound for America.

Maybe good fortune was bit strong because at the time it seemed more like out of the frying pan and into the fire. The ship was far too overcrowded and the smell of death was always on it. His own stepmother died aboard this ‘Coffin Ship’ as it was later to be known. Her death, as with his fathers, was a tremendous loss to Jez. He had started to look upon her as his real mother. She had been good to him and he would never forget her.

A sudden cloud burst brought him out of his thoughts.

“Not again,” He said aloud not caring if anyone was listening. “There’s got to be more than this.”

He looked around but there was nothing to see only mud and water. The rain was so heavy he could barely see five foot in front of him. He smiled to himself as he remembered his childhood dreams of fighting pirates. ‘What a fool I used to be’ He thought to himself and laughed quietly.

“I bet O’Rourke’s enjoying himself,” He muttered to himself, “Why am I here anyway? There’s no enemy for miles around. I’m just wasting my time.”

Deep down he liked Sergeant O’Rourke, the big Kerry man who shouted the orders. He had a lot of respect for him. After all they were both Irish men abroad, and ought to be looking out for one another. O’Rourke himself had a soft spot for both Jez and his stepbrother. Maybe he admired them for their bravery for Jez had proved himself a more than capable soldier on many occasions. In fact if it was not for his wildness and fondness for whiskey Jez would make a good officer O’Rourke had said to himself on many occasions.

This was unknown to Jez as he got wetter and wetter. He just wished his duty was over and he was

dry. Maybe he ought to ease up on the drink for a while it only seemed to get him and Davy in trouble. He had seen what his father was like when he used to drink heavily before he had met Charlotte and remembered how frightened he had been.

“No” He said to himself shrugging of his thoughts, “I could never be like that. I only fought people who were looking for trouble.”

“Jesus Christ,” He said loudly as he accidentally stepped into a large puddle saturating his already wet leg, “I don’t need this. I don’t need this at all,” he said emphasising the last two words angrily. The rain eased slightly and he debated whether to catch up with Davy. A sound broke his concentration. He knew the sound immediately and it sent a shiver down his spine.

“Artillery,” he shouted, hoping that Davy had heard him, and dived for cover.

The drone stopped to be replaced by a large bang that shook the ground all around Jez. Large chunks of wet mud fell all around him as he lay behind a half dead bush. It was not much cover but that was all there was around.

“Davy,” Jez shouted after he had regained his senses, “Davy” he shouted again but this time louder. No answer came back. The shell had landed roughly where Davy would have been and Jez was worried. Quickly he scrambled to his feet and ran towards where he thought the shell had hit. In his panic he slipped twice but it never slowed him down. He turned the corner and saw where the shell had landed.

“Davy,” he called again but this time it was more a pitiful wail. He searched around the area but to no avail. There was no trace of him. Maybe he was alright. Maybe he was just unconscious and could not hear Jez. Jez dropped to his knees in despair for he knew deep down that it was not true. Memories flooded back to him. The first time he saw him and Davy had brought him that funny rock. At the time it meant a lot to Jez but with all the trauma he had been through he had long forgotten why. Death Mountain and all its secrets was a mystery to him now as time had passed and he rose to manhood. He was not the sniveling child that used to hide under the table every time his father got drunk.

He remembered his loneliness though for that was something that would always stay with him.

Jez jumped up and started searching again. Maybe there was a chance he was still alive he thought to himself. He knew he would have to find out one way or the other.

He saw a large mound of dirt that had been left by the explosion. Instinctively he scrambled towards it. Like a dog he dug into it with his bare hands. The sodden clay soil made this hard work but he persisted. Deep down he knew he could only be in there for there was nowhere else.

He was used to digging albeit not with his hands, as his and Davy’s first job in America had been in the mines. It was a hot dusty job that paid next to nothing but they had to eat. In fact the advent of the civil war was an opportunity for them at the time although as he dug deeper those thoughts were far from his mind.

Then he saw it, it was a hand with the Claddagh ring on its finger. There was no doubt it was Davy’s. In his panic Jez pulled with all his might. With a sudden tug he fell backwards and the sight in front of him nearly made him vomit for in his hand was Davy’s forearm but that was all. All Jez’s senses went numb. He did not even hear the shell’s approach. He never saw the blinding flash, only darkness.

Chapter 2.

It was a weird kind of darkness. It was tranquil and Jez was not afraid.

“So this is death,” he thought to himself. He could still hear the rain hitting the ground around him but he could not feel it on himself. All his senses apart from his hearing had disappeared. Yet something told him he was not dead but only at peace. The rain around him had slowed down and as he lay there he heard voices.

“Keep looking they must be around here” A gruff Irish accent boomed. He recognised it immediately, it was O’Rourke. The shells must have brought out the guard to investigate.

“Nothing here Sarge,” a voice answered, he recognised it as Private Williamson. He did not care for him much as he was the one that Jez had been fighting with.

“Keep looking,” O’Rourke bellowed, “They must have been around here somewhere.”

“Probably went AWOL,” Williamson said quietly to another soldier next to him. Unfortunately O’Rourke heard him and shouted, “I would expect that from a coward like you but not from them.”

Jez smiled to himself. He tried to call out but it was useless. He just seemed to drift inside the peace of his own mind. He knew they would find him soon as the voices sounded quite near. The rain had completely stopped or so Jez thought as he never heard it. The voices were nearly upon him when he heard Williamson say, “Sarge over here,” and all the footsteps seemed to converge near him.

“God look at him there’s nothing left of him.”

“I must be dead,” thought Jez but a voice told him that he was not.

“It’s Davy,” O’Rourke said and Jez detected a hint of sadness in his tone, “What a mess.”

The next thing Jez heard was a voice above him, “It’s Molloy here Sarge I think he’s dead.” It was Williamson Jez wanted to kick out and hopefully catch him for even in peace he held a grudge.

“Some doctor you’ll make he’s still breathing,” O’Rourke answered. “Go and fetch the doctor I don’t think we’ll risk moving him, his stomach looks a mess.”

Williamson obediently followed orders. O’Rourke was left alone with Jez as the others hunted around for the scattered parts of the rest of Davy’s body.

“You’ll be alright lad,” O’Rourke said softly, “We’ll soon patch you up. Don’t forget you’re an Irishman.”

Jez heard the others scrambling about but it seemed distant to him. Even O’Rourke’s voice seemed distant although it was only above him.

Another voice came to the fore, “Jez help me,” It seemed to come from within him. Although he could not place it it sounded familiar.

“Jez help me,” it came again.

“Who are you?” Jez said quietly to it.

“You know me Jez, have you forgot me already?”

Jez thought hard but still could not place it, “Who are you?” He asked again.

“Jez help me.”

“How can I help you? I do not know you.” Jez said his voice getting quite desperate.

“Believe in me Jez. Believe in me.”

With that Jez seemed to drop into the darkness. It felt like his whole body was falling. Deeper and faster it went. It was quite exhilarating. Faster and faster he fell. He could not stop even if he tried. Not that he wanted to for he was enjoying the surge downwards. The darkness turned to light and he looked down and saw a great valley surrounded on all sides by great mountains. There was

something familiar about it but at the time he thought nothing about it. He was too enthralled by its beauty to think properly.

He landed softly on the lush green floor and picked himself up. He took a long slow look around taking in its spectacular view. The vivid greens and yellows of the surrounding fields were too bright to be of his world.

"I must be in Heaven," he thought to himself and then said aloud, "So Jez you finally done it. You've died and went to Heaven."

"So you think you're dead do you?" a voice behind him said.

Quickly he turned around but all he saw was a large brown rabbit.

The rabbit seemed tame but Jez expected it to bolt at any minute.

Jez looked for the person who had spoken but all he saw was the rabbit.

"I must be imagining it" he said aloud as if to reassure himself and decided to have a walk around and see if there was anybody about.

As he crossed the field to the large hedgerow about three hundred yards to his left the rabbit followed him at a safe distance. Turning around he picked up a small stone by his feet and hurled it at the rabbit.

"Go on, get out of it or you'll end up in my pot."

The rabbit ran back a few yards and hung around as if he was taunting Jez.

"He must be somebody's pet" Jez thought to himself and carried on. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the rabbit follow him but took little notice for he wanted to find out where he was.

The birds were singing loudly and he was sure they were singing

"Watch out Kim, Jez's about."

"I think my mind is going," he said aloud and trying to explain this new environment he found himself in.

"Maybe it's coming back," a voice behind him said again. He recognised it as the same one as before turning around all he saw was the rabbit again. "What's happening to me?" he thought to himself and decided to chase the rabbit away once and for all.

He ran as quickly as he could but the rabbit was too quick for him and bounded off into the distance "Let the little scamp go I don't think I'll be seeing it again," Jez said to himself getting out of breath.

He decided to sit a while to get his breath back and take in the warming Sun. He lay back and looking up into the air said, "Yes this is definitely Heaven but where is everybody. Surely there must be somebody about."

Curiosity made him get up and carry on looking. All he saw around him were long flowing fields that rolled and cascaded in the gentle cooling breeze. In the far far distance he saw a house or two dotted around and this reassured him immensely.

"So," he said to himself, "There must be others here" and set off back to the hedgerow that he had first intended to reach. His tiredness had completely disappeared and to him it was just like a morning stroll. He reached the hedgerow and followed its wall until he came to a slight opening. He managed to scramble through it quite easily and on the other side saw a pathway. It was not as wide as the road only being about six feet across and on the other side was a hedge.

"Well it must lead to somewhere." He said to himself and debated on whether to go to the left or the right. He decided to go to his right because the buildings seemed closer on that side. It was still miles into the distance and he knew it would take him ages to reach it.

The colour and aroma coming from the hedgerows either side of him and the warming Sun made the journey a pleasurable one. He was covering the distance quickly almost as if he was floating along. Maybe if he was in Heaven he would see Davy, Charlotte and his mother and father again, he had heard Williamson find Davy's body but he already knew that David was dead. Yes it would be good to see them all again. Maybe it was not bad being dead, once you got past the pain that is. He had a spring in his step as he reached the building.

When he got close enough he saw that the building was derelict and was of an unusual shape. It was like a round grey Tower with stones that had fell from the top and lay scattered around the ground.

"Oh well, I may as well have a look around while I'm here. Otherwise it will be a wasted journey." Jez said to himself in a disappointed tone.

He climbed the small hill it was on and was soon at the entrance. The door and frame that it was in had long gone and it was quite dark inside. He scrambled across the large stones and entered into the darkness. His eyes got used to the darkness and he noticed how spacious it was inside. It must have been about twelve foot in diameter but it did not look like anybody would live in it. The bare stone walls of its ground floor made it seem uninviting and left an eerie chill that hit Jez as soon as he entered. Rubble lay all around the inside and Jez almost tripped in the darkness.

"What sort of place is this" Jez thought to himself, "It must be some kind of defence structure but against what?"

Jez looked up at the ceiling and saw a narrow trapdoor. It must have been three feet square. It was open but the ceiling was too high to reach without a ladder.

"Maybe I'll find my answer up there," He said aloud. He felt as if he was being watched but when he turned around there was nobody there. He cursed himself for being paranoid and looked around to see if there was anything he could climb upon.

There was nothing inside so he stepped into the warmth outside and had a look around. All he could see was the large stone bricks that had fell from the decaying building, they looked heavy but he had no choice but to try and lift them. He walked to the nearest one and grasped it with both his hands. He tensed up and heaved. The stone lifted quite easily although it was heavy. He carried the stone inside and nearly tripped on some rubble because he had not let his eyes get used to the darkness. He chided himself for his stupidity and quickly put the stone against the wall for it was starting to get too heavy for him. He put the stone upright and stood on top of it but the ceiling was still too high.

"Trust my luck" he muttered to himself not really wanting to make the journey again. He stepped off the stone and went back into the Sunlight. Looking around, for he still felt that he was being watched, he walked to the next nearest stone and lifted it. It too was heavy and he struggled carrying it back. Letting his eyes get used to the darkness he carried it in and placed it next to the first stone and went out again. He hoped the next stone would be the last for it was starting to tire him out. He did not really see the point for it looked like nobody had lived there in many a year if at all. Curiosity kept him at it though and soon the third one was in its place on top of the other two forming a step. Jez carefully climbed on it as it did not look too stable. He balanced on the top stone and with a struggle managed to pull himself up through the hole.

Once up into the next compartment he had a good look around. This floor was well lit with two stone windows letting in ample light. The windows were barred making Jez think that maybe it was a prison of some kind. The bare stone walls enhanced his belief. He went to one of the windows

and took in the view. He could see for miles and it was a breath taking sight. He looked around the room but it was completely bare with only a ladder to take him up to the next floor. Judging by the height of the building Jez guessed that that was the last floor. He blessed his fortune that there was a ladder. There was no way that he would have even attempted to carry the stones up there. Gingerly he climbed the ladder for it did not look safe. Once at the top he pushed the trap door open. This took quite a lot of effort as it was quite heavy. The next compartment seemed light so he pulled himself up into it. He looked around the compartment. It was darker than the last but it was light enough to see quite clearly. The light came from four glassless windows. They were about four foot long and six inches wide placed at right angles to each other. Like the other compartments this one had bare stone walls and no furniture of any kind. Jez saw four books lying on the floor and went over to pick them up. He had to take them close to the window to try and read them. As it became light enough to read the words to his dismay he found that they were written in a foreign tongue. He hurled them down in disgust and cursed himself for wasting his time and energy climbing the Tower. He noticed another trap door in the ceiling and knew that it would lead to the roof. Hr debated whether to try and climb it for he knew that it would be a good view.

A loud bang brought him to his senses and instinctively he rushed to the narrow window that was above the entrance to look out. Down below he saw a rabbit scamper out of the entrance and run through the cornfield.

“What is this?” Jez said angrily and turned around. The trap door was shut and he walked towards it and heaved it open. The ladder that had been underneath it was lying across the floor and that was a good twelve feet below.

“What am I going to do now?” Jez said angrily. Thoughts that this place was Heaven were quickly turning to hell. He looked at the drop once more. It was a long way down but he knew he would have to try it. He knew that he could be up there forever if he did not.

He got on his hands and knees and peered down below. It looked a long way down. Nervously he lowered himself as much as he could and let himself fall the rest of the way. He landed, still on his feet, making a noise that rattled up his body. His feet were quite bad from the fall but he limped on towards the next entrance. He looked down and saw that the stones were still there. “That will make things easier” he thought to himself as he gently lowered himself onto the newly made stone staircase below. He kept his footing as he balanced on the top stone and caught the next step with his foot. Once on firm ground he said to himself, “Now I’ll find out what this is all about.”

Jez walked into the Sunlight once more and started following the direction that the rabbit had gone. It was difficult among the long corn but he followed it the best he could. His feet were hurting badly and after a few yards he decided to rest a while. He needed time to think and anyway the rabbit would keep until later. After all Jez felt that he had all the time in the world. There was something strange about the rabbit. It was far cleverer than any he had hunted. Maybe it was the land that he was in. The warming Sun seemed to revitalize him and he felt strange surges running up his legs. They seemed to cool his pain and after a short while it had disappeared completely. Jez felt like he had been recharged and sprang to his feet saying, “Well let’s see how clever this rabbit really is.”

He carried on the path he had first taken and soon came to the edge of the great cornfield. He looked once more at the hedge and debated which way he would go to find him. He had decided that he would turn left but a noise stopped him in his tracks. He listened attentively and thought to

himself that it sounded like somebody snoring. Instinctively he dropped on his hands and knees and crawled to where the noise was coming from.

He crawled through the last remaining strands of corn and the noise got louder the closer he got. He was soon upon the noise and peeped out from behind his cover. He saw a figure asleep at the bottom of the hedgerow in the cooling shade. It was the rabbit and he was within Jez's reach. "I didn't know rabbits snored," thought Jez as he got even closer. He wanted to make sure that he could catch him for he remembered how fast he had got away before. Quietly he got closer and then he was ready. He pounced like a cat and pinned him by the throat against the ground below him.

"Got you," he said aloud, "It's rabbit stew for you, you little" He never got the last word out. "No please spare me," the rabbit said in a panic stricken voice that shocked Jez enough to make him release his grip. This was enough for the rabbit to bolt and leave Jez holding a few strands of brown hair.

"Where the hell am I?" Jez said in despair, "What is this place? Talking rabbits, I think I've lost my mind."

The rabbit had not run away completely but stayed away at a safe distance as if he was taunting Jez again. Jez looked at the rabbit and said, "What kind of place is this? Where did you learn to talk?"

"Don't you remember me Jez?" It asked and Jez was too overcome with shock to answer him.

"No," He answered eventually, "I don't know you. Surely I would remember a rabbit that spoke. I mean it's not a thing that you hear every day."

"Don't you know where you are?" The rabbit asked playing with Jez in an insulting manner.

"No," Jez said and moved towards him slightly. He had meant to casually creep up on him and pounce again.

"Stop where you are," the rabbit said in an angry tone, "Or I'll run off and you will never find out where you are."

"Well don't mock me. I want answers. Don't talk to me like you would talk to a" Jez was stopped at this point.

"Child?" Justin interrupted with a smile on his face that made Jez think that he was being ridiculed again. Justin went on, "You are in the Valley of the Ever Young. Surely you remember."

"No," Jez said without thinking, "If I had been here before I would certainly have remembered it."

"But you have Jez. You have. Even the birds sing your praises on high." Justin answered and Jez remembered the birds' song earlier.

"Who is Kim?" Jez asked, "And why is she afraid of me?"

"All animals are afraid of you. You're a man. You kill for fun. "Justin answered almost spitting out the word man. His hatred of Jez was obvious and Jez noticed it.

"You're one to talk," He said mockingly, "You would have left me to starve in that Tower, wouldn't you."

"Nobody starves in the valley for we have no need to eat. You would have stayed there out of harm's way for we in the valley fear men." Justin answered and then carried on, "Tell me Jez, how many men have you killed?"

Jez thought for a moment before he answered, "I don't know. All I know is that all the men I've killed would have killed me if they had had the chance."

"That's no answer is it," Justin replied angrily, "You put yourself in the position of kill or be killed. You brought it upon yourself."

Jez had no answer so Justin carried on, "Tell me Jez, how many animals have you killed. You wanted to put me in the pot didn't you? But I was too quick for you just like the last time." "I've only killed when I was hungry. What animal does not do that? It is the way of Nat... What do you mean just like last time," Jez asked in confusion. "You would have taken my life so readily and yet you still don't remember me." Justin said. His tone had reverted back to a mocking nature once more. "I've told you before," Jez answered angrily, "I don't know you. I'm sure I would have remembered a talking rabbit. Especially a loud mouth like yourself." "Oh that's very nasty Jez. Very nasty. No wonder you have no friends. Not even Colin," Justin answered smugly. The mentioning of Colin's name brought it all back to Jez, "Hang on a minute. You're just a dream that I had when I was a kid. You're not real." With that the darkness covered him like a shroud and he started to drift.

Chapter 3.

Jez drifted through the darkness for quite a while. It seemed a different sort of darkness to the peaceful type that he had been through earlier. He heard no sound only that of his slow heartbeat. He had time to recollect on the previous events. Why had a dream that he had once had as a child come back to haunt him? It did not make sense. He must have had a vivid imagination as a child he thought as he drifted along. But he remembered how lonely he had been and he had heard somewhere that people like him usually had imaginary friends. For some reason he remembered the dream as if it was only yesterday. In fact he remembered it all which he had never done before. Things did not add up in his mind. He remembered that Davy was in the dream yet he had not met him at the time. He remembered the crystal and its power and then Davy giving it to him as a present. That did not add up either. Maybe it was just a coincidence. Life was certainly strange. Within a few years he had completely changed. Yes growing up was an ordeal.

His thoughts were interrupted by an Irish accent calling him. It sounded like Sergeant "O'Rourke but Jez knew that it was not him.

"Come here Jethro," It said and Jez seemed to drift off to his left and head towards it.

The darkness turned to light and Jez found himself sitting on a large oak chair by a large oak table. At his feet sat two large Irish Wolf Hounds and in front of him was a large roaring fire. In fact the whole room was large. By the fire stood one of the biggest men that Jez had ever seen. He must have been at least six feet seven and nearly as wide. His long straggling hair seemed to blend in with his long straggling beard. He certainly was mean but Jez was not afraid.

"I know you don't I," Jez said as a statement and not as a question.

"I don't know," The huge man answered, "Do you know me or am I just a dream?"

"What," Jez said in surprise.

"For if I was a dream then surely my life was wasted. Maybe I am a dream maybe you're just a dream in my life. What do you think?"

Jez was confused; he did not know what to say.

"That chair you are sitting on. Hit it with your fist and tell me if it hurts."

Obediently Jez lifted his fist and slammed it down on the hard unforgiving chair handle. The noise sent the two dogs running behind the man's feet.

"Well you managed to scare the dogs at least."

“Maybe it’s not a dream. I don’t know,” Jez said in even more confusion. “Your name is Taig O’Conner isn’t it.”

“Yes that’s right. Your memory must be good, for after all it was a long time ago. So tell me Jez what went wrong? When did you lose your belief in me? You were so close.”

“I know now. But at the time it did not seem important. I was just a child really. Maybe I was not ready for it. I had to face the real world and it was hard.”

“We all have to do that Jez. I spent most of my life fighting. I’ve seen death on many occasions. After a while you just don’t care. It comes so naturally,” Taig said and Jez detected a note of sadness in his voice.

“But surely there must be more to this. All I seem to have seen is death; I have watched thousands starve for no reason. What kind of world allows that to happen?” Jez said in despair. He had never talked about the famine before although it was often on his mind.

“I am afraid it was not the world that did this to you it was the greed of your fellow man.”

“No it was nature for surely the potatoes were destroyed by blight.”

“That is true but you like many others were put on a bare subsistence level living on poor ground. It was just an accident waiting to happen. Man is a bigger killer than nature.” Taig said with an air of resignation.

“Well I was right when I said that man was not ready for the Magic Eye. Imagine what carnage would have occurred in the valley. Tell me Taig why have you called me back after all this time?” Jez asked looking straight at Taig.

“Colin needs your help.” Taig replied. Jez detected a tone of sadness in his voice.

“What’s the matter?”

“I’m afraid he’s dying. He needs the crystal to recharge his powers,” Taig answered as he moved towards a large oak chair that was close to Jez.

“I am afraid that I have lost it. I never had it long and soon forgot its powers. I haven’t seen it in years. In fact it is not even in this country as I left it in Ireland.” Jez said in a sorrowful voice.

“Oh” Taig said and thought for a while. After what seemed like an eternity said, “It’s no good Jez. I don’t know the answer.

“What about the Teacher. Surely he would know,” Jez said as if he was hit by a bolt of inspiration. Taig did not seem so sure but agreed. Jez said, “Why don’t you come into the valley and we’ll both go and see him?”

“No” Taig said abruptly, “That is impossible. I cannot go into the valley. It is your valley.” He finished off mysteriously and Jez wondered what he meant. Jez was going to question him further but something told him that time was of the essence.

“How do I get back to the valley?” He said to Taig.

“Oh that’s easy, just relax, close your eyes and let your mind go free.”

“What do you mean?” Jez said in surprise.

“Don’t shackle it with thoughts let it go,” Taig said and this sounded odd to Jez but he tried it anyway.

As Jez let his mind go blank he felt himself drifting. It was a nice feeling, one of himself floating. When he opened his eyes again all he saw was darkness. He drifted along like a leaf in a river and just relaxed. It was a good feeling. He felt lighter and free. The journey seemed to finish nearly as soon as it had begun. Jez felt himself stop and then another feeling came upon him. He felt that he was falling again. His whole form dropped at a fast pace sending an adrenalin rush all the way up

and then down his body. Rapidly the darkness passed and he saw light take its place. He saw the great mountains that surrounded the valley and the valley in its patchwork splendour. Within a fraction of a second he had landed on his feet.

Jez looked around and tried to remember where the Teacher lived. He did not know where he was only that he was in the middle of a large green field. He looked towards the nearest hedgerow and something told him that he would find his answer there.

Jez set on his way and the journey seemed easy. In no time at all he was the hedgerow and looking down its wall to find an opening about twelve feet to his left. After scrambling through the hedge he came across a pathway and that held the answer. Jez saw a large signpost and went over to read it. The sign pointed to the right and on it was written 'Teacher's House'.

As Jez walked along he remembered the countless miles he and Colin had walked. He felt guilty because he had lost the crystal and did not want to be responsible for Colin's fate. He thought and thought but for the life of him could not remember where had had left the crystal. He did know that he had left it in Ireland so there would be no chance of ever seeing it again. He thought to himself 'What's the point; the Teacher will be no use'. He was debating whether to turn back when he saw the road veer off into a path.

"I may as well go to see him now," he said aloud for he realised that it was not far now. He followed the path still with a spring in his step. He could not understand it for the more he traveled the less tired he got. In fact as he walked down the path he seemed to be getting lighter as if his troubles were completely disappearing.

"Soon be there," he said to himself, "I hope the Teacher's in otherwise it means I've had a wasted journey." The path was changing to a track but Jez seemed to just float along.

As he turned a corner he saw the large cave and remembered that the Teacher lived there. It was like he had only visited that morning for his memory was even stronger now.

As he came towards the entrance of the great cave Jez shouted, "Are you at home Teacher?"

A voice shouted back, "Who are you?" Jez recognised it as the Teacher's voice straight away.

"I am Jez. Don't you remember me?" Jez answered and the voice told him to come in.

Jez walked through the entrance into the large Library. Books were still everywhere. They were stacked on floors and tables because all the shelves around the walls were full. 'Surely I must find the answer here' Jez thought to himself. Jez went into the next room and waited for the Teacher to appear.

"Won't be a minute Jez take a chair," he shouted from behind the door to the left of the table.

'I wonder what he does in there?' thought Jez to himself remembering how he was in that room the last time that he had visited him. Jez had some time on his hands and had a look around the room. It did not seem to have changed one bit. He remembered the first time that he had met the Teacher and how scared he was when he first met the wolf. Yes, he thought Colin was definitely right not to tell him that the Teacher was a wolf. Jez knew that he would never have entered the cave if he had known.

The teacher entered the room and looked at him smiling. Jez saw that he had not altered one bit and this surprised him.

"Well you've certainly grown now Jez" The wolf said, "I would not have recognised you as the same child that visited me with Colin all those years ago."

"It's been a long time Teacher, but you haven't changed a bit."

"I hear that you have Jez, both physically and mentally. Tell me Jez, what happened? You were

nearly there you were so close. What went wrong?"

"I don't know," Jez said for he never really evaluated his life, "I just seemed to have strayed off the path. I can offer no excuse other than desperation."

"Desperation?" the wolf said as a question.

"Yes when I first came to you I was just a lonely child with no idea of the outside world," Jez said and waited for a while. He was expecting the wolf to say that was the same for most children. The wolf spoke but only to say "Go on".

"When I grew up and entered the adult world your values did not seem to work." Jez went on but was stopped at this point by the wolf. "How do you mean?"

"Well you taught me to believe in myself. But how can I do that after I saw my father, along with many others die. I was powerless to do anything. Life isn't in our hands but in the hands of others," Jez said and seeing that the wolf didn't understand said, "I mean how can I believe in myself if my life is controlled by other people?"

The wolf thought for a moment and said, "Do you still believe in yourself?"

"Yes I suppose I must do. I left Ireland to get away from the famine and make my fortune."

"Well you have just answered your own question."

"Sorry what do you mean?"

"You left Ireland because you didn't like the situation. Surely that means that your life was in your control. You think that your life is in other people's hands and in some cases it is. It has to be. But you Jez you have the ultimate choice," the wolf said and started to pull out one of the books from the shelf that was nearest to him.

"Yes your right," Jez said. He felt a lot better, "But what happens now?"

"Sorry" the wolf said as he put the book on the table. Jez looked at it but could not read the title.

"Well now I've strayed. I've killed on more than one occasion. It is too late to go back now" Jez said still trying to read the title. "What's this book about anyway?" He said picking it up off the table.

"It's never too late to go back Jez. Don't ever give up. That's not in your nature. You killed for self protection."

"I've had this before with Justin. He said and thinking about it I agree with him. He said I put myself in that situation in the first place."

"You did or was it desperation?" the wolf asked. He saw that Jez had no answer, "So you want to know what the book's about. Well Jez you have come to me for Colin needs helps."

"Yes that's right. How did you know?" Jez asked in a surprised tone.

"I just guessed. So tell me Jez what can I do for you?" the wolf said picking up the book from Jez.

"Colin needs the crystal to help to recharge him. He is in a bad way,"

"And you've come to find out where to find him?" the wolf's statement was more of a question.

"Well yes and no. You see I have not got the crystal anymore," Jez said with an air of resignation.

"What do you mean you have not got it anymore?" the wolf asked with a surprised look on his face.

"I've lost it. I know it's in Ireland and too far away to be of any use. What am I going to do?" Jez asked his tone changing more to one of desperation.

The wolf thought for a while as he opened the book, "I don't really know. How could you lose it? Mind you it's a bit late for that. This book has an index of all the books in the Library. Maybe there will be something in it that might help."

Jez saw the size of the book and thought that there must be thousands of books in there.

The wolf studied the book and after a few moments said, “No sorry. But there’s nothing in here that’s suitable.”

You could feel the disappointment in the air as Jez said, “What am I to do. He needs me and I’ve lost the crystal. How stupid of me.”

“There’s one thing. It might help. I’m not sure but it’s worth a try though.”

“What’s that?” “I’ll try anything to help Colin.”

“Do you remember the castle you visited?”

“The castle? Yes I remember it.”

“You must go back. Maybe you’ll find what you are looking for in it,” the wolf said but he did not seem sure and Jez could tell by his tone.

“And Colin?”

“I’m sure when you find the crystal Colin won’t be far behind,” the wolf answered putting the book back in its place on the shelf.

Darkness covered Jez once more and he began to drift again. He didn’t know where he was going but thought that it might be the castle. He could not really believe that he would find the answer there but he was desperate.

All of a sudden he started spinning wildly and this seemed to make his stomach churn. Faster and faster he went. His stomach throbbed and sent pain spasms all through Jez’s mind. The pain got worse and was starting to become intolerable. The darkness was starting to haze and through the pain he could see that he was in a small white room. He seemed to be lying on something but the pain was numbing his reality. He was not sure where he was. As he looked up through the haze his body started to shake with all the pain. His stomach felt like it had been ripped open. He was hurting bad. He needed help but he could see no-one in the room. He tried to shout for help but nothing came out. His every movement sent pain gyrating across his body.

Suddenly he heard voices. They were indistinct and he could not understand what they were saying. Maybe they were from the same people who had written the books in the Teacher’s Library. Jez did not know and the pain made him indifferent.

Voices came from inside him. He recognised one as Colin calling him, “Jez help me,” It said.

“How can I help you? I can’t even help myself,” Jez answered quietly through his pain.

“Be strong Jez and then you can help me,” Colin answered but Jez was powerless. The pain was all over him. The voices subsided as the pain took over. He shook and shook more violently every time. “Help” he shouted but only in his mind, “I need help.”

He looked up into the haze for signs of movement. He did not care who. He just wanted the pain to stop. Shadows flickered in and out of his limited vision. And then three shadows appeared around him.

Chapter 4.

Through the pain Jez tried to make the figures out. All he saw was three indistinct shadows though. He could not know for sure but they seemed to be analysing him. Maybe they were from some ancient race for their tongues were unknown to him. Through the pain he heard Colin comfort him. “Don’t worry Jez” he said, “They mean you no harm.” This eased Jez’s fears somewhat.

They were doing something to him and Jez was not sure what. His pain was intolerable and racked his whole body. All of a sudden it seemed to disappear. It was like it had been covered by a blanket. With the pain going the voices seemed more distinct. He could tell that they were

speaking in English. There were two men who both had American accents and a woman with a soft Irish brogue. His vision had started to clear but the removal of the pain had made him tired. He was drifting again and soon he was back in darkness.

Jez liked the darkness for he was free from pain. He could not recall how the pain had come about. He was just glad that it was over. He did not even know that he had been badly injured and had been given morphine to dull the pain. Those thoughts were far from his mind as he drifted across the vast expanse of darkness that was all around him. He remembered Colin and how he needed the crystal. He knew that he had to find the castle for it was his last chance of helping Colin. His mind was racked with guilty thoughts about his stupidity at losing it in the first place. How could he have forgot its awesome powers, it didn't make sense to him. He seemed to be traveling for hours getting stronger as he went. In the distance he saw a large building. It was the castle. It seemed to be floating in the space with no visible means of support.

"Well" Jez thought to himself, "I'll soon find out if it can help me."

Jez floated nearer and the extent of the view was amazing. The castle was huge. Its grey stonework seemed to rise for miles and soon it had captured his total vision.

"Who could have built this?" Jez said to himself as he admired its magnificence. He was overwhelmed by its size and felt like a small child again as he sheepishly approached the two huge oak doors.

The doors seemed to open a lot easier than before for now he had the strength of a man. He passed through the large doors and entered the huge hallway behind it. It had not changed a bit since his last visit all those years ago. He walked down the stone floor passing the oak doors on either side of him. He was making his way towards the large stone staircase. He wanted to have a look behind some of the doors that he had passed but now he knew how to get there he knew he could do it anytime. The corridor that he was walking down finished and he ended up at the foot of the stairs. He looked up and taking a deep breath grabbed hold of the wooden stair rail and started his ascent. He seemed to get lighter the higher he climbed and by the time he had reached the top he was almost floating.

In front of him he saw the square old table and the leather chair that was under it. Although tempted to sit on it he carried on to his right down a dimly lit corridor. Doors lay either side of him but automatically he carried on to the end. At the end of the corridor lay a large oak door. He had been through the door before but somehow it seemed different. A light shone from behind it lighting up all the gaps around it. He was glad that it was lit for he did not relish going through the dark once more. He had made the journey before as a child, and remembered how good it felt when it was over but did not know how much time he had.

Jez approached the door and turning its knob pulled it open. The corridor of darkness was not there so he walked straight into the large Library. He entered the Library a different person than the child who had entered before. He saw a book lying on the desk that was in the middle of the room.

Instead of walking over to the desk curiosity made him have a look around some of the shelves.

The first book he picked up was called 'A year in the life of Stephen Davidson 1383' the next book on the shelf had a similar title except the year was 1384. Jez remembered the name and that he was a butcher born in London in 1370. All the books in that section were about him and each one had a different year. Jez remembered him as the jocular man with the large round face. "So" thought Jez to himself "This is where all the knowledge was stored" He debated whether he should look round and see if there were any books about his life. Something seemed to draw him to the desk though

and those thoughts soon disappeared. At the desk he saw the book and picked it up. He read the title. It was different to the last one 'Jez's Journey of the Mind' this one said 'Jez's Return to the Valley'.

Excitement gripped him as he read his name once more. He opened the book but there was no writing in it only a large cut out square hole. His searching was done for inside the hole was the crystal that he had lost. Jez took the crystal and held it to his heart. He felt its power and it made him happy. Jez's intention was to go and see the Gate Keeper as he might know where Colin was but Jez really wanted to know why Colin's power had gone so soon. The Gate Keeper had said that it would last for two lifetimes but it had lasted for a few years. Deep down Jez wanted to fly again and this was really only an excuse.

Clutching the crystal Jez went out of the door and turned to his right. He saw the door at the other end of the corridor. Doors were dotted to the left and right but he walked straight past them. He longed to explore them for now he knew what they were it intrigued him. The door still had a light behind it and Jez turned its handle and entered in. Brightness flooded in and he took in the cool breeze. He saw the vast open sky with its few clouds dotted around and anticipation trapped him. He stepped onto the cloud that seemed to come right up to the door. He remembered how frightened he had been before and was still a bit reluctant. Nervously he put his foot on it but to his relief it was still solid. He walked onto it, still testing his weight, and made his way to the edge. He looked down to see that the valley was still there. Its patchwork fields stretched for miles and its splendour still took Jez's breath away.

He took the crystal and placed it on his heart. He shut his eyes and waited. Nothing seemed to happen at first and Jez was starting to get worried. Maybe he needed some magic words but he could not think of any. He opened his eyes and looked into the crystal. Nothing happened. No pictures, nothing. Had he lost his way and along with it the power of the crystal? He knew that Colin's time was running out and started to panic. What could he do? In desperation he shouted "Help me, help me. My friend is dying."

Instinctively he put the crystal to his heart and then it happened. He felt his chest expand rapidly. It grew and grew until it seemed to burst open. Feathers seemed to bulge forward. His legs seemed to shorten and get lighter. He looked down to see that they were of a bird. His face seemed to push itself forward like it was being pulled by the nose. His nose and cheekbones seemed to converge into one. His arms grew heavy carrying the weight of the feathers that had sprung out. He shook them and it still felt good. He looked over the valley like an eagle surveying its domain. For in fact he was an eagle and this was his domain. He looked behind him to make sure that the door of the castle had disappeared and then jumped off the cloud. He could have flown straight off the cloud but the child inside him wanted to jump. He enjoyed the drop immensely the last time he had done it and wanted to do it again. As he dropped the ground seemed to rush up to meet him. He started to flap his wings slowly to slow down his descent and reverse his plummet. As his arms went faster he started to hover and spent a few seconds taking in the view below. He could have stayed there for eternity but something told him to be on his way. He veered to his left and swooped upwards. His whole body lifted and his stomach seemed to end in his chest once more. The feeling of exhilaration was still there but he knew that he had things to do and set about on his way.

Surely the Gate Keeper would know where Colin was for it was his job to know where everything was. Jez climbed higher and higher until he felt himself being pulled by the air around him. He stopped flapping and just let himself float. He had time to survey the view below.

He could not believe how he had managed to forget all this. It was awe inspiring. On and on he flew lapping up the miles. Soon he was at the edge of the valley and its lush green fields. Green turned to yellow as he flew into the desert.

“Not far now” He thought to himself and remembered the huge mountain that he would have to climb to reach the Gate Keeper’s House. As he inspected the desolation of the land below a sudden thought came. In his last conversation with the Gate Keeper he had persuaded him that living in the valley would be a lot better than living where he was at that moment. Maybe he had already moved and Jez was making a wasted journey. The thrill of the flight would compensate for the wasted journey but if the Gate Keeper had moved Jez would have a job to find him again.

His thoughts were interrupted by the sight of the mountain that appeared in front of him. Columns of rock stretched up into the sky above the high cloud line. Halfway up it another layer of cloud seemed to encase it. It was even more majestic than he had remembered it. He felt stronger than the last time that he had visited and so decided to try and fly straight up.

He soared upwards and soon was at the top of the mountain. On landing he took the crystal out of his pocket and put it to his heart. He could feel his chest get smaller and his legs lengthen and get heavier. His arms seemed to get lighter and his face returned to its original shape. He looked towards the large one storey stone cottage with its thatched roof to see if there was any sign of life. He was too far away to see any so he quickly proceeded to the front door.

Jez knocked loudly on the front door shouting “Is there anybody in?” But nobody answered him. Jez turned the handle of the door and to his surprise it opened. Jez entered into the house but to his dismay he found it completely empty. What was he going to do now? He searched for clues but found nothing. He sat on the cold stone floor for a while. He needed to get his breath back but he also needed time to think. He must have sat there for ten minutes but he could not find an answer. His tiredness was gone and he was about to return to the valley when he heard a noise outside.

It was a scratching noise that seemed to come from the rear of the house. Quickly Jez rose and ran to the back door. Opening the door he saw a large goat rubbing its head on one of the few bushes that was lying around.

The goat stopped when it heard the door open, looked at Jez and started to run away.

“No” Jez said softly for he did not want to frighten it anymore, “Please don’t go. I mean you no harm.”

The goat stopped and still at a safe distance said, “What do you want?”

“I am looking for the Gate Keeper.” Jez said, “Have you seen him lately?”

The goat came closer. It was still at a safe distance for it did not trust Jez. “No not for at least ten years,” it answered.

“Do you know where he went?” Jez said hoping that he might have left directions with the goat. It seemed a stupid idea but Jez was clutching at straws and anyway anything could happen in the valley.

“Yes”, the goat answered, “He left me a contact address” the goat said no more and Jez waited for the address but it never came. “What is it”?

“I don’t know if I ought to tell you. I don’t know who you are you could be anybody.”

Jez could feel his temper rising so he kept it in check. He could see the goat’s point of view Jez could have been anybody.

“I am Jez” he said in a friendly manner as he could, “I am looking for him to ask his advice about finding Colin.”

“I know Colin and he has mentioned Jez to me. Jez was a young lad and you are not.”

“Jez was a young lad when he first met Colin but that was a long time ago. I have grown since then.”

“Well I don’t suppose it will do any harm telling you,” the goat said.

“He has made a home close by the Queen of the Inner World.”

Jez thanked the goat and turned to leave. As he walked off the goat called after him. “It will be dark soon. You’ll never find him in the dark.”

Jez stopped for a moment and looked at the sky. Sure enough the goat was right it would be dark soon. As he was thinking the goat said, “Why don’t you stop here tonight?”

Jez thought about it. The goat was right he would be better off staying in the Gate Keepers old house and starting off again in the morning.

He did not trust the goat though. There was something in its manner that did not seem right to Jez. Eventually he decided to stay for he had no choice really.

“Yes” Jez said “Why not?”

Jez, following the goat, walked in the old house and sat on the stone floor. It was the goat who spoke first, “So tell me Jez” in a friendly manner, “What brings you into the valley?”

Unaware that he was being interrogated Jez answered, “Colin called me. I think he needs my help.”

“Why,” the goat said with a false impression of concern, “What ever’s the matter?”

“I don’t know,” Jez answered thinking that the goat did not seem too bad after all, “But he needs the crystal.”

“The crystal What’s that?” The goat asked in a childish manner that Jez found quite endearing.

“The crystal it’s err,” Jez said and took it out from one of his pockets. “It’s this” Jez gave the crystal to the goat who examined it attentively.

“It’s just a rock isn’t it?” the goat said pleading ignorant. He knew about the crystal but he did not know how to use it.

“No” Jez told him and then told him about all its powers. The more he told him the larger the look of incredulity appeared. For some reason this seemed to make Jez start to disbelieve its powers. Maybe he just dreamt them he thought to himself. He soon dismissed that theory though for his flight was more than a dream.

“Show me how it works,” the goat said and Jez detected and hint of demand in his voice.

“I don’t know how it works,” Jez lied. Something inside him told him that he should not trust the goat.

With that the goat got up and said in a false manner, “Well Jez it was nice talking to you. I must be going home now. I’ll probably see you later.”

Jez said goodbye and after the goat had left thought that it would be advisable to lock the doors. After he locked them he settled down. His thoughts dwelled on the goat as he fell to sleep.

Jez seemed to waken up back in Ireland.

He looked about himself and recognised his old home. He felt like he was just a child again. He looked about the place to see who was at home. He heard voices coming from the kitchen. He recognised them as his fathers and Charlotte’s so he went to see what they were saying. For some reason a feeling of fear came upon him as he proceeded to the door. He tried to fight it saying to himself that there was nothing to fear but the feeling stayed with him.

He could make out what they were saying and he knew that they were talking about him.

“He’s a useless brat” his father said angrily. He seemed to have been drinking again.

“Don’t worry he’ll soon be gone,” Charlotte said in an enraged manner.

“The sooner the better for me,” his father said and then went on, “Why can’t he be more like your David?”

“Yes” Charlotte said proudly, “He’s a good lad really.”

“I know” his father went on, “I am proud of him. I look on him like a son you know.”

“I know you do,” Charlotte answered, “It’s just a pity that Jethro is nothing like him.”

“You know, sometimes I am even ashamed to call Jethro my son,” his father said and Jez detected a note of truth in his voice.

Anger rose inside of Jez. He tried to storm into the room to tell his parents what he thought of them but his legs seemed to be stuck on the ground.

Darkness covered Jez and with it his anger disappeared. He seemed to remain motionless for hours, just him and the darkness. He could hear himself breathing deeply and slowly. Light appeared around him once more. He recognised the place again. He remembered the scene vividly for he had seen it before. Countless people were around him just waiting to die. Jez felt hunger. He felt like he was one of the horde around him. He seemed to be getting weaker and weaker with every breath he took. “No Jez” he said to himself, “You survived you made it.” With that the picture became hazy and in time turned to darkness. It was a cold darkness that had occurred previously. Even this seemed to sap at Jez’s strength. His thoughts seemed to be that of self doubt. Maybe his parents did see him as burden. The thoughts became stronger. Did they prefer Davy to him? A whole pool of negative thoughts seemed to take over his mind. The stronger the thoughts got the more of an urge Jez had to take his own life. He got up and proceeded to the door. Voices seemed to be all around him, “Go on Jez do it,” and “You’ve nothing to lose” louder and faster they grew. Other voices came in “Do it, do it.” He found himself at the door. He turned the handle but it was locked. Voices all around him told him to jump of the cliff. He pulled and pulled at the door.

“Turn the key” a voice shouted in a laughing manner. This seemed to set all the voices laughing. Jez turned the key and opened the door. The voices had stopped laughing and were urging him on. He seemed to float out into the cold night air as if he was drawn to the cliff. Onwards he went voices all around him. A new voice came to the fore. Jez recognised it immediately. It was that of his friend Colin, “No Jez, Stop” It shouted in a panic stricken voice.

The other voices tried to drown out Colin’s voice but to no avail.

“Take your life in your hands Jez don’t throw it away.”

Jez was close to the cliff now. He must have been only feet from its edge when he seemed to break the spell.

“Where am I?” He said to himself still not fully awake. He saw the cliff and thought to himself that was a close thing. He turned around to see the goat scampering off into the distance.

“What happened,” he thought to himself, “What is happening to the valley? Why are they trying to kill me? He thought of Justin and how he had tried to trap him in the Tower. He thought of the goat but this seemed to only add to the confusion.

Jez never slept that night but waited instead for the first signs of daylight. He had a few words to say to the Gate Keeper. He was not doing his job properly. This was a different valley to the one he remembered as a child.

He thought to himself that he should have asked Colin where he was. That would have saved a lot of time but in all the confusion he had not time to think. Shafts of light seemed to break through the darkness and Jez knew that he would soon be on his way.

He thought to himself that the goat might have lied to him when he said that the Gate Keeper lived near the Queen. So he reluctantly changed back into a bird and started his journey.

Chapter 5.

As Jez soared into the wilderness his depressive cloud lifted somewhat. The cooling breeze seemed to cool his temper as well as his body. The valley was unusually hot that morning almost to the point of burning. The height he was traveling at cushioned him from it slightly though. Jez swooped to the left hand side just for the thrill of it and nosedived down to the hot desert sand. He pulled himself up at the last minute and he soared into the blue sky once more. He veered to his left and then to his right and after a time his glumness had completely gone. He had passed over the desert but for the life of him could not remember how to get to the tree. Luckily for Jez he did not just possess the eagle's body he had its acute vision as well. In no time at all he saw the great tree standing tall in its own carpet of grass. Jez saw a small unassuming cottage not far from the tree.

"That must be it," he said to himself as he swooped down to the ground. The cottage itself was unusually small. Its white stone walls were only about twenty feet long and there seemed no sign of life within.

"The Gate Keeper can't live here" Jez thought as he approached the cottages little entrance.

Jez knocked loudly but nobody answered him. "Are you in Gate Keeper?" He shouted but still to no avail. Jez walked around the back to look for sign of movement. He was debating on whether to go and ask the tree but was stopped in his tracks by a noise that came from inside the house.

"Right," Jez said angrily, "I've been messed about too much recently." He quickly marched round to the front door and pushed it open.

Inside the building the room was surprisingly well decorated. He looked around for signs of movement but there were none. He thought that somebody must be hiding which was rather stupid in a room as small as the one he was standing in. He looked around and saw a large cupboard to the rear of the room. He quietly walked up to it and raising his right fist back to his chin pulled open the door with his other hand "Right you little Davy, is that you?"

Sure enough cowering in the corner was his step-brother David. Davy meekly looked up at him and said nothing.

"What are you doing in the valley? How did you get back in? And why the hell are you hiding in this cupboard?" Jez asked but all Davy said was. "Ti ... Ti ..."

"What is it Davy, spit it out," Jez could see the distress that Davy was in but after all he had been through he wanted answers and quickly. "What?" he said again, slightly louder for his temper was starting to get the better of him.

"Tiger" Davy shouted and this seemed to bring real fear to his face. Jez could see the terror in his eyes and this calmed his anger immediately. "Breath slowly and deeply Davy and tell me what happened," the anger in his voice was replaced by concern as Jez saw the state that Davy was in.

Davy breathed deeply and when he had calmed down enough said, "There's a tiger loose in the valley."

"What?" Jez said with an air of incredulity and thinking that maybe Davy had gone back on the whiskey.

Davy saw the look of disbelief in Jez's eyes and started to panic.

"Look Jez believe me. There's a tiger in the valley."

"Alright I believe you," Jez said although he did not really, "Tell me, what's he doing in the

valley?”

“I don’t know. I didn’t get close enough to ask him,” Davy said, “I’m not that stupid.”

Jez could see that Davy’s panic was lifting slightly so he said, “Tell me Davy, what happened? Where did you see it?”

“God,” Davy answered, “I don’t know what to say. It sounds stupid no matter which way I say it.”

Jez could imagine after all he had been through so he said, “Go on tell me everything from start to finish.”

“I don’t know where to start. I was on guard duty and all of a sudden total darkness. I seemed to drift around for hours.”

Davy looked at Jez waiting for him to explode in laughter but Jez was still listening attentively so he carried on, “I was just drifting and all of a sudden I fell. I just plummeted until the darkness changed to light. I found myself here in this valley. Weird place isn’t it. Did you know that the animals talk?”

Jez nodded with a smile on his face. Davy thinking that he was laughing at him said, “No, honest they do. I heard them.”

“Yes I know they talk,” Jez answered reassuringly. Jez thought to himself that Davy must not have been there before. This did not add up in Jez’s mind for he had seen him there. Jez looked at Davy seriously and Jez said looking at him hard “Have you been here before?”

Davy could tell that Jez would know if he was lying so he decided to tell the truth, “Well once when I was a little kid I had a dream about this place. You were in it as well.”

“Was that just before I first met you?” Jez asked.

“Yes, that’s right,” Davy stopped for a moment and then said, “Did you have the same dream?”

“Yes,” Jez answered for he did not have the time or inclination to tell him the truth. Maybe he would leave that to Colin for he seemed to have all the answers. “Anyway go on with the story.”

“Well I recognised the valley straight away so I thought I would go and see the Gate Keeper,” Davy answered.

“He’s moved,” Jez interrupted Davy in mid flow.

“Yes,” Davy answered, “I know.”

“You did not have to cross the desert just to find that out, did you?” Jez asked.

“No,” Davy answered, “I was lucky. I stopped and asked this bird and he told me that he had moved.”

“Yes” Jez said proudly, “That was my idea to go and live in the valley.”

“Well” Davy went on, “If he had stayed where he was he might still have been alive.”

“What?” Jez said in surprise, “What are talking about?”

“I was walking to his new house when I heard loud noises. As I got closer I saw him being eaten by the tiger.” Davy said as panic appeared again on his face.

“Why didn’t you help him?” Jez said angrily.

“What” Davy said in surprise, “Against a tiger? I wouldn’t last two seconds.”

Jez looked at him in disgust and Davy seeing this got angry, “What could I do. I’m not a hero.” And then quietly, “I’m not like you.”

“But you were always behind me when I was in trouble.”

“Yes I know but that was because I was following you.”

Jez looked at him in confusion. Davy carried on, “If I was on my own it would have been a different story.”

“Yes but maybe if I had been on my own it would have been a different. Nobody knows until it happens.”

Davy thought a while. It made sense to him, “But what about when I died?” he asked.

This stopped Jez in his tracks looking around he saw a chair which he quickly sat in, “What do you mean you’re dead. What’s going on? What is happening to me?”

Jez went quiet for quite a while. He had a lot on his mind. Nothing added up. He sat there in intense thought while Davy looked on in silence. If Davy was dead then maybe he also had died. He thought back to as much as he could remember, although that was not a lot, but nothing seemed to fit. He remembered the white room and the three figures that were around him. Surly they had something to do with it. Maybe he was just badly hurt. And this was his way of fighting it. After a while Jez looked up at Davy, “What is going on? How do you know you are dead? Maybe it’s all part of a dream. Mind you a nightmare would be a more apt description.”

Davy smiled and said, “No Jez, I am not alive. Believe me. I know.”

“What do you mean you know?” Jez asked getting more confused.

“Well Jez that tells me that you are still alive. For you do not know.”

Jez persisted questioning him on this but Davy would say no more.

“Well” Jez said as if he was inspired, “If you are dead why you are scared of the tiger? After all he can do you no harm.”

“This is no normal tiger Jez” Davy said mysteriously “It does not just take your body it also devours your mind.”

“I thought that when you die then so does your mind,” Jez said and then thought himself foolish as he remembered Taig O’Connor and the others.

“No Jez I’m living Err, dying proof of that” Davy answered with a glint in his eye.

“O.K” Jez said, “So what happened when you died that made you afraid of this tiger?”

“No”, Davy said defensively, “My dying did not make me afraid of the tiger. My dying made me realise that I was a coward.”

“Sorry”? Jez said in bewilderment.

“I heard the shell and dived for cover.”

“Well” Jez said getting impatient, “That’s natural isn’t it?”

“What hiding under the bush blubbering like a little child. Is that natural?” Davy asked looking down on the floor.

“You’ve faced shell fire before. What was different this time?”

“I don’t know. I found I just couldn’t cope like I could before.” Davy answered his head never leaving the floor.

“Maybe you had a bad day, I don’t know. But I do know you’re no coward. I know you too well to think otherwise.” Jez said but he could see his words were falling on deaf ears.

“Look” Jez said, “Maybe I’m explaining myself wrong. Why don’t you help me find Colin he might be able to help?”

“I don’t know Jez” Davy said in a frightened voice, “Maybe that tiger’s still about.”

“You’ll be safe. A tiger would be no match for both of us together,” Jez answered.

“I hope you’re right,” Davy said as he reluctantly followed.

Chapter 6.

As they walked out into the daylight the intense heat hit them straight away.

“Jeeez” Jez said mopping his forehead, “It seems to be getting hotter.” The usual pleasant stroll down the lanes seemed to become more of an ordeal as the heat seemed to sap their very strength. The valley had always been warm and revitalising but something had changed.

“I think we’d better find Colin quickly.” Jez said to Davy who was nervous as he looked around, “All this doesn’t seem to add up.”

They walked on quietly for most of the time as the heat had sapped their very will for conversation. Jez looked and saw that the flowers had started to wilt all around him. The lush greenery was becoming dry and brittle even the hedgerows seemed to be losing some of its foliage. Confusion added to his misery although he knew that his destiny lay in the hands of those three shadowy figures in the white room. A voice inside him told him he must defeat the tiger and things would be back to normal. He could not understand how defeating the tiger would make things right though. He did not fear the tiger although Davy’s statement that it also devoured minds did unnerve him slightly. He dismissed it quickly by thinking that Davy’s panic must have made him say that. His thoughts were interrupted by Davy’s voice saying look and pointing in the distance. It was then that he first saw it in all its majestic splendour. It must have been about a quarter of a mile away and running in the opposite direction. Something inside him told him to run after it. A voice came through saying ‘Have no fear Jez, remember the galloping horse’. As if by magic a new surge of energy took him over and he ran after it.

Nervously Davy followed but even he seemed to get strength from Jez. The tiger had slowed down somewhat. He was unaware that he was being pursued. Jez and Davy soon closed up to it and it was then that the tiger saw them. The heat had subsided slightly and this seemed to add to the strength that Jez had accumulated.

The tiger scowled and said, “Luckily for you I have just eaten.”

As Jez looked at the tiger all fear disappeared, “What are you doing in this valley?” he demanded.

“I am taking it over.” the tiger said with a sneer.

“You have got no chance.”

“Look around man,” the tiger said mockingly, “See how the flowers wilt at my very presence. See how the Sun beats hard on your back. The Edge of Darkness gets ever closer. Soon there will be no more valley. Just sand.”

“Are you trying to tell me that all this is because of you?” It was Jez’s turn to mock, “Don’t make me laugh.”

The tiger sensed that Jez had no fear of him and this unnerved it slightly. Davy had spotted this and this made him braver, “You are not wanted here,” Davy said, “Get out.”

The tiger scowled at Davy and looking at Jez said, “You need me here and you don’t even know it.”

“I don’t need you,” Jez said walking menacingly towards the snarling tiger. In his mind Jez said to himself.

I am the giant in me the giant in me is me.

While others perform I progress while I transform they transgress.

With that Jez seemed to grow. He was a fairly big man before, standing at six feet and weighing in at around fifteen stones, but now he stood over seven feet and he was still growing. Jez stopped growing at eight feet and looking down at the tiger said, “Here kitty, kitty,” in a mocking tone. For now in comparison to Jez the tiger was the size of a normal domestic cat.

The tiger backed off slightly saying, "You can't kill me for if you kill me then you kill yourself." Jez did not understand what the tiger was saying for he moved even further forward. Seeing the desperate predicament that he was in panicked the tiger into springing forward. It had hoped to catch Jez with its sharp claws but Jez was too quick for him. Like lightning he side stepped and caught the tiger by its throat.

"So, I can't harm you then," Jez said as he increased the pressure on its throat. The tiger spluttering for breath clawed madly into thin air but to no avail. Jez held it tightly and felt its life slowly leaving its body. Suddenly Jez felt a twinge in his stomach. He thought that the tiger must have caught him but looking down he saw no wound. The weaker that the tiger was becoming the more painful his stomach got. Very soon the pain was too much for Jez and he released the tiger. The tiger was about to run off but seeing Jez on his knees in agony changed its mind. He circled around and made ready to pounce on him.

Davy, seeing the peril that Jez was in and not thinking of the danger, picked up a rock and hurled it at the tiger. Although it fell short the tiger ran off. Jez stomach was in turmoil and he guessed that he would be going back to the white room soon. Through his pain he told Davy to meet him at the Teacher's and not to worry for he would not be long. With that the valley seemed to disappear and he was once more floating in darkness. His stomach grew worse by the moment. In his mind he called for help but nobody answered. On and on he drifted. He called again but to no avail. What did the tiger mean? Why did Jez need him? He tried to think but the pain numbed his senses. Suddenly he started to spin. Faster and faster he went. His stomach felt like it was being unscrewed and wrenched from his very body. The darkness started to haze and he found himself back in the white room. There was no sign of life around him. His body vibrated with pain. Every movement caused his stomach to churn. He tried to call for help but nothing came out. The haze had cleared somewhat and his ears had picked up some voices that were behind the door. "I'll go and check on Jez," a woman's voice said. Jez had heard her soft Irish brogue before but this time he could understand her. His pain, though quite intolerable, was not as bad as it had been on his first visit to the white room.

The door opened and a slim girl with attractive blue eyes entered in. Her long black hair was tied behind her in a bun. Jez recognised her immediately for she was the girl that he had only ever really loved.

"Mary," he said weakly through his pain, "Is that you or am I still dreaming?"

"Quiet now Jez," she said mopping his sweating brow. He had caught fever and this aggravated his condition no end. "Yes Jez it is me."

"I thought that I would never," he said but she stopped him.

"Don't speak now, you are still too weak," she said still mopping his brown. "I followed you over as soon as I could but you were gone."

The pain started to get worse now and Jez started to vibrate wildly.

The picture in front of him was hazing badly and the last words he heard were "This will help Jez," from Mary's trembling lips.

The pain subsided but with it came darkness. Jez drifted through the cool dark air. It was quite a relief for him after the intense heat that he had been through. His thoughts never left Mary. He remembered how they first met at a local dance. He had just turned sixteen and was quite full of the joys of spring. He was still slightly withdrawn after his lonely childhood but there was something about her that brought out his courage. They got on really well and were soon talking about

marriage. The famine came and everything was turned upside down. They had promised to meet up again but it never materialised. ‘Never mind,’ Jez said to himself, ‘She’s here now. I’ll soon see her again’.

As Jez drifted his thoughts again turned to the tiger. What did it mean when it said that if Jez killed it then he would be killing himself? Why did he want to take over the valley? Why did he want to destroy the valley? So many questions clouded Jez’s mind. Something inside him told him that it was he alone who must find out the answers. As if by some strange force Colin’s face appeared in front of him. He was not smiling but had a look of concern on his face.

“I’m, sorry,” Colin said and Jez could tell that he was genuine, “But as you’ve worked out for yourself I cannot help you.”

“Colin” Jez said with instant recognition, “But I thought that it was you that wanted my help.”

“Look” Colin said with a look of concern, “Time is running out meet me at the Teachers cave but if I was you I would see what’s in the castle. It might be helpful.”

With that Colin’s face disappeared and Jez was left in total darkness. Reluctantly Jez floated on. He knew he was drifting towards the castle but with everything seemingly against him he thought he was wasting his time. Something kept reoccurring in his mind. It was something that Taig O’Connor had said. He had said that it was Jez’s valley. What could he have meant? He also said that Colin needed his help yet in reality it was Jez that needed Colin’s help. He recalled the white room and the distress that Mary was in. Suddenly realisation hit him square on the jaw. He was in a bad way. He could be dying. Things seemed to get clearer now with that revelation. The stomach pains meant that he must have been badly wounded. But what of the tiger? What was it doing in his valley as Taig had said?

He recalled Mary’s last words to him “This was help Jez” She must have given him something to numb the pain. As if by some way of encouragement a voice inside him said, “Nearly there Jez,” this seemed to urge him on in his thoughts. She must have given him a pain killer.... something like.... like morphine.

Jez knew that morphine was highly addictive yet he also knew that he needed it to help him. Without the morphine he could surely die.

Jez went quiet for a while. This realisation would have knocked him off his feet. If he had been standing that is. The tiger had said that he was needed in the valley.

His valley. The valley must be his body. ‘No’ he interrupted his thought train, ‘My body’s lying in that room. It must be my mind’.

This sudden realisation seemed to bring the floating castle into view. All Jez’s thoughts stopped at this sight and he approached the castle door with a great deal of hope. He pulled the door open and entered in with a strong gait. He purposefully strolled towards the bottom of the stone stairs and started his ascent. As before his spirit seemed to lift with every step that he took. At the top he saw the table and chair and turned to his right. He saw the door at the end of the dimly lit corridor and proceeded towards it.

He got about half way when a voice stopped him in his tracks. It was a woman’s voice and it came from a door to the left of him. She said, “Jez is that you?” he vaguely recognised it but he could not put a name to it. Jez turned to his left and started to proceed to the door. A voice inside him said, “No. Don’t go through the door” but curiosity made Jez dismiss it. That was the first time that he had not listened to the voice. As Jez put his hand on the knob the voice inside him said with an air of resignation, “Oh well, be careful then.”

Jez opened the door and walked into a dimly lit room. It was about ten foot square with bare stone walls around it. The room itself was bare with the exception of a candle and an adjacent chair. On the chair was a woman in her early thirties with light brown hair and deep green eyes. She was gently rocking to and fro and seemed to be singing a song that Jez had not heard for many a year.

I'm a rambler I'm a gambler I'm a long way from home

So if you don't like me then leave me alone.

With that Jez joined in.....

I'll eat when I'm hungry and I'll drink when I'm dry

And if the moonshine don't kill me I'll live till I die.

Jez looked at the gently rocking figure and with tearful eyes said

"Mam, is that you?"

"Do you really need to ask?" The figure answered looking at Jez's tear stained face.

The voice inside him told him to be careful but Jez was not listening. Approaching closer he said,

"Why did you leave me, Mum?" almost crying.

"I was called to a better place, Jez." she answered softly.

"But I was so young. It was not fair," he answered wiping his nose for it had started to run.

"I know darling. But when you are called you have to go." she answered and stopped rocking the chair.

"I have so many things to talk about," Jez said but was stopped at that point.

"We have plenty of time to talk Jez. You must come with me." she answered and Jez detected a change in her tone. This change started a doubt in his mind which the voice inside him increased by saying, "Don't be fooled Jez your time is not yet".

"No" Jez said softly but firmly, "It is not my time yet."

"Come and make a home with me and your father, Charlotte and Davy are their too. We are all one happy family, join us," she said. Jez detected a hint of desperation in her voice.

"No" he said again, "It is not my time yet."

"It is your time if you want it to be Jez," she answered and alarm bells started to ring in Jez's mind.

"Who are you?" he demanded to know.

"You know who I am," she answered in a tone that was meant to sound like Jez had hurt her feelings.

"The only thing I know is that you are not my mother," Jez said, backing off slightly.

"Come with me Jez, trust in me," she said getting really desperate.

"Trust you, why should I trust in you? You said that you were with Davy and yet he was in the valley. First you tell me that you have to come when you are called and then you say that you can come when you want. You are full of lies." Jez said backing off even more. He was at the door when he saw her disappear.

Jez pulled open the door and stepped through it into the dimly lit corridor.

"That was close," he said to himself and the voice inside him agreed.

Jez took a few moments to compose himself before he proceeded to the door that he was going to go to in the first place.

Opening the door he went in. The room was well lit and he walked past the bulging book shelves to the table in the middle, Jez saw a book on the table. It was the same one as before. The one with Jez's Return to the Valley as its title.

Opening the Book he found a six line verse that read.....

The questions may be many but the answers only few
Put the crystal on a high point for it knows just what to do
The tiger will be difficult for he's an animal you can't kill
Take the stone in front of you it will hold Kitty against his will
The goats the biggest threat against which you'll have to vie
For if the beast defeats you then you will surely die.

In front of the book was a small yellowish brown stone. It had a dark oval stripe on its edge and inside the stripe was a thinner oval stripe but this was the same colour as the rest of the stone. To all intents and purposes it looked like an eye. A Tiger's Eye.

Chapter 7.

Jez picked up the stone and examined it 'That's an unusual stone' He thought to himself and put it in his pocket next to his crystal. The poem intrigued him for according to it the tiger was not responsible for the valley's dramatic climate change. That must be something different. Maybe he had caught the fever. He had seen it take his father's life away and it worried him. He knew that it must be his first job after he had found Colin.

"Oh well," Jez said making his way to the door, "I suppose I'd better find him," Jez knew that Colin was at the Teacher's cave and so he made his way to the door that was at the end of the corridor to his right. When he got to the door and stepped onto the cloud he started to transform immediately. His legs tightened and his chest expanded to almost bursting point. His arms were laden with feathers once more and his face transformed to that of an eagle. Jez took off and with little effort floated down into the valley. He fell to about twenty feet above ground level and scanned the view below. He knew that the cave would be difficult to find that was why he flew in low. A lot of the fields near to the Edge of Darkness had been swallowed by the desert sands. The whole valley seemed to be getting smaller. He was losing the valley field by field. The once lush green valley was drying quickly and most of the grass was now light brown.

Jez saw the Tower and thought that it would be ideal to put the crystal on. He knew the teachers cave was nearby and soon he had it in his sight. Jez swooped down and landed a few feet away from the cave entrance. After transforming back he made his way to the entrance. He heard voices inside and recognised them as Davy's and the wolf's

"Can I come in?" He shouted through the entrance.

"Yes come in Jez," came the reply. It sounded like it was the Teachers voice.

Jez entered in and walked past the first room and into the second it was there that he saw Davy and the wolf sitting down.

"Hello Jez" The wolf said with a warm smile, it looked more like a snarl but that was the closest thing that the wolf could get to a smile.

"All right Jez" Davy said turning around.

Jez returned the greetings and asked where Colin was.

"He shouldn't be too long, why don't you sit down and take the weight off your feet.

Jez sat down and waited. Jez was still trying to add everything up in his mind and so he turned to the wolf and said "Tell me Teacher. This is my valley isn't it?"

Jez could see the look of surprise on the Teachers face as he answered him, "Yes, when did you find that out?"

"Not long ago. It just came to me." Jez answered and then went on "So tell me if this is my valley

then what are the animals doing in it?"

"Each has a purpose of its own," the wolf said vaguely.

"What is your purpose?" Jez asked for he was persistent.

"I am the Teacher. I am your Teacher,"

"My Teacher?"

"Yes. Over your lifetimes you have amassed a great deal of knowledge. Some of it is kept in the castle and the rest is all around you. It is my job to process it for you. It is your knowledge I have. It is all inside you. I just sort it out for you. I suppose I'm more like a Library attendant." The wolf answered and Jez thought that he might be a lot more help than he had given him credit for.

"What about the other animals? Justin for instance." Jez asked thinking that he might be getting somewhere.

"Well, Justin is well I suppose he is the child in you." the wolf answered scratching his chin as if he was in deep thought.

"If he's the child in me then why did he mean to kill me?" Jez asked getting slightly confused.

"No, he never tried to kill you. He just wanted to slow you down a little." the wolf answered half heatedly.

"What?" Jez exclaimed, "Slow me down a little, whatever for?"

"Justin is just happy to play all day. He was afraid of you growing up for he thought that you would lose the child in you. He only trapped you in the Tower to try and keep you prisoner. To stop you growing up if you like." the wolf answered and it made sense to Jez except one thing.

"What about the wishing well. He meant to throw me down there." Jez answered to a surprised wolf.

"Down the wishing well, when was that?"

"On my first visit to the valley," Jez replied and waited for the wolf's answer.

"Who knows the mind of a child Jez? The important thing is that while the valley is at one with nature then you are at one with yourself."

"But where does the tiger come in? He said that he could destroy the valley." Jez asked again moving in his chair slightly.

"Yes he can," the wolf said and Jez detected a note of fear in the wolf's voice.

"You mean that he is responsible for the changes in the climate then." Jez said in surprise. He was thinking that maybe he ought to change his strategy.

"No he is not responsible for the climate changes, I am afraid that you have caught the fever. The tiger is systematically killing all the creatures in the valley." the wolf answered and looking straight at Jez said, "You are in grave danger."

Jez had already guessed that but did not realise the full extent and so said, "What happens if he kills all the animals?"

The wolf went quiet for a while. When he finally spoke he said, "Then he has the valley. That means as you have probably guessed that he controls your mind. Virtually every thought you have will be about the tiger." Jez stopped him there saying.

"By the tiger you mean morphine don't you?"

"Yes," the wolf said quietly and silence took hold of the room.

"Then I must defeat the tiger first." Jez said after a while.

"No," the wolf said, you must defeat the fever first. You have a bad stomach wound but nobody can operate while you have the fever. It is too dangerous."

“What about the goat?” Jez said.

“The goat is the most deadly of your adversaries. You have to leave him till the end” the wolf said mysteriously.

“Why is he so deadly surely he is just a goat?” Jez said and was taken aback by the wolf’s reaction.

“No” the wolf said angrily, “Never underestimate any of your foes. First things first sort out the fever and the tiger and then you can sort out the goat.”

Jez changed the subject back onto the tiger saying, “So how many animals has the tiger killed?”

“A few birds at present but he killed the Gate Keeper. He is a very important person in the balance of the valley.”

“He is?” Jez said as a question.

“Yes, he watches over it and makes sure everything is in harmony.”

Jez thought for a while before he said, “Can I replace him?”

“Yes. It is your valley.”

Jez looked over at Davy, who had been sitting quietly during the conversation, “Then I would like Davy to be my Gate Keeper.”

Davy was taken by surprise and said, “Me be the Gate Keeper but why?”

“I would like somebody I could rely on,” Jez replied with a smile.

“But I don’t think I would be brave enough,” Davy replied sadly looking at the ground.

“Well you stood up to the tiger and saved my life,”

“I was just doing what needed to be done,” Davy answered in a bashful manner. The thoughts of his past actions had long since gone.

“That’s all anybody can do,”

Davy looked at the wolf and said, “What does it involve?”

“You are the Magic Eye so to speak you spent a lot of time with the Gate Keeper you’ll soon pick it up.”

Jez spoke, “So the Gate Keeper is the Magic Eye I always thought that he only controlled it.”

“The information is always within you. The Gate Keeper monitors its release. It is up to him to decide how much you can cope with.” the wolf answered. This confused Jez slightly, “So if that’s the case why did I have to go and see him about the Magic Eye?”

“You see” the wolf answered, “He was not doing his job properly. He had hid himself on the Edge of Darkness. Your real job was to bring him back to the valley.”

“But why all of the lies?” Jez asked. His mind was in total confusion. First of all he thought that he had worked it all out and then something new came up to taunt him.

“No,” the wolf said seriously, “They were not lies Jez. You were just a child with a child’s imagination. If we’d told you the full truth then I’m afraid your mind could not cope with it.”

“But I did not know about him hiding himself. What if the thought had not occurred to me that he should move to the valley? It was only an afterthought.”

“That was a chance that we had to take. Listen to the voice inside you for it will not lead you astray,” the wolf answered and pulled a book from the shelf nearest him.

“What are you doing?” Jez asked looking at him.

“I expect that you wanted to know about the strange stone that you were given in the castle,” the wolf said smiling.

Jez was about to ask how he know about the stone but instead said, “Yes”

Jez took it out of his pocket and handed it over to the wolf. The wolf examined it carefully and

opening the book looked through some of the pictures that were in it.

“Oh” he exclaimed, “Tiger’s Eye Stone.”

“The Tiger’s Eye Stone,” Jez said, “What does it do?”

“It gives you strength Jez,” the wolf answered “The strength of a tiger.”

“How?” Jez asked looking at the stone, “Surely it’s just a rock.”

“No Jez,” the wolf said giving it back to him, “It is more than just a rock look after it and when you need it you will know just what to do.”

“I’ve so many questions to ask,” Jez started saying but a voice behind him said, “It is now time for action Jez. You can find the answers to all your questions later.”

Chapter 8.

Jez quickly turned to where the voice was coming from. He recognised it as Colin’s immediately. Colin looked tiny to Jez’s adult eyes but he knew his beaming smile anywhere.

“Colin” Jez said getting out of his chair and warmly shaking his hand, “It’s been a long time.”

“Yes Jez almost a life time. It’s just a pity we had to meet under these circumstances,” Colin answered and Jez detected a note of sadness in his voice.

“I’ve got so many things to say,” Jez said, “I just don’t know where to begin,” it was almost as if Jez was that child again.

“First things first,” Colin said, “There’s a little matter of the fever to settle.”

“Yes” Jez said taking the crystal from his pocket, “I think I’m ready.”

“Do you know what to do?” Colin asked him.

“I think so.”

“Good” Colin said, “I’m sorry I can’t help you make your decisions. But what I can do is tell you if they are correct.”

“That’s good enough for me, I’m supposed to put the crystal on the high point. I was thinking about putting it on top of that old Tower nearby.”

“That’s a good idea. It should cover the valley from there. It’s not far now and as you might have guessed we are running out of time.”

“I had better make tracks then,” Jez said and made his way to the door.

“Do you want me to help?” Davy asked from the chair and Jez looked at Colin who said “Yes that’s a good idea. After all you are the new Gate Keeper now. I can come as well if you want.”

Jez was wondering how Colin knew that Davy was the new Gate Keeper but said nothing. He had plenty of troubles on his mind to worry about that.

“Very well” Jez said “Let’s get started then”

Colin, Davy and Jez walked outside into the burning hot Sun. Jez saw the concern in Colin’s face and knew that it would be a close thing. The desert had captured more fields and encroached almost to the wolf’s cave. Half the valley at least was now under a sandy carpet. The rest of the valley saw sparse grass that was almost burned by the heat. The intense heat sapped Jez and Davy of virtually all their strength and it became hard work just walking.

They passed two dead birds on their way to the Tower. Seeing these birds brought a slight twinge of pain to Jez’s stomach. He hoped that it would not get worse for he had a lot to do if he ever wanted to see Mary again. The hedgerows on either side of them were almost skeletal and they could see the sparse fields behind them. The flowers had long died and the silence of the birds was unnerving.

Sweat seemed to pour from all over Jez's and Davy's bodies yet Colin was unaffected. They went around a curve to the left and it was there that Jez saw it. First of all he saw a clump of fur and bone. He approached it cautiously for he had half guessed who it might be. There was not a lot left of it but Jez knew that it was Justin. A new surge of pain attacked Jez's stomach but he fought it and kept it under control.

Through his pain and anger he looked at Colin and said, "That tiger's got a lot to answer for."

"One job at a time Jez, don't let the tiger distract you from your job in hand."

"I thought Justin would have been too clever to get caught," Davy said. "He was a very cunning animal."

"Who knows Davy" Colin said, "Maybe he was curious. He might have feared men but he would never have seen a tiger before. Maybe he thought it was a big version of Kim."

With Colin's last sentence inspiration hit Jez, "Kim maybe she can help." Jez went silent for a moment before he said, "Oh, I forgot she left the valley."

"She's back now Jez," Colin answered.

"She's back," Jez said in surprise, "However did she manage that?"

"When she helped you in the desert she helped herself back into the valley. She proved that she could live in harmony with the other animals."

"Do you know where she is now?" Jez asked Colin but he shook his head. The conversation stopped as they approached the large derelict Tower.

"Well" Jez said, "Let's see what the crystal can do."

The three figures scrambled through the mass of masonry that was strewn across the floor. They entered the ground floor and Jez saw the stones that he had placed as steps.

"I think we'll have to strengthen that staircase." Jez said looking at the precariously stacked stones, "Will you give me a hand Davy. It will be light work between the two of us."

"Yes alright Jez" Davy answered, "Mind you it looks like hard work in all this heat."

They both walked out into the heat and picked up the large square stone that was nearest to them. Lifting it up they struggled to carry it inside and placed it on the floor next to the two that were already there. Jez pushed the stone that was on top of the existing two back against the wall.

"Another two should do it I think Davy." He said mopping the sweat from his forehead.

"I hope so, this is too much like hard work."

They both walked out into the blistering heat once more. The nearest stone to them was a lot further away than the last one.

"Isn't that typical" Jez said with an air of resignation and Davy agreed.

They both walked to the stone and it took almost all their strength just to lift it. They got about half way when Jez had to drop it for it was getting too heavy for him.

The noise sent Colin running out from the coolness of the Tower. "Jez, Davy are you alright?" he asked in panic.

"Yes we're alright Colin. It just got a bit too heavy that's all," Jez answered rather sheepishly.

"Let me give you a hand," Colin said walking towards Jez and Davy.

"No you're alright Colin. We'll manage this" Jez said and he and Davy crouched down and lifted the large stone once more. It was heavy and it was a struggle but eventually they made it into the Tower. They placed the stone on top of the three that were on the floor and next to the one that Jez had pushed against the wall.

Jez and Davy stopped for breath but only for a moment.

“Last one Davy,” Jez said looking at Davy.

“I hope so Jez. I don’t think that I can manage any after that.” Davy answered puffing and blowing. They both walked outside into the sweltering heat once more. They looked for the nearest stone and to their dismay it was a good ten yards away.

“I think we’ll do it in two goes,” Jez said to Davy almost as an order.

“Yes I think you’re right Jez. It’s becoming a bit of an ordeal now.”

“Don’t I know it, well let’s crack on hopefully it will be the last one.”

Both Davy and Jez were tired and even the walk to the stones seemed to be sapping their fast going strength.

They both crouched down and lifted the stone. It seemed to take all their strength just to lift it.

“Is it me or are these stones getting heavier?” Davy asked as they struggled to carry it to the Tower.

“I think it’s the stones Davy lad unless I’m getting weaker as well,” Jez answered.

They got about half way when Jez asked Davy if he thought they could manage to take it the rest of the way.

“We’ll give it a try but if you feel like dropping it don’t forget to tell me,” Davy answered.

They struggled on, both of their legs were starting to buckle but they eventually made it. It was with great relief that Jez and Davy put the last stone on the pile.

“Hang on a minute” Jez said putting his hand out to stop Davy from climbing onto the first stone.

“Get your breath first. There’s still quite a climb.”

After a few moments Jez felt ready to make the ascent. He climbed up the steps that he had just made and crawled through the hole in the ceiling that the steps led to. It was a lot easier to crawl through now as the extra stones had given the stair case more height. Once Jez had got through he held out his hand and helped Davy climb through. Davy climbed through and they both found themselves on the first floor. Jez saw the ladder and climbed up it. He was quickly followed by Davy and soon they were at the top floor.

“I think we are going to have to get on the roof to place the crystal,” Jez said to Davy who was wiping the copious amounts of sweat that was on his body.

“Yes” he answered, “But how? There is no ladder here.”

Jez thought a while. The soaring heat that had sapped most of his body now seemed to be sapping his mind. A voice inside him spoke, “Why not pull the ladder up and use that?” Jez looked at Davy and said “We’ll use the other ladder.”

Jez went to the trap door and started to pull at the ladder. The ladder seemed to be heavy and he called Davy to give him a hand. Together they pulled it up but it still seemed like hard work. Jez leaned the ladder against the wall underneath the trap door that lead to the roof. He looked at Davy and said, “Here goes. Keep a good hold on the ladder Davy.”

He started his climb. His legs seemed to get heavier the higher he rose. Tiredness was taking a firm hold on him but he knew that if he stopped then that would be the end of it. Jez struggled on and eventually he reached the top. Jez pushed at the trap door but it would not move. Jez breathed deeply and gathered what little strength he had left. He gave the door an almighty push and it moved slightly but not enough.

“I don’t need this,” Jez said aloud.

“What’s the matter Jez” Davy said from the bottom of the ladder.

“I can’t move the trap door” Jez answered in between clenching his teeth.

“Is it locked? Davy asked, still holding the ladder.

“No, I moved it slight but it’s too heavy for me. I think the Sun has sapped my strength.” Jez said looking down at Davy.

“Do you want me to come up and give you a hand,” Davy answered back.

“No thanks Davy there is not enough room for both of us on the ladder.”

“Try using your head.”

“This is not the time to get funny,” Jez said getting angry.

“No, put your head to the door and climb up the ladder further. That should lift the door enough to get your hands fully behind it,” Davy answered and Jez thought that he would give it a try.

Jez put his head against the trap door and started to push with it. The door moved slightly and this encouraged him to climb a step. The door was quite open now as he put his hands under it and gave it a final heave.

The door flung open and with it came the heat. The heat almost knocked Jez back down the ladder but he kept his hold. Jez climbed onto the top of the ladder and took in the view. The valley had now shrunk to such an extent that there was only a few fields now that had not turned to desert. Even these were starting to show signs of decline.

Realising his shortage of time he looked for somewhere to place that crystal. In the centre of the roof there seemed to be a stand that looked like it had been made just for it. Jez placed the crystal on it and turned to go.

Chapter 9.

Jez shut the trap door behind him and quickly scrambled down the ladder. He did not know what the crystal would do or how long it would take to do it. They put the ladder down the next trap door and Jez followed by Davy scrambled down. They lowered themselves onto the stones below and rushed to the hot outside. Colin was waiting there and they followed him to a safe distance.

“You may as well sit here and rest,” Colin said pointing to the floor.

“What about the tiger?” Jez asked for he was in a hurry.

“The tiger will keep, believe me Jez this is a sight worth watching.”

They all sat down and looked up at the Tower. They could not see the crystal as it was hidden by the top of the Tower.

“How long will it take?” Davy asked impatiently looking at the top of the Tower.

“Not long now Davy,” Colin answered, “Not long at all.”

The red hot Sun beat down on their backs and another field disappeared under a blanket of sand.

“What’s it doing?” Jez said for he was just as impatient as Davy.

“It’s recharging itself through the Sun”

“What for?” Jez said but a glow on top of the ladder made him stop talking.

“Look” Colin said excitedly. “It’s working Jez. I’ve only heard about this. I’ve never seen it before.”

“What” Jez exclaimed he was about to say ‘You mean we did all this and you did not know if it would work.’ but the glow on top of the Tower got brighter. Colin was silent. He was too busy watching the top of the Tower. It seemed to have captured all of his imagination.

“Nearly there Jez” he said after a while. His excitement was that of a child waiting in anticipation for a present, “Not long now Jez” he continued. The glow was even brighter. Jez and Davy found it hard to look at it but Colin sat there almost spellbound, and then it happened. The glow started to pulsate. It was almost like a heart beat that seemed to spray gold into the air.

Excitement captured Colin and seemed to spread to both Jez and Davy.

“It’s coming Jez,” Colin spluttered out. “It’s coming.”

Suddenly the crystal pulsated even faster. With every beat it threw out a rainbow.

“Look at that,” Davy said as another rainbow flew over the top of the Tower.

Jez said nothing but Colin said almost in a frenzy, “It gets better Davy, much better.”

Another rainbow shot out. They seemed to start from the top of the Tower and end all over the valley. There must have been at least forty of them.

“Look at that,” it was Jez’s turn to speak, “What a sight.”

“There’s more to come Jez, much more.”

As if on cue from where the rainbows had landed shafts of gold shot up into the hazy blistering sky.

“Look Jez,” Colin exclaimed, “There is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.”

The shafts seemed to cut through the haze and head up to whatever was above, and then patches of bluey purple seemed to appear where the gold had penetrated the haze. The patches grew rapidly like a pen on blotting paper and soon the whole sky was one mass of colour.

Below them the three figures just sat and stared into the sky. Not a word was spoken between them for what could they say. Nothing like it had ever been seen before. The colour worked its way down and soon it was at ground level. Everywhere they looked they saw it. It seemed to engulf everything that was around it; Davy seemed to get a bit edgy, so Colin said to him, “Relax Davy. It will do you no harm. In fact it can only do you good.”

The colour completely covered them and Jez was a bit wary.

Once he felt how relaxing it was though he soon calmed down. The colour seemed to cover them for only a few seconds but in that time Jez and Davy had both regained their strength.

The colour had started to lift all around them and soon they were watching the colour disappear into the dots that it had first started from. The dots disappeared and were quickly followed by the rainbows. Soon even the pulsating crystal had stopped.

It was Davy who spoke first “That was amazing. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“Yes but did it do any good?” Jez asked for everything seemed to be going against him and he was getting a little pessimistic.

“Give it time” Colin said trying to reassure him.

The valley seemed to be cooling down slightly which was a good sign. Jez was about to get up to carry on with his quest for the tiger but Colin stopped him.” Not yet Jez, let the energies build up it won’t be long now.”

With much reluctance Jez remained sitting down. The valley was cooling down a lot quicker and soon it was quite pleasant once more. Davy looked around him and saw that the grass was turned back to its original colour. He told Colin who answered, “See Jez it will soon be back to normal.”

The hedgerows seemed to be regaining their vivid green and yellow colours and even the flowers seemed to be fighting their way through. The biggest surprise was the ebbing of the sand from the fields. They saw field after field change back into lush green pasture. Soon everywhere they looked was green.

“What about the Edge of Darkness?” Jez said looking at Colin, “Will that be green as well?”

“No, sorry Jez” Colin answered, “The crystal is not that powerful. Besides you need the Edge of Darkness as much as you need the valley.”

“I do?” Jez said in surprise “Why is that?”

“You need one to counteract the other,” Colin answered and took out his pipe.

“So you still have that pipe then Colin” Jez said looking at Colin with a snigger.

“Yes,” Colin answered indifferent to Jez’s slight, “I find it helps me think. You ought to try it,” and offered it to Jez with a beaming smile.

“No thanks Colin,” Jez said putting his hand up, “Tell me about the Edge of Darkness and the valley. Is it like good and evil?”

“Well I suppose you could define it like that. I like to look at it like positive and negative, though,” Colin answered as he filled his pipe.

“Positive and negative?” Jez said as a question and not as a statement.

“Yes” Colin answered “Things that will do you good and things that will do you harm.”

Jez looked a little nervous so Colin continued “Don’t worry Jez, they can only do you harm if you allow them to.

Jez thought a while as Colin lit his pipe. He looked at Colin and said.

“So tell me Colin why did the Gate Keeper hide in the Edge of Darkness?”

“Good question Jez,” Colin said, “Who knows.” Colin turned to Davy and said, “You were with him a long time Davy, what do you think?”

“I don’t know. He seemed to have terrible mood swings. I can remember that” Davy answered. Colin offered him his pipe. Reluctantly Davy accepted it.

“That would be his environment,” Colin answered, “All that negativity around him must rub off on him sometimes.”

“This is a strange brand Colin what do you call it?” Davy said after he had taken a drag on the pipe.

“Oh that” Colin answered with a smile “It’s a special herb from the other side of the valley. It’s not called anything in particular.”

“Oh right” Davy answered, “It’s not bad at all it seems to relax me more than the other brands of tobacco.”

“Anyway” Davy said as an afterthought “I don’t think he believed in himself. That is probably why he hid away.”

Colin looked at Jez and said, “Does that sound familiar?”

Jez thought for a moment. Was Colin making fun at his expense? He looked into his eyes and saw that he was not. The more Jez thought about it the more it made sense. He himself virtually hid away, shielded from the world around him, in negative thoughts.

“You mean my destiny was tied up with his,” Jez said in a surprise tone and looking at Davy said, “Any of that bacca going spare?”

Davy passed Jez the pipe and he drew heavily on it. As he did so Colin said, “Yes I suppose you’re right Jez. Mind you thinking about it he was your Gate Keeper.”

“This tobacco has a funny taste has it gone off?” Jez said almost coughing.

“No that’s how it’s supposed to taste,” Colin answered and seeing that the pipe was empty offered to fill it once more.

Jez passed the pipe to Colin and lay back to let the herb do its work. “I feel funny” he said laughing. For some reason this set Davy laughing. They looked at Colin and seeing a bemused look on his face sent them into hysterics. Jez had forgotten what it was like to laugh but now he seemed to be making up for it.

“Yes” Jez said looking at Davy, “It is relaxing isn’t it.”

“A bit like whiskey really” David said and Jez gave him a confused look “Yes whiskey Jez. It relaxes me anyway. Sometimes I’m that relaxed I fall over” Davy finished and started laughing

again.

“This stuff” Jez said looking at Colin, “Its not addictive is it?”

“Jez” Colin said with an air of disappointment, “Don’t you think that one tiger is enough for any valley?”

Colin had refilled the pipe and after he had lit it passed it back to Davy. Davy took a long drag on it and let the smoke fill his lungs. After he had exhaled he said, “That’s not bad that, I could get quite used to it.”

“What about the tiger?” Jez said suddenly, “Shouldn’t we be looking for him?”

“It’s getting dark now Jez. Best leave it until morning,” Davy said in a relaxed manner.

“I think he is right Jez,” Colin said, “You’ll have to work out what to do with him anyway.”

“With the crystal’s power that won’t be a problem,” Jez said and seeing Colin’s face went on, “I can use the crystal can’t I Colin?”

“I think its better that you leave it where it is.” Colin answered. “At least until the valley is fully healed.”

“Oh,” Jez said, “I was hoping that I could use it.” He had an air of disappointment in his voice.

“You should be alright Jez,” Colin said as if to reassure him” You still have the stone.”

“Have some more of this,” Davy said passing the pipe to Jez, “It will cheer you up.”

Jez smoked the pipe and took in its effect, “Yes,” he said, “It will keep until morning.”

They sat around smoking and talking and soon it was twilight.

Chapter 10.

As twilight fell they were well relaxed and happy in each other’s company. Jez had forgotten all his troubles or at least put them off for another day. He knew he had conquered the fever and the valley was nearly back to normal. He had wanted to go after the tiger but had seen the sense in what Davy and Colin had said. His mind drifted back to Mary and his longing to see her again. A smile came over his face as he remembered how they used to be.

“Are you alright Jez” Colin said, “You look a little dazed.”

“Yes fine Colin,” Jez answered, “I’m just day dreaming. Have you anymore of that stuff?”

“No I’m afraid it’s all gone,” Colin answered and Jez sighed suddenly a shiver came over Jez’s body. He shook himself and Colin asked him what the matter was.

“I don’t know,” Jez answered, “A shiver just came over me.”

“Oh” Colin said indifferently, “The spirit is upon you.”

“What,” Jez exclaimed in surprise, “The spirit. What’s that?”

“It could be souls in transit a bit like Davy or it could even be a past life catching up on you” Colin answered as if it was just a matter of fact event.

“Are you sure it’s not that stuff I’ve been smoking?” Jez said looking at Colin seriously for he thought that he was joking.

“Well in a way it is I suppose,” Colin answered, “For it makes you relax and when you are relaxed you let your spiritual side come through more.”

“Spiritual side?” Jez thought for a moment, “Oh yes I remember you mentioning that before.”

“Would you like to see some of them?” Colin asked looking both at Davy and Jez.

Reluctantly they agreed and so Colin told them to relax and clear their minds of any thought. Once they had done that he told them to look at each other.

With slight apprehension Jez looked into Davy’s face. As he looked Davy’s face and shoulders

seemed to disappear to be left by a silhouette. His own face seemed to be contorting into different shapes. First of all he felt his cheekbones get bigger and his chin seemed to be pulled down. The darkness on Davy's face disappeared and Jez saw a pair of Brown eyes make its way through. Davy's forehead had lowered slightly and his nose had grown.

"That's amazing," Jez said "What do you see on my face Davy?"

"I see a huge head with a large mustache," Davy answered quietly trying not to concentrate. Time flew by and soon tiredness crept over Jez. He found himself back in the white room.

"The fever has subsided," the older man said.

"Yes," the younger man answered, "Now we should make some progress."

The younger man turning to Mary said, "Has there been any change nurse?"

"His heart beat was very erratic earlier," Mary answered, "But it has stabilised now."

"Good, good," the younger man replied.

Jez felt himself being drawn back into the darkness once more. The figures and the white room disappeared to be replaced by total darkness. Morning came and with it a revitalized Jez. As he woke he saw that Colin and Davy were already up.

"Morning Jez," Colin said, "Sleep well?"

"Yes Colin," Jez answered, "Like a log so where do you think the best place to find Kim would be?"

"You could always look behind you," a voice behind him said. Jez turned and saw Kim coming from behind the hedgerow.

Colin said, "I thought I'd save a bit of time by sending the birds out to find her."

"So Jez," Kim said in a friendly manner, "It's been a long time. Colin said you need my help so I came straight away."

"Oh thanks Kim," Jez said. He was slightly suspicious for he remembered their first encounter. She must have detected this for she said "Don't worry Jez. I've changed besides I think it's in everybody's interest that the tiger is brought under control."

Jez could see the logic in this and besides he had nothing to lose. He knew he could not fight the tiger on his own for he had lost the use of the crystal. He had not worked out how he would do it yet. He had the Tigers Eye Stone but did not know how to use it.

"Yes you're right Kim," Jez said, "Mind you I don't know where to begin."

"Couldn't you set a trap and kill him? Kim asked.

"No I can't kill him." Jez answered, "For if I kill him I kill myself."

"Sorry" Kim said in surprise.

"It's a long story," Colin said. "If the tiger dies then so does Jez. Jez needs to trap it though because it is killing all the animals in the valley.

"What about the Tower Jez?" Davy spoke up, "That looked like it used to be a prison."

"Yes", Jez said thinking about it, "That would be ideal, mind you how are we going to get the tiger to go to the Tower?"

"Leave that to me" Kim said pondering a while, "I think I might know the answer."

"You do?" Jez said still quite suspicious, "Will you need our help?"

"No, well not to get him to the Tower anyway. Once he's in the Tower though it's up to you to trap him. Don't forget though he has a good sense of smell and can smell a human from quite a distance," Kim answered.

"Yes" Colin said, "But not a leprechaun though."

"I am afraid he can Colin," Kim answered, "For I can and if I can then that means he can."

They found themselves in a bit of a dilemma for somebody would have to be in the Tower to close the trap door and take the ladder away. It was Davy who spoke first, "Maybe if we tied the ladder to the trap door when it was pulled away then the trap door would shut automatically."

Jez thought for a moment and said, "Yes that would work, but someone would still have to be in the Tower."

Davy replied, "Not necessarily. You would just have to run in and pull it. You could be in and out before the tiger even blinked."

It was Kim's turn to speak, "If you had another rope from the bottom of the ladder down to the ground floor, that would be even easier wouldn't it?"

"That's a good idea," Jez answered, "But the tiger would see the rope hanging through the trap door."

"Maybe if you put the rope through one of the windows on the first floor it would not be as noticeable," Davy said.

"That's not a bad idea at all Davy," Jez answered, "You wouldn't even have to go into the Tower either."

"Why don't you go and try it to see if it works," Colin said, "The Teacher's got some rope lying about, "and taking a nail out of his pocket said, "Remember this?"

Jez looked at Colin and smiled, "A very versatile object Colin. I was just going to tie the rope around the trap door."

"No", Colin answered, "There is a chance that the tiger could put his paw under the gap left by the rope, if it was nailed on then it would be completely flat."

"Good thinking Colin," Jez answered.

"Well", Kim said, "If that's sorted shall I get off and find him."

They all wished her luck as she went on her way, after she had gone Davy said, "Are you sure you can trust her?"

"Yes I think so," Jez answered, "Mind you we don't have any choice really do we."

Davy, Jez and Colin took the short journey to the Teachers cave and picked up some rope and a hammer. As they made their way to the Tower Davy said, "Lucky it's cooled down now."

The journey to the Tower was almost over as soon as it had begun. Jez climbed the stone steps and lifted himself up through the trap door. Davy and Colin remained outside waiting for Jez to thread the rope through the first floor window. Jez climbed up to the trap door that separated the first and second floor and hammered the nail into the middle underside of it. He had two lengths of rope that had been cut earlier. One was about two feet long. He tied one end of this to the protruding nail and the other end onto the second ring from the top of the ladder. Jez climbed down and tied one end of the other rope to the bottom rung of the ladder. The other end Jez threw out of the window to Colin and Davy who were standing below.

"Have you got it?" Jez shouted from the first floor.

"Right here", Davy shouted back.

"Give it a pull", Jez shouted.

Davy pulled it with all his might and the ladder flew into the air just missing Jez. The ladder stayed hanging in mid air supported by the rope that was attached to the trap door. The trap door remained open.

Jez shouted down, "It's not going to work. The trap door hasn't moved."

This was a major blow as they didn't know when the tiger would be coming.

Colin shouted up, "Put the ladder at less of an angle and see if that does anything."

Jez did as Colin said and shouted down to Davy to pull the rope once more. Davy dutifully obeyed but the trap door did not move.

"Any better?" Colin shouted from below.

"No, it's no good," Jez shouted back with an air of disappointment. "I don't think it's going to work."

"Try it again at a less steep angle," Colin shouted back. He had detected the despair in Jez's voice so he said, "It will work if you get the right angle."

On the third attempt the trap door moved slightly it was not enough to close it completely but it gave Jez encouragement to try a fourth time. On the fourth time the trap door slammed shut much to Jez's surprise and pleasure.

"It works Colin" he shouted down, "It works. Now all we have to do is remember the correct angle."

They tried it, a fifth time just to make sure and Jez marked the floor where the ladder was supposed to stand. He did not want the ladder to move forward when it was stood on so he put two broken stones in front of it to stop it going forward.

Jez lowered himself back down onto the steps after he had concealed the rope under some sand and dirt that was copiously lying around the floor. He proceeded outside and said to Colin and Davy, "Well that's the best we can do now. It's up to Kim."

"Yes", Davy answered, "Mind you I don't really trust her."

"She'll do alright Davy," Colin answered, "She's as much to lose as anybody."

Chapter 11.

During Jez's endeavours to construct the trap for the tiger Kim was having no luck in her pursuit. She searched high and low but to no avail for the valley was back to its original shape. The tiger could be anywhere in the huge expanse of the valley. A bird flew above her. It was Brian and he was out for his morning fly. Kim called up to him and he hovered a safe distance above her.

"What do you want?" Brian shouted down. He had not heard about Kim's change in attitude for he was not one of the birds sent out to find her to come to Jez's aid.

"I mean you no harm" Kim shouted up unperturbed by Brian's abrupt manner of speaking to her.

"Yes right," Brian answered in the same tone he had used before. "I've heard that one before."

"No, look, all I'm after is some information."

"Tell me, why should I help you after all the trouble that you have caused? If it was up to me you would never have got back into the valley. You might have fooled the rest of the animals but you haven't fooled me."

"It's not for me but for Jez."

Brian's tone changed slightly at the mention of Jez's name, "Jez. He's not back in the valley is he?"

"Yes and he needs our help," Kim answered. Brian landed on the ground albeit at a safe distance.

"Go on," Brian said still in a very suspicious manner.

"I need to find the tiger," Kim said softly not wanting Brian to fly away.

"Why. You want to join your relative and finish killing the rest of the animals don't you," Brian said and looked as if he was about to fly away much to Kim's dismay.

"No, I've come to help Jez to trap the tiger," Kim said almost in panic, "After all he means to kill

all the animals in the valley. That includes me as well you know.”

Brian relaxed and thought for a while. Kim was probably telling the truth for the tiger did not need her help. He was quite capable of killing everything in the valley including her and Jez. Eventually he said, “What do you want me to do?”

“All I want you to do is tell me where he is, I’ve been looking all over for him and time is running out. Soon there won’t be an animal alive in the valley.” Kim said with a sigh of relief.

“I’ll see what I can do,” Brian said as he flew up into the deep blue sky.

Kim had not worked out what she was going to say to the tiger when she saw him. She knew that she was putting herself in great danger for she meant nothing to the tiger. She would have to tread very carefully although she was very quick on her feet when she needed to be.

Brian was back in no time at all. “He’s about two fields away. He’s eating something but I can’t be sure what.”

“Thanks”, Kim said and Brian asked if he could be of any further use. Kim thanked him again but declined his offer of help.

It was with a great deal of apprehension that Kim approached the tiger. He had finished his meal and was relaxing in the cool morning Sun. Not a trace of what he had been eating was left and Kim could not be sure what animal it had been.

Coolly she walked up to him and trying to sound that she had no fear of him said, “Am I too late?”

The tiger turned around in a nonchalant manner and said, “No, I think I could still fit you in.”

“Ah that’s good, very funny, I’m glad to see that you are in such a good humour.”

“And why shouldn’t I be?” the tiger answered changing his manner slightly, “Have I not food in my stomach? Do I not rule the valley?”

“You rule the valley,” Kim said in mock surprise. “I thought it was Jez that ruled the valley.”

The tiger went sullen and said in a quiet tone, “His time will come. Don’t worry about that.”

“Oh but I do, I do.”

“You,” The tiger said with a sneer, “You, why should you you’re nothing to me.”

“Are we not from the same parents?” Kim said in a proud tone, “Albeit a long time ago. I looked to you as a brother.”

The tiger thought for a while. He knew that Kim was up to no good but was it him or Jez that she meant to harm.

“Yes”, he said eventually, “That’s right; we are from the same family. That means I know you like I know myself. So what is the real reason you are here?”

Kim took a deep breath to try and help her courage, “Well it’s like this” she said and looked at the tiger, “You don’t seem to be doing a very good job of destroying the animals.”

“What”, the tiger spluttered angrily. A feather flew out of his mouth. “That’s not true. Anyway even if it was what concern of your would that be?”

“Like I said before,” Kim answered trying not to let the tiger’s anger frighten her more than she was already, “We’re family.”

“Like I said before,” I know you like I know myself so what have it got to do with you,” the tiger said fixing Kim hard stare.

“Yes, I see you do know me. I too would like to see some harm done to Jez.”

“Ah, I thought so. So tell me why do you want to see him harmed?”

“He humiliated me”, Kim said and heard the tiger snigger. She turned angrily on the tiger, “I don’t know why you are laughing. You are not doing too well against him.”

The tiger going into a rage said, "Don't ever talk to me like that you need me more than I need you. I could eat you just like that."

Kim backing off slightly said, "Look why are we falling out. Are we not family?"

"How could you help me?" the tiger said changing from anger to a mocking tone. "You and your side of the family left the wild to become man's playthings."

"Oh yes," Kim said, "You don't think I don't know that. Here Kitty Kitty",

"So why did you put up with it?"

"The crystal is responsible for that and for much more," Kim answered and saw that she had the tiger's attention.

"Well", the tiger said with an air of resignation, "If he really has this magical crystal then there is nothing that I can do."

"You give up to easily," Kim said calmly, "As I mentioned before I walk in man's footsteps and know all his ways. We have been waiting for a long time to steal the crystal and take our place as head of the animals."

"You mean with this crystal I would become king of the valley," the tiger said with a slight air of excitement. He had seen Jez grow and he did not really relish fighting him.

"Look," Kim said as if she was talking to a child, "With this crystal you could become King of the World not just the valley."

This seemed to appeal to the tiger's vanity. A broad grin came upon his bloodied face. "Yes," he said as if he was talking to himself. "Imagine that me King of the World."

"What do you mean? You King of the World?" Kim said trying to put a stern face on to hide her fear.

"Oh don't worry." The tiger said smiling down at Kim, "There will be a little place for you very close to my heart."

Kim knew straight away that he meant his stomach. At one point earlier in the conversation she had been seriously tempted to join forces with the tiger. His last statement made up her mind for her. Kim said nothing.

"So tell me," the tiger said after he had thought a moment, "Why haven't you stolen this crystal before?"

"The crystal has been long hidden from man. It is only recently come back to the surface. I found out that Jez has one", She answered looking around as if she was being watched "I can't be seen talking with you. You don't know who's watching."

"What are you afraid of," the tiger said in a happy tone, "It's me they fear. Not Jez."

"Yes but while he has the crystal you can't be too careful," she said settling down a bit.

"So", the tiger said and waited a second before he carried on. "We know Jez has it but how do we get it off him?"

"We don't need to take it off him. He has not got it with him anyway", she answered.

"Well?" the tiger said impatiently, Kim noticed his impatience on the second occasion and thought that maybe the plan would work.

"Remember how you started turning the valley into desert?" Kim said and the tiger proudly answered "Yes".

"Well Jez healed the valley with the crystal, Kim said. The tiger had heard of its healing powers so he said nothing. Kim continued, "He has placed the crystal at the very top of the Tower.

"The Tower?" the tiger asked.

"It's near the wolf's cave."

"Oh the wolf's cave," the tiger said. He had been thinking of paying the wolf a visit. Maybe he could kill two birds as the saying goes.

"I could take you there, it's not far."

"Yes" he answered, "Lead the way partner."

Chapter 12

The tiger and Kim walked together towards the Tower. Kim had to run sometimes just to keep up with him, "So tell me little one" The tiger said looking down at Kim, "What has he done recently to humiliate you?" He had a playful tone in his voice

"What makes you think that he has," Kim said getting very defensive. The tiger noticed it and said, "Well that for a start. But the main reason is because you seem in such a hurry to see him hurt."

"Well", Kim answered, "Long before you arrived into the valley the animals feared me and I was sort of Queen of the Valley".

"You", The Tiger said laughing, "You were Queen of the Valley".

"Yes me", Kim snapped back "Till he came along anyway."

"Oh right", The Tiger said finally understanding, "Until he came along". The tiger thought a moment. Maybe he would not kill her. After all if he was King of the World what's a little valley? He may as well let her have it.

Meanwhile back at the Tower Jez and Davy were getting impatient, "What's keeping her?" Davy said angrily.

"Calm down Davy", Colin said, "She'll be here soon. Don't forget that she has to find him first."

They had situated themselves behind a hedge near to the Tower and watched the road eagerly.

"God I hate waiting around," Jez said tapping his foot onto the floor below, "I used to hate this in the Army".

"Yes", Davy said nodding his head in agreement, "I know what you mean, Jez, I know what you mean".

"Did you like the Army?" Colin said, "In general I mean".

"No" Davy said, "After all I said it would be the death of me".

"So", Colin went on, "Why did you join then?"

"I don't know," Davy answered, "I just followed Jez I suppose".

Colin looked at Jez and said, "So what about you Jez. Why did you join the Army?"

"I just followed the crowd really," Jez answered, "Besides its regular money," he added as an afterthought.

"I thought you were different than that" Colin said with an air of disappointment, "What changed?"

"I guess I wanted to be somebody. There's not much glory laying rails" Jez said with a slight smile.

"Glory did that become your goal?" Colin asked.

"Yes I suppose you could say so" Jez answered "I suppose it did become that."

"What now Jez?" Colin answered with a serious look on his face.

"I dunno" Jez answered, "I know my Army days are over even if I do survive. Maybe I'll get a farm of my own and me and Mary could settle down."

"Maybe" Colin replied, "It's your life well it will be soon once more."

Jez smiled, "Yes, one step at a time. I wish she would hurry up though."

"Patience Jez everything comes to those who wait" Colin said.

He was having his doubts about Kim but he kept them quietly to himself. Close by the tiger and Kim were making their way to the Tower. Kim was nearly out of breath just trying to keep up with the tiger's long strides. Brian was watching them from a safe distance. His doubts about Kim's motives for wanting to meet the tiger were enhanced when he saw how well they seemed to be getting on. He had decided that he must go and warn Jez but he did not know where he would be. Brian flew off in the direction that the two cats were walking and soon came across the Tower. There was not trace of anybody around it but something told him that they were there. He circled low and looked around the hedgerows and saw three sets of legs sticking out. Brian swooped down and landed nearby. Jez had already noticed Brian even before he landed and greeted him warmly.

"Hello Brian, what brings you here?" he said with a warm smile. Brian did not recognise Jez straight away for he had grown since their last meeting. He recognised Colin though and so he guessed that it must be Jez.

"Hello Jez, I didn't know you. You're not a man chick no more" he said. He did not know Davy for he had never met him.

"No, my man chick days are over. This is Davy," Jez said by way of introduction, "He's my brother."

Brian went quiet for a while and Jez asked him what was up.

"I think I've done you a disservice Jez", he said with his head hung low.

"You have" Jez said in slight confusion, "Why what have you done?"

"I told that Kim how to find the tiger and now they're both making their way here", Brian continued.

"No Brian, you did us a service for that is what we want" Jez said relieved that they were on their way.

"They seemed very friendly", Brian carried on, "Almost too friendly. Are you sure you can trust her? After all she's done you nothing but harm."

"No Brian" Jez said, "I think she's changed. How far away is she by the way?"

"She's about a mile from the Teacher's cave but closing in quite quickly" Brian answered.

"Tell you what Brian, if you want to do me another service could you fly back and let us know when she is about half a mile away." Jez asked. Brian agreed, and flew off.

After he had gone Colin said, "There I told you everything comes to those who wait."

"Yes true", Jez answered, "But we don't know whose side she's on yet." Jez still had his doubts for that was his way.

"I thought you said it was in her interest to help us for she was no use to the tiger", Davy said. He was starting to trust her again.

"Yes", Jez answered, "But the crystal would be a bit of a bargaining tool, don't you think Colin?"

Colin thought a while before he answered, "Certainly the crystal is a great bargaining tool but they have no way of reaching it."

"Does Kim know that?" Jez asked not wanting to let the matter drop.

"I don't know", Colin answered, "Probably not"

"But you are not sure", Davy asked probing up on Jez's doubts.

"It doesn't matter", Colin answered, "For it doesn't alter the fact."

Kim and the tiger were just about approaching the wolf's cave.

"Ah my next meal" the tiger said on seeing the cave.

"We have plenty of time for that", Kim answered, "Once we have the crystal." Kim knew that with

the wolf gone and Jez and Colin defeated then she could rule the valley for there was not another animal that could stand in her way. She was sorely tempted to let the tiger kill the wolf but she had made a promise.

“Are you sure?” the tiger said, “It won’t take too long and I’m getting a little hungry.”

Kim looked up and saw Brian hovering above. She said to the tiger as she pointed up, “Look we are being watched.”

The tiger looked up and said disdainfully, “It’s only a bird. What can it do to stop us?”

“It can warn Jez and he could take the crystal back before we even get to it. Then what will happen.”

The idea of fighting a giant did not appeal to the tiger so he soon forgot about the wolf and speedily headed on his way, Brian flew back to Jez and the tiger said, “Look you are right he has gone to look for him.”

“We must hurry then”, Kim said picking up a bit of speed, “For once he has the crystal you will never be King of the World.”

Brian had reached to where Jez, Davy and Colin were hiding and said in an excited manner, “They’re coming Jez. They are on the way.”

“Thanks Brian” Jez answered, “You must hide now for we don’t want to give the game away.”

Brian hid and they all waited. After a few minutes the tiger with Kim running behind it like a little kitten came within their view. “Well now we’ll know if she betrayed us” Davy said.

As they saw the Tower Kim said, “There it is, the crystal is on the very top.”

“However are we going to get up there,” the tiger said looking at the huge building

“Oh that’s easy”, Kim answered, “There are ladders inside. You just climb up and fetch it. There doesn’t look like there is anybody around. It should be easy.”

As they got even nearer the Tiger stopped and said, “I can small man they must be about.”

“Quickly”, Kim said pretending to panic, “We must get there before them.”

Kim’s panic must have set the tiger off because he bolted towards the Tower leaving Kim behind.

“Wait for me”, she shouted after him but to no avail.

The tiger climbed the stone stairs. He scrambled through the first entrance and saw the ladder to the next floor. He saw the rope attached to the trap door and in his greed for the crystal ignored it. It was probably to hold the ladder in place he thought to himself as he scrambled up. It was on the second floor he started to have his doubts. There was no way of getting on the roof and seeing the small windows he thought that maybe he was in a trap. This was confirmed when the trap door slammed shut.

Jez ran in and after he had climbed the steps into the first floor untied the rope and took the ladder down to ground floor. Under screams of “Let me out, let me out. You need me,” Jez and Davy pushed the stone stair case over and went outside.

“You’ll pay for this”, the tiger shouted from his new prison cell. “Don’t worry. You’ll pay for this.”

“Well”, Jez shouted up, “You’ll have a long time to think of your revenge for you’ll be here for a long time.”

“You need me and you don’t even know it”, the tiger shouted down and Jez heard the panic in his voice.

“Yes I know I need you”, Jez answered, “But I don’t need you killing all the animals. I need you in the valley but I need you under control so you will stay in the Tower.”

The tiger went quiet for he knew that he was beat. Jez put his hand in his pocket and took the strange stone out.

“Well”, he said turning to Colin, “It looks like I don’t need it after all.”

“I don’t know Jez. Eventually he might lift the trap door and escape.” Colin said.

“There’s not much chance of that” Jez answered looking at Colin in a strange manner, “Is there?”

“Why don’t you block the entrance with the Tiger’s Eye Stone?” Colin said, “Just to make sure.”

“How can a little stone like this block the entrance?” Jez asked looking at the stone.

“Put it in front of the entrance”, Colin said almost as an order and Jez dutifully obeyed. Colin told him to close his eyes and empty his mind.

Jez shut his eyes and waited a voice came from inside saying,

“Give me strength in word and deed

To keep the tiger from its feed”

Virtually as soon as the voice had finished the stone started to grow. In no time at all it had completely covered the entrance.

“That’s just to make sure”, Colin answered, “You might not need it but can’t be too careful.”

They left the tiger to its misery and headed towards the Teacher’s cave.

Chapter 13.

Jez was feeling very sure of himself as they strolled towards the wolf’s cave, “Well Colin.” he said with an air of over-confidence, “Two down and one to go and it’s just an old goat.”

“Don’t underestimate the goat Jez he can do you more damage than the fever and tiger put together” Colin said abruptly but Jez would have none of it.

“Yes” he said to Colin in a tone of disbelief, “You’ve said that before Colin but you won’t tell me how.”

“I can’t Jez”, Colin answered, “You have to face the unknown by yourself.”

“What about Davy” Jez asked, “Is he not allowed to help me?”

“No” Colin answered, “Davy has got a lot of work of his own to do.”

“I have?” Davy asked giving Colin a bemused look, “What’s that then?”

“You have to put the valley back in order. Find out what animals have been lost and make sure that everything is in its proper place” Colin said as they approached the entrance to the wolf’s cave.

“Well that doesn’t sound like hard work. Surely I’d be better off if I helped Jez against the goat.” Davy asked for although he did not like the idea of fighting a tiger a goat did not seem too bad.

“No” Colin said, “You’d be better off getting the valley back to its full strength for that’s what gives Jez his strength.”

“I didn’t know that” Jez said in surprise.

“Yes”, Colin answered, “Didn’t you notice how weak you were getting with every lost field.”

Jez thought for a moment. Yes now that Colin had mentioned it it made sense. If the valley was his then it’s his health must be closely tied together. “I never thought about it but yes it makes sense”.

Jez turned to Davy and said, “So how do you fancy looking after my health then Davy?”

“Well”, Davy said jokingly, “You have been looking after mine for long enough I guess it is time to pay you back.”

“Yes but no more bar room brawls. I don’t think that I am up to it anymore.” Jez answered laughing.

They entered the Teacher’s cave in good spirits. The Teacher was pleased to see them and by their

actions he knew that the tiger was beaten.

“Well”, he said warmly looking at Davy and Jez, “I see congratulations are in order.”

“Yes”, said Jez “Just the goat now.”

“Ah your biggest struggle yet”, the wolf said ignoring Jez’s flippant tone.

“What the goat” Jez said, “My biggest struggle yet?”

“Don’t make the mistake of underestimating the task. Don’t forget that you have to get to him first”, the wolf said abruptly.

Jez stopped to think about the last point. He had not thought about getting to the goat. It was on the other side of the desert and without the crystal he was going to have to walk.

“How far is it away?” his tone had lost the edge of arrogance that it had been using recently.

“It will take you the rest of the day to reach the Edge of Darkness then maybe two or three days to cross the desert. I’m not sure because no man has ever done it before” the wolf said looking at the floor.

“What? Nobody has ever done it before. Why not?” Jez asked.

“Well you normally use the crystal don’t you?” the wolf answered looking at Jez.

“That’s a long walk though. I don’t know if I would be up to it.” Jez said and took a chair.

“Well”, the Teacher said, “If the valley is at full strength then the journey to the desert shouldn’t be too taxing.”

“What state is it in?” Jez asked the wolf.

“It’s nearly back to full strength so the first part of the journey should not be too bad” the wolf answered and waited for Jez’s next question.

“So I can have the crystal back soon then. Can I?” Jez asked like the wolf knew he would.

“No sorry Jez” he answered, “It’s still needed here”, he answered, “The valley needs to be at full strength for quite a while before you can have it back.”

“Oh, looks like I’m walking then doesn’t it” Jez said quietly to himself. The wolf laughed quietly to himself.

“Never mind” the wolf said pointing to the room that he always seemed to be in, “There’s something in there that might help you.”

“What” Jez exclaimed, “You’ve got another crystal?”

“No it’s something that will recharge your energies” the wolf answered and seeing Jez’s bemused look, “Believe in it Jez. It won’t harm you.”

“What shall I do?” Davy asked feeling left out.

“You must go to the Gate Keepers house and take his place”, the wolf said looking at Davy.

“What, now?” Davy asked itching to get started.

“Yes the sooner the better for Jez” the wolf answered.

“Well”, Davy said looking at Jez, “Looks like I’m leaving you before the trouble starts again. Good luck” he said shaking Jez’s hand.

The wolf told him that once he got there he would know what his job would be. Davy left them and proceeded to his new destiny. After he had gone Jez turned to the wolf and said, “Well I suppose that I’d better get started.”

“As I was saying earlier you have to cross the desert and then climb the mountain” the wolf said watching Jez’s face turn a slightly different colour.

“What that big mountain. I’m afraid of heights”, Jez said and Colin could see that he was telling the truth.

“But” Colin said, “What about all that flying?”

“That was different. I had the crystal. But have you seen that big mountain its vertical right up to the sky” Jez said with a hint of desperation.

“It’s is never easy facing your fears” the wolf said with a wry smile on his face, “Now is it Jez?”

Jez could see the irony and it made him smile, “Yes, you got me there. So after the walk and the climb what more do I have to do.”

“Then you have to face the goat” the wolf said in a grave manner.

“Look” Jez said getting impatient, “What’s so good about that goat?”

“You have to ask?” it was Colin who spoke, “You nearly ended up trying to kill yourself.”

“Yes but I know what to expect this time” Jez said by way of justification.

“Nobody ever knows what to expect” the wolf said, “That what makes it so dangerous.”

“Yes but surely I can overpower it?” Jez said, “Especially if I have been recharged.”

“You forget that you have a long hard journey to make first” the wolf answered, “You will be in no fit state to fight anything.”

“And this treatment what will it do?” Jez asked looking at the wolf in a serious manner.

“It will bring you back to your peak physically and help you mentally as well” the wolf answered.

“Well” Jez said, “Tell me what I have to do.” and they both walked to the door of the little room.

The wolf opened the door and Jez saw that it was spartan. The only object in the room was an old stone table. It looked more like a bed but for its height.

“All you have to do is lie on the table. Just relax and don’t be afraid of anything you might see,” the wolf said reassuringly.

Jez lay on the table and the wolf left the room. Once he had relaxed and got use to the table’s hard surface he felt tired. As Jez started to fall into slumber his legs started to throb slightly. It was not a painful feeling in fact it was quite exhilarating. Jez got the feeling that the room was going hazy although when he looked it was still clear. Tiredness made Jez half close his eyes and he felt two hands on the top of his head. They seemed to be touching at the fingers with the palms facing outwards and gently resting on the crown. They must have rested there for about five minutes. Jez was a bit nervous but the energy that the hands seemed to be giving him quickly allayed his fears.

The hands gently glided down and stopped with the fingers resting over each eye and the palms resting on Jez’s cheek bones. The cooling energies it left in its path seemed to gently bounce around Jez’s head. He was really enjoying the feeling. He felt like he could just float off. After roughly another five minutes the fingers seemed to turn towards the back of the neck using the palm as a pivot. The palms moved across so that the fingers gently touched behind the base of the neck. The energies seemed to be massaging Jez’s head and he rolled it in pleasure. After another five minutes the fingers came around, still with the palms as a pivot, and gently met above the throat. The energies seemed to pour into his body, he felt a blockage at the throat but that seemed to get smaller and soon disappeared. After it had gone the energies flowed in, relaxing every muscle in his body.

Another five minutes passed and the hands slid down and rested above Jez’s heart. The energies seemed to get stronger and more relaxing. The hands slid down and rested above the solar plexus. With every second the energies got faster and he felt himself starting to lift. The hands moved down after a while and rested above his abdomen. Whilst all this was happening he felt that somebody had gently got hold of his feet.

Through Jez’s half closed eyes he could see two figures standing at the bottom of the bed. They

seemed to be massaging his feet. They were unusual creatures. They seemed to be translucent with a light green outline. They seemed too busy in their work to even notice Jez. Jez just relaxed and enjoyed the show. He felt them poke at the base of his feet and this seemed to send surges of energy up his legs. It was a nice feeling and he enjoyed himself. The spirits hands moved to his toes and started to gently pull them. Jez could feel the energy surge up his leg and end up all over his body. He sensed that the spirits had gone and then a warm feeling came over him. It felt like somebody was gently pulling a blanket up his legs. The whole atmosphere in the room changed. There was something different about the room but Jez could not be sure what it was. This did not deter Jez; he just relaxed and enjoyed the new warming feeling. The blanket was about round his chest now and still rising. Soon it covered him completely and then he felt the energy leave his head and make its way to his feet.

The energy started to rise up his body and make its way to his head once more. It seemed to take an elliptical path from Jez's feet to his head and round to his feet again. He felt the energy change to a point and shoot up his body, out his head and back down to his feet. Faster and faster it went and he started to rise. He tried to fight it but it was too strong and soon took him. Jez relaxed his eyes and felt himself go with the lift. Faster and faster he went. Clouds on either side of him looked like numbers on an elevator as they flew past.

Faster and faster upwards he went. Soon the clouds had joined each other to form a mass of greyish blue. As he went higher even this changed. It got brighter and brighter making Jez feel warm and whole inside. Jez found himself encapsulated by a golden orange light that was both warm and healing. It put out a strange kind of heat. It was not a burning heat in fact if anything it seemed a cooling heat. Higher into the heat he went and this gave him a feeling of real contentment.

The light changed to white and Jez traveled into it. He saw water above him and swam towards the top. He saw a circle of light and headed towards it. As the light got bigger he had the feeling that he was in a well. He saw the edges of the well's walls and some hazy figures looking down at him. Jez broke through to the surface and saw six figures dressed in white cassocks looking down at him.

Chapter 14.

It took Jez only a fraction of a second to adjust his eyes but the figures were still there.

"What do you want of me?" Jez asked looking out of the water.

"It is you who came to us for help Jethro," the nearest one said.

"I didn't have much choice. I just seemed to drift up here," Jez said, "Where am I anyway?"

"You are where you were meant to be in this point in time," the figure answered.

'More riddles,' Jez thought, 'That's all I need'

"Only the riddle of life", the figure said and it occurred to Jez that they maybe telepathic.

"Yes Jez", another figure had moved forward, "We are telepathic."

"So tell me how can you help me against this goat?" Jez said looking around. He could not see their faces as a bright light was behind them.

"We can tell you how to defeat him but that is all. The battle is between you and the goat", the first figure said.

"What is this goat anyway and why do people fear him?" Jez said in a frustrated tone.

"You have a serious stomach wound and your life is in danger", the first figure said.

"Yes I know that" Jez said impatiently, "But what has that got to do with the goat."

“The goat is your self doubt, your will to live. The stronger it gets the less you have” the first figure answered.

“So if I defeat this goat then I will live?” Jez said as if he had just understood.

“Well no, not quite” the figure said.

“What do you mean not quite?” Jez answered getting confused once again; he seemed to be spending a lot of time in confusion.

“If you defeat the goat then you have the will to live” the figure answered, “But your life is lying in the hands of somebody else at the moment. He might not be up to the job”.

“I thought that my troubles were over” Jez said with a slight hint of despair, “Now it seems like they are only just beginning.”

“No Jez”, the figure said laughing, “Most of the fighting has been done. You are just mopping up so to speak.”

“Well I hope so” Jez said, “So you can advise me. Is that what you are saying?”

“Yes think of us as advisers”, the figure said smiling, “Yes I like that word. Advisers.”

“How can you help me then?” Jez asked.

“Ask us a question and we will try and give you the best answer”, the figure said.

“But how do I get in touch with you?” Jez asked.

“Do you still have your crystal?” the figure said looking down at Jez.

“No, I’m afraid it’s being used to save the valley” Jez said with an air of disappointment.

“Oh well. It can’t be helped” the figure said, “You must relax and imagine that your heart is a crystal. It will do the rest.”

Jez felt himself being drawn back into the water and soon he was starting a sharp decent. He found himself lying back on top of the stone table. Jez kicked his legs over the side and sat up. He felt strange, he felt like he could do anything.

Jez got off the bed and walked to the door, “That feels good”, he said stretching himself. Looking at the wolf Jez said, “Do you do that a lot?”

“Yes”, said the wolf, “Where do you think I get most my answers?”

“But I thought you were the Teacher” Jez said getting puzzled.

“I am your Teacher Jez but I can only take you a certain distance. You have learned enough now not to need my help. You know how to find the answer yourself.”

“So I can contract them at any time then?” Jez asked.

“Yes, now you know how to get there” the wolf answered, “But only go to them when you really need them.”

“Well if that’s all done then I’d better be getting off.” Jez said cringing at the thought of the long journey in front of him.

“I can come with you to the Edge of Darkness if you like” Colin said because it looked like Jez could use the company.

“Yes”, Jez said cheering up almost immediately, “If you don’t mind Colin”.

“No” Colin said getting up, “Besides we have a lot of catching up to do. I haven’t seen you in years.”

They said goodbye to the wolf and walked into the warm outside air. Jez seemed to be floating along as they set down the valley road. Colin spoke first, “Do you feel up to this Jez?” He had a serious look on his face and this worried Jez slightly.

“It’s got to be done Colin” Jez said unperturbed by Colin’s tone, “Sooner or later we all have to face

our doubts.”

“You know about the goat?” Colin said happily for now he knew that Jez had a chance.

“Yes them fellows told me about them” Jez said as if he thought that Colin knew what he was on about.

“What fellows?” Colin asked to Jez’s surprise.

“Them fellows dressed like monks but wearing white” Jez answered.

Colin pretended that he did not know who they were for he knew that one question would lead to another. “And these fellow, are they here to help you?”

“Yes they told me how I could get in touch with them” Jez said and as he did Colin’s grin got broader and broader.

“Well Jez it sounds like you have a very good chance” Colin said looking up to Jez. Colin had to walk quite fast to keep up with Jez’s purposeful strides.

“Oh yes, against the goat maybe but what about the Doctor?” Jez said down heartedly.

“Sorry?” Colin said.

“My life is in somebody else’s hands. What if he has a bad day?” Jez said in despair.

“You can’t do anything about that Jez” Colin said, “So don’t worry about it. It only does harm.”

“Yes, I know what you are saying, it just creeps in sometimes” Jez said sadly.

“It all adds to doubt Jez and the goat lives on your doubt. It makes him stronger” Colin said to Jez as they walked along.

“I thought that you weren’t supposed to be helping me”, Jez said.

“That’s true, but with you finding out about the goat yourself I can help you. “Colin said.

“Is that true?” Jez said looking at Colin suspiciously.

“Well not strictly” Colin answered laughing.

“You haven’t actually told me who you are” Jez said and with that Colin stopped, turned to him and bowed saying, “My name is Colin and I travel the worlds.”

“Okay I know who you are” Jez said and then, “What I really want to know is what you are”

“I’m a leprechaun”, Colin answered, “isn’t that obvious?”

“Well alright you’re a leprechaun but what does a leprechaun do?” Jez said for he was persistent.

“Do. What do you mean what does a leprechaun do?” Colin said evasively.

“The wolf is the Teacher. The Gate Keeper keeps the valley in order and the tree holds the mind to the body.” Jez was saying but Colin stopped him there. “How do you know that the tree holds the mind to the body?” Colin asked in considerable surprise.

“I don’t know just something inside me spoke.”

“Well you are right Jez I am here for a purpose” Colin said, “But I’m afraid that I can’t tell you what it is.”

“Can you tell me why”, Jez said getting impatient.

“All I can say is that you don’t really need to know at this stage.” Colin said and then continued, “In fact if I told you it would just add to your worries and that won’t help against the goat.”

“Are you here for a bad reason then?” Jez asked.

“No, I am here to do you good” Colin answered, “But if I told you everything then your mind would be too cluttered with new information to be of any use against the goat.”

“Will any of this information that you are not telling me about be of any use against the goat?” Jez said slowly.

“Oh no” Colin answered, “You have got all the information you need. I made sure of that.”

Jez smiled and said, "Yes I knew that you wouldn't let me down."

They walked a while chatting away as if the years were only days. Soon the journey was over and they stood looking at the vast expanse of desert that lay in front of them. The journey had been an easy one for Jez. It seemed to be over almost as soon as it had begun. He was not tired and said to Colin might get a couple of hours more traveling before night fall."

"If I were you I would rest here and start a fresh in the morning," Colin said but Jez did not seem to hear him. "I don't feel tired Colin."

"It is not advisable to stay too long in the desert Jez" Colin said mysteriously, "Your best bet is to stop here in the valley tonight."

"I could be wasting valuable time" Jez said impatiently.

"Nobody has ever crossed the desert on foot before. Now the wolf said that it would take two or three days to cross. That means that you would be in the desert for at least two nights. Surely that's enough," Colin said. He was getting quite impatient himself.

"Is it that bad at night then?" Jez said going quiet.

"It's bad but you are good enough to cope with it. You don't want to push your luck."

"Alright Colin I'll accept your judgment" Jez said and sat down on the cool green grass.

They sat and talked a while and eventually the subject went back on Colin. "I remember that you once told me that you were from another world I thought that you meant the valley. But you didn't did you?" Jez asked.

"No, you are right", Colin answered, "I am not from the valley."

"So where are you from or am I not allowed to ask?" Jez went on persevering.

"Well I suppose I could tell you", Colin said after he had thought for a while, "When you find out how complicated it is you will know why I can't tell you everything."

Jez waited patiently while Colin thought a few moments longer, "I suppose that you could say that I am from another dimension."

"Another dimension?" Jez said after Colin had finished, "What's a dimension?"

"An aspect I suppose you could call it", Colin said and this seemed to add to Jez's confusion. "You know that a drawing is two dimensional", Colin said trying to clarify.

"Is it?" Jez asked giving Colin a vague look.

"Yes, height and width. It is just a flat object. Now you live in a three dimensional world" Colin said.

"Do I?" Jez said he still did not understand.

"Yes, height, width and depth" Colin answered, "That is why you are not flat."

"Yes" Jez said after he had thought for a while, "I think I know what you mean."

"Well there is a lot of other dimensions and I am from one of them" Colin answered. Jez pretended that he understood what Colin was talking about but Colin saw through it.

"Look", Colin said getting slightly flustered, "Maybe I'm not explaining myself properly. Give us a minute."

Colin took out his pipe and started to fill it. Jez looked at him and said, "I thought that you smoked that all last night?"

"Oh", Colin said looking at the tobacco pouch, "I got this this morning while you were asleep." He offered it Jez but Jez declined.

Colin sat a while puffing on his pipe and thinking. Jez sat quietly next to him and waited. Colin looked deep in thought and Jez had no wish to disturb him. All of a sudden he looked up, turned to

Jez and said, "I suppose the nearest example I can think of it the caterpillar."

"The caterpillar?" Jez said laughing, "I think that I better have some of that funny tobacco."

Colin passed the pipe to Jez and he took a long drag on it. He held it in his lungs for a few seconds to extract its goodness and exhaled.

"Oh, that's better" Jez said and turning to Colin said, "So you are a caterpillar then."

"No" Colin said smiling, "You are the caterpillar."

"Me" Jez said taking another drag, "I've never thought of myself as a caterpillar."

"A caterpillar virtually lives his life eating and fattening himself up doesn't he?" Colin went on unperturbed.

"Are you trying to say I'm a glutton now?" Jez said jokingly but Colin ignoring him carried on, "He rarely looks up so to him he lives in a virtual two dimensional land."

Jez went serious and thought for a while, "Yes I think I understand."

"Well as I said before", Colin carried on, "He rarely looks up and has probably never seen a butterfly before."

"Yes" Jez said for the answer was becoming more clearer.

"Now even if he did see one he would probably not know what it was? He would not know that the butterfly was once a caterpillar just like him." Colin went on but by this time the answer had become as clear as the crystal that was standing on top of the Tower.

"What about when he saw the chrysalis?" Jez said after he had thought for a moment.

"He would just see a dead caterpillar and when the butterfly had left he would see a decomposed body" Colin answered and saw that Jez was still with him.

"And I am the caterpillar so to speak", Jez said in a more serious vein.

"Yes, well I said it was the closest example I could think of" Colin said by way of explanation.

"So if I am the caterpillar then you are the butterfly" Jez asked looking at Colin. Jez passed the pipe to Colin who took a long drag on it.

"No" Colin answered, "I am not the butterfly."

"You're not" Jez said in exasperation, "Then what are you?"

"I suppose that you could call me the chrysalis." Colin said and took another puff on his pipe.

"You know it must be the stuff I've been smoking" Jez said, "But that sounds quite reasonable to me."

"Are you ready for some more then", Colin asked looking over to Jez.

"No I think you are right Colin" Jez said laughing, "I've got enough on my plate to try and work out all this extra information."

"Yes, you're right Jez" Colin answered, "Besides it will soon be nightfall and you are going to need a good sleep."

Jez agreed and settled down to dream.

Chapter 15.

Jez found himself drifting in a cool, dark expanse. A feeling of tremendous joy just seemed to creep over him. All senses seemed to be at once with each other. Suddenly his whole body started to rise, first slowly and then building up to a surge. Faster and faster he went until the darkness had turned into a golden orange colour. Higher he climbed and the orange turned to white. Higher still he seemed to be underwater and making his way to an orange light. As the water disappeared Jez found himself being looked down at by six hooded figures.

“Not you again” he said jokingly for he knew that they meant him only good, “What is it this time?”

“It was you who called us Jethro” the figure nearest to him said.

“When, I never did” Jez was about to say but a voice inside him said, “Shut up, that was me you fool.” Jez did not know what to ask them but the voice inside him said, “Ask them what is going to happen to you.”

“Very good question” the first figure said, “Why don’t you step out of the water.”

Jez pulled himself out and had a look around at the surroundings.

“What is this place?” he thought as he found himself in a desert with a few white stone houses. It was like a small Mexican town. The other figures had disappeared leaving only the figure that had done most of the talking. He pulled back his hood to reveal a man of about 5 foot 8 inches and of slimish stature. “My name is Starlan” he said with a smile. He had an unusual haircut Jez thought to himself a bit like a monk but without the shaved top. “I too am telepathic” a thought seemed to land in Jez’s head.

“Oh” Jez said aloud jumping back slightly.

“So you want to know what’s going to happen to you Jez.” Starlan said bidding Jez to walk with him.

“Yes” Jez answered “Well something inside me does anyway.”

Starlan laughed and said, “So you want to know how to conquer your doubts do you Jez?”

“Yes I suppose I do. Yes, that’s a good question” Jez said as if realisation had just hit him.

“Well I’m afraid I can’t tell you that”, Starlan said guiding Jez to the left.

“You can’t tell me that.” Jez said in surprise, “Why not?”

“Because only you know how to conquer your doubts” Starlan said and looking seriously at Jez, said “But I can tell you what will happen to you but only you will know the final outcome.”

“Well yes” Jez answered, “Anything will do. I’m sure it will all help.”

“You will have a vision quest in the desert”

“That doesn’t sound too bad” Jez answered, “Now I’ll be expecting it. So in this vision quest what will I see?”

“Only you could know the answer to that Jez” Starlan answered and smiled at Jez. “It will not be easy Jez” Starlan said for he saw how over confident Jez was starting to become, “Imagine it Jez. The beating hot Sun burning into your back and at night burning into your mind as well.”

Jez went quiet for a while before saying, “Surely it will not be as bad as all that.”

“Oh but it is Jez”

“What happens whenI mean if I defeat this goat?”

“Then you may step up into the light”, Starlan said putting his left arm out slowly.

“What ... but it’s just desert.” Jez said laughing.

“The light” Starlan said getting angry, “Is whatever you want it to be.”

He clicked his fingers and the scene suddenly changed to the inside of a castle. Starlan clicked his fingers once more and they were back in the desert town.

“For when you are in the light then you are at one with yourself,” Starlan said looking at Jez.

“What do you mean at one with myself?”

“You have conquered all your fears. You have passed through the circle of darkness. You are in the light”, Starlan said in a triumphant tone.

Jez half understood it but the idea sounded good anyway. “So when I conquer the goat then I am in the light?”

“Not quite,” Starlan said putting a damper on Jez’s happiness, “You have to answer one question.”

“Another question I had to ask one to get in here” Jez said getting a little impatient.

“One you ask and one you answer. It is for the balance of Nature. You give to the countryside and then you take from the countryside,” Starlan answered with a sigh.

“Alright”, Jez said, “What’s the question?”

“No Jez”, Starlan said, “I’m afraid you have a job to do first.”

Starlan guided Jez towards the water in the well. Jez had noticed that although he was in the water he never got wet.

Jez fell back into the water and soon ended up back in the darkness.

He felt a lot happier now that he vaguely knew what he was up against.

He must have to conquer his doubts. But how do you do that? What are your doubts? What were his doubts? Doubts about whether he would live surely that must be it. When his doubts get too strong would they take away his will to live? Jez thought back to his first encounter with the goat. He had wanted to kill himself. The goat would have beaten him if it was not for Colin. What was his dream about before that? He tried to remember. He was standing outside the kitchen door listening to his father and Charlotte talking. They were comparing Jez badly to Davy. Did he think that they treated Davy better than him? “No”, he thought to himself, “We were treated the same as each other. So why did it appear in his mind?” He thought on a while. Maybe they don’t have to be true only doubts to make the goat stronger. Jez thought of his fears but could not summon any up. Suddenly he thought of the huge mountain that he would have to climb. A shiver went down his spine. He had to climb a huge mountain and it scared him. He had to conquer that fear or he had lost. He needed something to help him conquer that fear but what? Maybe he would find the answer in the castle. As soon as he had that thought the castle seemed to drift into view. Jez floated up to the castle and standing up opened the large doors and walked in. He looked around the castle and thought “Right what have you got for me.”

Confidently he strode up the stone staircase. The feeling of elation had not occurred but he was too busy to notice. He quickly turned past the table and made his way down the dimly lit corridor. Opening the door he quickly walked in and made his way to the book that was lying on the table. He picked up the book and read the title ‘Jez’s Return to the Valley.’

Jez smiled and said, “Now you little beauty what can you tell me?” Jez opened the book and face visibly dropped as he read the lines.

If you’re looking for a ladder then I’m afraid you’re out of luck,
For the answer you require you won’t find in any book.

A look of total disappointment came over Jez’s face. What was he going to do now? He had no choice but to climb the mountain. It was a sullen Jez that was found walking down the stone staircase.

Jez walked down into the darkness and floated away from the large castle. Soon the castle was out of view and all that was left was total darkness. He drifted around for a while until he heard a voice saying, “Wake up Jez” he recognised it as Colin’s and headed off to the direction it was coming from. Jez soon found himself in the valley at the Edge of Darkness. Colin was up and standing, “Make an early start Jez.”

Jez blinked and saw Colin filling his pipe. “It’s a bit early for that isn’t it?” he said to Colin. Colin looking down at Jez said, “It’s not for me Jez, it’s for you”, and passed it over to him.

“No” Jez declined, “It’s like the book Colin, I won’t find my answer in that.”

“Oh well, suit yourself Jez” Colin said. He was about to smoke it when he changed his mind.

“Look Jez”, he said, “Why don’t you take it with you?”

“Why? It will do no good” Jez answered.

“You have seen what it does” Colin said, “It will help you to face your fears.”

“Yes but only by masking them” Jez said coldly.

“You ought to take it though Jez” Colin said trying a different plot. “It will make an old man very happy.”

“Oh alright” Jez said taking the pipe and putting it in his pocket “Anything for a quiet life.”

This cheered Colin up and he said, “Are you feeling up to it?”

“Well I’m not sure” Jez answered.

“No doubts Jez. Not this early it will seem to make the journey longer” Colin said and this got Jez thinking.

“The wolf said two or three days didn’t he Colin?” Jez said getting up off the floor.

“Yes that’s right” Colin answered, “Although he could not be sure.”

When Colin said that the wolf could not be sure, Jez thought hard. No the wolf could not be sure because he was not making the journey. Jez was making the journey because it was his to make. The journey would take as long as his doubts.

“Nobody can be really sure Colin” Jez said secretively.

Colin looked up at him and said, “You know don’t you?”

“Well I thought you were telepathic” Jez said with a laugh.

“Yes but we are too close to the Edge of Darkness for my powers to work fully” Colin answered in some way of explanation. “Anyway you know don’t you?”

Jez said furtively. “I could know something and it could be quite different to what you know.”

“Stop talking in riddles”? Colin said sharply.

“Oh but” Jez answered with a smile; “I had a good teacher.”

Colin looked into Jez’s eyes and saw that he was only playing. His expression changed to a smile.

“So you think that you are up to a riddle then Jez?” he asked still smiling.

“I don’t know Colin” Jez answered, “I’ve come a long way.”

“If you were an insect what would you be?” Colin asked studying Jez’s face.

“I would be a butterfly” Jez answered shrewdly remembering their earlier conversation. Something inside him told him to say no. “No” Jez said, “Wait a minute Colin.”

“It’s not as easy as it first seems is it Jez, “Colin said smiling.”

“I would be a bee” Jez said after he had thought a while.

Colin’s smile turned to a knowing nod and said, “That’s good Jez. Now tell me why you would like to be a bee?”

Jez thought for a moment and said, “I don’t know. The idea just appeared to me. I like the idea of flitting from flower to flower. It’s a bit like flitting from life to life.”

Colin stopped what he was doing and said in a serious tone, “You have definitely come a long way Jez. You are so close that I have a feeling that you are going to make it.”

With that his whole appearance began to change. He started to grow. Before Jez’s eyes he had turned into somebody dressed like Starlan. The only difference was that he wore a Brown Cassock.

“Good luck Jez” he said, “If you make it then so do I.”

With that the figure disappeared.

Chapter 16.

Everything seemed to click into place then. The realisation hit Jez square on the face. Colin was training to be like one of those other figures. He was sure that if he knew the answer then he would have a very short journey to make. He thought for a while. He had to go up every time that he saw them. They were higher than him. He remembered Colin mentioning something called the Higher Self. Yes that must be them. And Colin's last test would be to get me to defeat the goat. He said if you make it then so do I. That must be his test. This did not really help Jez as he started his journey across the desert. In fact it was a bit of a hindrance. For it meant that Colin was depending on him. That was a heavy weight to place on his shoulders.

The cool morning air though gave him good spirits as he started his trek. But he did not notice that the further from the valley he went the hotter it seemed. By mid afternoon he had lost sight of the valley and all he saw was sand.

The Sun poured down on his back and sweat oozed from everywhere that it could. Jez was starting to feel weak. He staggered forward and for the first time in his life he found out what real thirst was. In front of him he could see some palm trees so he headed towards them. Jez staggered and fell into the cool tasting water. It felt so good. Jez waited besides the pool getting his breath. A fly was nonchalantly flying past when out of habit Jez flicked at him. The fly turned round and looked at Jez saying, "So it's true that you humans hate flies."

Jez was amazed by this talking fly. It had not occurred to him that flies could talk. That was funny for he had seen rabbits, rats and birds talk "Oh I'm sorry" Jez said, "It was just force of habit."

"Yes" the fly answered, "Your force of habit is usually our force of death."

"No" Jez said, "I have never killed a fly."

"Oh come of it not even one" the fly said laughing, "Everybody has killed a fly."

"Oh yes" Jez said getting defensive, "A lot of people kill flies but I am not one of them."

"Yes, I bet they all say that" the fly said with a sneer.

"If you are calling me a liar" Jez said getting angry, "Then I'll swat you like a...."

"Like a fly" the fly said with a sneer.

"Like a stone, I was going to say like a stone."

"You cannot kill an animal in the valley. Did you know that Jez?"

"We are not in the valley now though" Jez said starting to lose his patience, "And how do you know my name?"

"Everyone knows Jez the fly killer."

Jez was about to lose his temper and swat the fly when a voice inside of him told him to ask it its name.

"Jez the fly killer that's very good" Jez said trying to act friendly. "The birds used to call me Jez the man chick when I first came into the valley. So tell me fly, you know my name now tell me yours."

The fly disappeared and a voice seemed to say "When you know your doubts are false they disappear" Jez felt strong enough to carry on with his journey but decided to rest a while longer. He thought about this meeting with the fly and what the voice had said afterwards. That fly must be one of the tests that he had to pass. Deep down if he thought that he had killed one then he would not have got into the light. The fly had put a doubt in his mind and he had dismissed it because he knew that it was untrue. For lies and doubts fall into much the same negatives.

Jez stayed by the pool for some considerable time, before he knew it night had crept in. He felt that the oasis would be a good place to stop the night. He would make an early start in the morning and

try and catch up. He was feeling quite happy although he did not fancy crossing anymore desert. Jez settled down and found himself falling asleep.

He was aware of what was going on around him as he seemed to gently flow upwards. Soon all around him was darkness and he felt its coldness. He drifted into the dark and found himself back in the valley. He saw the wolf in the darkness and started to walk in his direction. The atmosphere seemed different than usual and Jez sensed that all was not well. Suddenly the blue sky started to throw lightening down into the valley. A bolt hit the Tower nearly cutting it in half.

“What was that?” Jez shouted to the wolf in the distance but he never seemed to hear him. Jez started to run towards the wolf but fell when the ground started to shake. He looked around in panic and saw the hedgerows vibrate violently. “What is happening?” He thought to himself as he got up on his feet. Another bolt of lightning flew down and Jez fell to the floor because he knew that it was close. He heard the lightning crash into the ground and looked up. He could not see the wolf. All that was left where he had been standing was ash and burnt grass.

“Oh no” Jez said almost weeping. He had liked the wolf. Jez looked around and something inside him told him to get the crystal. The ground was still shaking badly as he ran towards the Tower. Lightning was striking all around him, igniting hedges and sending smoke everywhere. Before long Jez found it difficult to see because the smoke had got so thick. It was a struggle but he made it through. The Tower had been badly damaged, but was still intact. He walked up to the blocked entrance and looked at it.

“How am I supposed to get in there?” he said loudly, forgetting that the tiger was there.

“Ain’t that strange” a voice two stories above said in a mocking tone. “You want to get in and I want to get out.”

Jez looked up and saw the tiger looking out of the window laughing.

‘Oh God’ he thought to himself, “I really don’t need this at the moment.”

Jez tried to move the stone but it had fit that tightly that it had jammed. He did not know how to make the stone smaller. There was no way in, he knew that though. It seemed a long way up and he would have to get past the tiger. The ground shook more violently and he saw the valley open up. Lightning struck again and again. Jez knew that time was running out. He looked around and saw the valley and knew that he had very little time.

Jez looked at the top again and took a deep breath. He started to climb. The part of the wall that he started from was beyond the reach of the tiger’s claws. Unfortunately it was not beyond the reach of his voice and Jez had to put up with his taunts. “You’ll never make it.” the tiger kept saying over and over again.

Jez ignored the barracking and made his way up. He never looked down and soon was about half way up. The tiger was on about the same level and looked out at Jez and said, “You’re not going to make it. You feel tired imagine if you fall, you’ll kill yourself.”

Jez carried on towards the top. His legs had been shaking violently at the start of the climb. They steadied now and he was even starting to relax. He looked around to see the valley deteriorating. It looked like a battlefield. On and up he climbed, the tiger shouted, “You’re too late now no crystal can heal that. Jez shut all of his thoughts and carried on up towards the top of the Tower. He had virtually made it now and pulled himself on top of the roof and got his breath back. He looked down at the valley and then at the floor from where he had started. If it looked a long way up from the bottom it seemed twice as far from the top.

“Did I climb that?” Jez said in surprise. This was closely followed by a warm feeling inside him, a

feeling of achievement. Jez turned and picked up the crystal from the stand it was on. It had not been damaged by the lightning bolt Jez noticed as he examined it carefully. He had a feeling that maybe he could climb that mountain after all. Jez put the crystal in his pocket and was trying to decide what to do. Would he have to climb down the wall? A voice inside told him to remain there for he would be safe. The carnage around him was escalating and Jez felt sorry for all the animals out there.

He thought about Davy. Would he be safe? A voice inside said that he was dead anyway so what else could happen. Jez looked over to Davy's new house just to make sure. He knew that he would have been long gone though. He saw the large tree that was the Queen of the Underworld. "That must be the tree that holds my mind to my body" Jez said aloud because of the shock of the realisation. The sky filled with dark clouds which started to rotate spitting out bolts of lightning. The clouds rotated faster and faster like a tornado. This seemed to suck the tree up. Its roots held firm but Jez could see that it was losing the battle. The force of the pull lifted the roots further out of the ground. The ground all around it opened up swallowing up land in seconds. The tree made an unusual sound as it left the ground, it sounded like a howl.

"That's it" Jez said, "That must be what Davy was talking about. I must be dead. That must be the howl of the Banshee."

Jez floated up into the sky and found himself in total darkness once again. As he drifted along the cold air seemed to bite into him. He floated along. "I'm dead", he thought to himself, "What happens now?" The air got colder and this seemed to make him more miserable. "I mean I'm dead" he said aloud, "It's so final."

The voice inside him said, "Well what are you doing here?" interrupting his thoughts.

"Yes, it is true", he thought upon realisation, "I'm still here, mind you thinking about it I should have known. I mean look at Davy." The air all around him warmed up slightly and the cold tang had disappeared. It had come to Jez's notice that whenever he was feeling low the air always seemed to grow colder. Maybe that was it? Maybe that was how the goat fought his battles. It seemed to make sense to Jez as he floated through the fast warming darkness.

Jez thought more about what Colin had said about the butterfly. Maybe he was the chrysalis that Colin was talking about. Jez thought about all the other times Colin had said something that meant nothing at the time but later became useful. Colin had told him all the answers already. He just had to work them out for himself. He had the figures to help him if he needed them.

Jez took the pipe out of his pocket and looked at it carefully. "You might not need it but it's nice to have it around," He said aloud. Thoughts went back to Colin once more and Jez said with a smile, "Clever sod."

Chapter 17.

The cold morning air awoke Jez and along with it came a feeling that he was being watched. He opened his eyes and had a quick look around. About fifteen feet away there was a snake but it was not looking at Jez. It seemed to be doing something strange. It seemed to be shedding its skin. It pulled itself out and left the empty shell behind, "That's better" it said.

"That looks painful" Jez said looking at the empty shell.

"No you don't know you are doing it but when it's gone it's a relief" the snake said looking at Jez.

"Oh my name is Adam by the way" he said as an afterthought.

"Pleased to meet you, my name is Jez," Jez said nodding at the snake. When Jez said his name he

did not notice the slight change in Adam.

“Jez I’ve heard of you, you are quite famous around here you know.”

“I am, for what?”

“I don’t know what have you done?”

“What have I done?” Jez thought for a while. What had he done? That was a good question. After a few moments Jez stopped thinking and said, “If I haven’t done anything then I can’t be famous.” It was the snakes turn to think. He had no answer so he tried another tact.

“I thought you were dead anyway, people are generally more famous when they’re dead.”

“I’m here aren’t I” Jez said happily, “I’ve just lost a shell that’s all”

“No you can’t have, you’re dead”, the snake said for he was a persistent sort of animal.

“Look. I’m still here”, Jez said laughing.

“How can that be?” the snake said in panic.

“It’s is bit like that shell of yours” Jez said pointing at the empty shell.

“Yes?” Adam said looking over.

“I’ve just lost a shell like you did earlier” Jez said but saw that the snake was still confused. “You said that it wasn’t painful and it wasn’t” Jez carried on as if the snake had understood. “Shedding a skin.”

The snake remembered what he had said earlier “You don’t know its happening but when it’s gone it’s a great relief.”

“Yes but I did feel some pain” the snake said but he knew that he was in a hopeless condition.

“Yes, but it didn’t hurt did it. Not really, besides you do it when you are still alive for I am here.”

The snake had no answer for this so he went off in a huff or was it a puff.

Jez was stuck for something to do. He could carry on into the desert or he could let the desert come to him. He had worked out that the more his doubts the larger the desert. With every doubt he faced the desert got smaller. Eventually the mountain would come to him. He was still a little worried about the mountain. Maybe that was what was stopping him from reaching the mountain. His doubt as to whether he would be able to climb it. But the only way to conquer his doubt would be to climb it. This sounded like he might be at the oasis for a long time. It was definitely a catch twenty two situation.

A voice inside him said, “Remember the goat.”

“There’s a time to be bothering me about animals” Jez said for he was still quite relaxed despite his predicament.

“No. Do I have to spell it out for you” the voice said angrily.

“What’s a goat got to do with climbing a mountain?”

“Maybe the goat is the mountain?” the voice said pointing Jez in the right direction.

“And the goat gets bigger the greater my doubts. So you are telling me that the mountain gets smaller like the goat” Jez said slowly getting the point. “And by the time I get to the mountain it won’t be a mountain so I have nothing to worry about. Or should I say doubt about.”

“Well” the voice said, “How does that sound to you?”

“Yes that sounds very good.”

“Sounds like you are getting closer.”

Jez thought for a while. The voice did not seem that bad. Maybe he could be like him? Maybe he would be like him?

“Well” Jez said looking around, “I see no mountain, I must have more doubts.”

“What are your doubts Jez”, the voice inside him said, “Do you still think that this is just a dream?”

“No. I made that mistake before”.

“Maybe you do want to be famous, Jez of the Valley sort of thing” the voice said. Jez found himself getting quite close to the voice, mentally anyway.

Jez thought for a minute, “Bit pointless now really,” and laughed, “There is no valley to be off.”

“Yes, true, so it’s pointless and one less doubt. I can feel the mountain closer all the time.”

“In fact we may even be on it already” Jez said half jokingly.

“You may be right we do seem to be agreeing with each other more.”

“Mind you I don’t like the idea of all this waiting around”.

The voice laughed and said, “You worry too much. There is nothing that you can do about it. Just let it happen.”

Jez went quiet, he felt a bit like the snake, he would have walked off in a huff but the voice was always with him.

“Hang on a minute” Jez said clutching at straws, “There must be something that I’ve missed.”

“You may be there already and you just need to find the question”.

Jez thought about it. It sounded quite possible but finding the question would be a job in itself.

“So how do you go about finding a question?” Jez said thinking aloud.

“Colin springs to mind. Is that a good clue by the way?” It said afterwards by way of a hint.

Colin and clues rang a bell in Jez’s mind. Colin was always telling him things that seemed to help him later and Colin did seem to be around a lot to help him. Maybe he had something to do with it? Jez thought back trying to remember what Colin had told him. “Look” he said to the voice in near desperation, “Could you give me another clue?”

“Colin was there to help you. Wasn’t he?” the voice said in a serious tone.

“Yes. I know that.” Jez said trying to guess for himself.

“And you wanted to defeat the goat didn’t you” the voice said and waited for an interruption but none came so he carried on, “Well maybe Colin had already defeated his goat and now he has to help you to defeat yours.”

Realisation was starting to dawn on Jez, “So the question maybe something to do with that.”

“Now we are getting somewhere. Your turn Jez” the voice said and put the ball back in Jez’s court.

“So Colin may have said something about what the question would be.”

“No” the voice said losing his patience slightly, “The question has something to do with him.”

“Oh” Jez said “What did he say that might help. He asked me if I would like to be an insect once.”

“An insect?” the voice answered, “Yes that will do. Can you remember what you said?”

“I said that I would like to be a bee flitting from life to life.” Jez said talking to himself. He had thoughts that maybe the Sun was getting to him and he was going mad. No he rationalised, if he was going mad then he could not rationalise.

Besides he was just wasting time. Maybe that was only part of the clue. What about when Colin changed into one of those figures? Jez knew that Colin had said that he was from another dimension and Jez knew that Colin was there to help him. So the question might have something to do with that. He remembered Colin telling him that if he made it then so would Colin. Jez had remembered the caterpillar and the butterfly. Colin said that he was the chrysalis, maybe if... Jez stopped a minute. Jez was a chrysalis too now. He would not be a butterfly until he had climbed the mountain and answered the question. Colin was a chrysalis too but he must be from a Higher Self or trying to get into it. Maybe he was in it and his last job was to help somebody else. So if Jez

entered the light and answered the question correctly then Colin could pass his test.

“You are definitely getting there” the voice said interrupting his thoughts.

“God, I forgot about you” Jez said in shock, “I was miles away.”

“No Jez” the voice answered for it seemed to have got stronger, “If anything the miles are getting less.”

“I don’t see a mountain yet” Jez said looking out to the desert.

“You have not worked out the question yet”, the voice said, “And even then it might not bring the light to you.”

“Okay” Jez answered, “One step at a time. Right I have got to think of a question and Colin has left clues to try and help me. He is training me to be in a dimension that he is in, that I am probably in. He is not quite in this dimension and his fate seems to be in my hands. If I answer the question then he has passed and I have passed.”

“No” a voice said from inside him.

“I haven’t passed, I have to do something else”, Jez said getting close.

“Yes” the voice said impatiently, “Something that Colin did perhaps.”

“He’s helping me to get into the light so maybe I have to help somebody to get into the light. Maybe that is the question.”

Jez looked around and saw no sight of the mountain, “Maybe there is something that I have forgot about” the voice said.

“Well” Jez said, “It looks like I’m still walking.”

“No wait. Stay a while we must have missed something.”

Chapter 18.

Jez sat quietly for a while. Why had the mountain not appeared? He was going to have to cross the desert and he was not looking forward to it.

“Have you any more doubts?” the voice asked after about five minutes.

“I don’t know, all I know is that it’s going to be a long walk.”

“You could be walking for ever until you find out what that doubt is.”

“Yes, you’re right. I may as well wait here.”

“That’s a good idea Jez. I have a feeling that one more night should do it.”

“I hope so, anyway what about my doubts. I still have to find them” Jez said, “Anyway why am I talking to you?”

“Because I am here”, the voice said and then jokingly, “Everyone else you meet seems to want to harm you. You don’t know who your friends are.”

“True but what I mean is that if I just think it you will still hear it won’t you?” Jez said as if it was significant.

“Yes, I suppose you could, why?”

“So people won’t think that I am mad for a start. But that makes me telepathic doesn’t it.”

“Yes, well sort of, but what does that prove?”

“It could prove that you are somewhere else” Jez said half heartedly.

“How do you work that out?” the voice said slightly confused.

“It’s alright; I think I’m running out of doubts.”

Jez’s two way conversation was interrupted by a voice that came from behind him.

“Excuse me, may I have some water?”

Jez turned around only to be confronted by a large brown lioness.

“Yes certainly, help yourself, it’s not mine” he said. For some reason he was not afraid of the lioness.

The lioness supped a while and when she had finished said, “Thank you Jez. It’s unusual to see a man that doesn’t want to own the land.”

Jez did not know how to answer this so all he said was, “I must be an unusual man then.”

“Yes what kind of man would kill his brother?” the lioness said fixing Jez a hard stare.

“Not this man” Jez answered. He was slightly wary of the lioness now but that did not stop him from speaking his mind, “Davy died by a shell wound.”

“Oh”, the lioness answered. She thought that he would not have known about his brother’s fate, “I must have misheard.”

“Yes” Jez said, “Well you know what the valley gossip is like.”

“Did you know that the valley was destroyed?” the lioness said half heartedly.

“Yes, I heard.”

“Oh” the lioness had decided that it might be time to scare him. She went serious and said, “It’s been a long time since I have eaten.”

“Oh, and I bet you must be getting hungry.”

“Yes that’s right.” the lioness said unperturbed by Jez’s nonchalant manner.”

“You mentioned my name earlier.”

“Yes, Jez. Everybody knows about you,” the lioness said, seeing that Jez was getting less afraid of her by the second.

“Did you hear about what I did to the tiger?” Jez said fixing the lioness with a menacing look.

“Yes, I heard, but you had the crystal then.”

“What makes you think that I don’t have it anymore?” Jez said still looking at the lioness.

She cowered a little but said, “You left it on the Tower, everybody in the valley knew that.”

Jez took the crystal out and said, “You should not believe all you hear.” The lioness started to walk off.

“Don’t be in a hurry, stay a while.” Jez said almost as an order.

“Well I really must be on my way,” the lioness protested but the crystal made her afraid of Jez.

“Oh no, stay a while please, I want to know all about you.”

“Me, I’m just a lioness.”

“A hungry lioness” Jez interrupted the cringing lioness.

“You are quite brave for a man” the lioness said if she had a sudden flash of inspiration.

“Well I have a good friend” Jez said patting the crystal.

“Yes but would you be brave without that crystal?” the lioness said suddenly getting braver.

“I don’t know” Jez answered honestly.

“Why don’t you find out?”

“Why? That would be stupid wouldn’t it?”

“Are you scared of me?”

“I should be scared of you if you were real” Jez said smiling.

“If I was real, do I not look real to you?”

“You can only do me harm if I let you” Jez said thinking aloud, “But you can’t harm me while I have the crystal. And I have the crystal so I have no fear of you.”

“Yes true, but you said that you don’t believe that I am real” the lioness said, “So why do you need

the crystal if I am not real.”

Jez thought about it. It was true he did not need the crystal. “The crystal is my way of getting around. In fact,” Jez said, “It is rather presumptuous of you to think that I carry this crystal because I am afraid of you.”

The lioness was taken aback slight, “Well maybe not me but you are afraid of something.”

“You mean I still have doubts about going into the light?” Jez said putting the lioness’s statement a different way.

The lioness was amazed that he had such a grasp of the situation

“How can you be sure?” the lioness said, trying to put Jez off his stride.

“Maybe the doubt might be that you are real” Jez answered, “But you are not real so that is not the doubt.”

“Are you seriously trying to tell me” the lioness said changing her plan of attack, “That I am a doubt manifesting in animal form? You will be talking to yourself next” she was trying to put a doubt out about Jez’s sanity.

“And what’s wrong with that?” the voice inside Jez said. He had been quiet for a while and Jez had forgotten about him.

The lioness was stunned for a fraction of a second. She saw that she was losing the battle and getting desperate. “You have an inner voice” she said, “So why do you need the crystal?”

“I like to get out a bit, now and the” Jez answered flippantly.

“You know that you will never get to the mountain while you have the crystal, for you doubt your ability to get into the light without its use.”

This put Jez on the spot. Maybe the lioness was telling the truth. Maybe the crystal was holding him back. He could feel doubts creeping in and with it the journey getting longer. He was about to go down an ever decreasing circle but the voice threw him a lifeline, “You are making the journey without the crystals help.”

“Tell me” Jez said when he had realised, “If I doubt my ability to get into the light why am I making the journey on foot?”

“What do you mean?” The lioness said pleading ignorance.

“You said that I would never get to the mountain while I had the crystal”, Jez reiterated, “For I doubted whether I could climb the mountain without its power.”

“Yes” the lioness said, “It’s a big mountain and on top of it you still have to face the goat.”

“And he gets bigger the more I doubt just as the journey gets longer to the mountain.”

“Yes” the lioness answered. She was amazed at how much knowledge he had gathered. He was nearly ready, she would have to try another doubt, “But that sounds like a journey into the unknown”

“At present it is but I am learning all the time and with knowledge comes light” Jez said looking at the lioness. She seemed to be getting weaker. This gave Jez an idea. “You don’t look too well yourself” Jez said studying the lioness, “Maybe the closer I get to the mountain the weaker you become.”

“Why should that be?” the lioness said defensively.

“Because you are my doubt” Jez answered straight away, “You get stronger by feeding off me.”

“Well I can do that literally” the lioness said changing her tone now for she was clutching at straws.

“As I said you can’t kill me for you are not real besides I am dead anyway. So what can you do to me?”

“Nothing physical maybe” the lioness said in desperation, “But I don’t see no mountain. It has not got nearer so what’s holding you back?”

Jez thought for a while. It was true that the mountain was not getting nearer. He must still have doubts but what could they be. The voice inside him spoke up, “You have a bad memory Jez,” Jez thought to himself impatiently, “What now?”

“Maybe you are already at the light?” the voice carried on unperturbed.

Jez looked at the lioness and said, “Maybe the mountain is not getting nearer because the mountain is already here.”

“That’s a lot of maybes” the lioness answered but Jez saw that she was getting even weaker and this spurred him on.

“Yes that’s a lot of trust” Jez said to the wilting lioness.

“But you are not in the light yet so that means that you have not faced all your doubts” the lioness said by way of inspiration.

“Yes I may still have a doubt” Jez answered, “But I know it is not you.” With that the lioness disappeared leaving Jez to his thoughts.

What was keeping him? He seemed to be getting nowhere. He had conquered doubt after doubt and yet he seemed no nearer.

The voice inside him said, “What do you mean that you are getting no nearer. You can talk to the Higher Self. You have evolved that far.”

“Oh yes” Jez answered, “I am evolving all the time but I don’t seem to be getting closer.” There was a tone of gloom in his voice.

“Don’t worry you are close”, the voice said by way of comfort. “Maybe another night might do it.” Jez looked around and saw that it was getting dark. He remembered Colin’s pipe and thought that it might be a good time for a smoke. Jez took it out of his pocket and fumbled around for a match but he had none.

The voice inside him said, “Don’t worry Jez, you don’t need it.”

He thought for a while and it dawned on him. He did not need it or the crystal. Maybe they were like the Teacher. Jez had out grew it or nearly anyway. Maybe he had evolved? Maybe he was already in the light and like the snake did not know it was happening.

Chapter 19.

“Oh well”, Jez said aloud, “Looks like I’ll probably find out tonight.”

“I think I need more knowledge don’t I” he said to the voice inside him.

“More knowledge?” the voice said puzzled, “What for?”

“The more I know about my doubts the closer I seem to be getting towards the light.”

“You mean the mountain?” the voice said testing his knowledge.

“Well the nearer the mountain the nearer the light for I have to conquer my fear of the mountain.”

“But did you not already do that?”

“When?” Jez said in surprise.

“When you climbed the Tower.”

“Did I?” Jez said thinking, “Oh but the mountain is a lot bigger than the Tower” Jez said as an afterthought.

“Not by the time that you get there”, the voice piped in.

“Not by the time that I get there” Jez said thinking aloud; “There might not be a mountain. Maybe I

just walk straight into the light.”

“You’re getting there” the voice said in encouragement.

“But hang on a minute then. If I stay here then the light will come to me,” Jez said arguing with himself. “Yes” Jez thought, putting a dampener on it, “So why hasn’t it?”

“Maybe it’s like the snake?” the voice chipped in.

“You mean its happening and I don’t know about it but when it’s over it is a relief” Jez said going back into thought. The snake would not leave his mind so maybe it had more to tell him.

After a while he asked the voice, “So you said that I was getting closer to the light didn’t you?”

“Yes that’s right; you would not hear me otherwise.”

“Well the snake suffered a slight amount of pain at the transition didn’t he?” Jez asked the voice.

“Well not pain”, the voice corrected Jez, “Maybe an uneasy feeling.”

“I think that it might be similar to what I have to go through, would that be right?” Jez asked the voice.

“That sounds like you are on the right track.”

“Now something is going to happen tonight. If I can get through it I am in the light” Jez said triumphantly.

“Yes but would it not be an idea to try and work out what it will be” the voice said urging him on.

“Yes” Jez said in mild frustration, “But where would you start?”

“You can only start from where you are.”

“I’m in the Edge of Darkness, what’s that got to do with it?”

“What is the Edge of Darkness” the voice said getting slightly flustered.

“I don’t know, I can’t think.”

“It will come, just relax.”

Jez was sorely tempted to try and call on Starlan for his help but decided that he would make the journey on his own. If the desert shrank along with the mountain when he thought that doubts lessened then the Edge of Darkness must be his doubt. “My doubt must be holding me back” he said to the voice.

“If that’s the case then you would never get in”, it answered laughing.

“Are you from another dimension like Colin?” Jez asked clutching at straws.

“No”, the voice answered, “But who knows after tonight” he said as a clue.

“So it’s all to do with tonight” Jez said in exasperation, “Tonight I go into the light and there is nothing I can do about it.”

“Yes” the voice answered though it was not quite sure.

“Well if there is nothing I can do about it why have any doubts” Jez said and then carried on, “So I need not fear anything because it is going to happen anyway.”

He was getting there he could tell but something was missing. What was stopping him? Maybe it was the crystal? Jez looked at the crystal; he did not need it anymore. Maybe he should return it so that somebody else might find it? The voice inside him told him to put it into the pool. Jez obediently obeyed and sat down. He heard a bubbling and turned towards the pool. It was not its normal calm self. Ripples had appeared and started to turn into waves. The pool started to change colour. It became an orangey gold and seemed to pull Jez closer. Suddenly a shaft of light left the water and made its way to the sky. This lasted about a minute and after that everything went back to normal.

Jez looked into the pool but it had somebody else’s face in it. He had blond hair and a short

cropped beard. Jez went backwards in shock and heard a voice say "Careful" It sounded familiar but when Jez usually heard it it was inside him. Jez turned around and saw a brown cloaked man. It was the man that he had seen in the pool. He was dressed as Colin had been although it was not Colin. Recognition came to Jez as he said, "You must have got out" looking over at him.

The figure smiled and said, "The voice from within so to speak."

"Does that mean that I have passed, and I'm now in the light?"

"Just about, but I must leave you now."

"What, but I'll get bored. This waiting around is getting to me it's worse than the army."

"I must go. You have only one more doubt to face. Good luck Jez."

"But wait" Jez said. The figure waited.

"Does that mean that you are out of my body for good?"

"Oh no, you are not that lucky for you are evolving into me."

"But how can that happen" Jez said in surprise, "I can't evolve into you can I?"

"You are already evolving, after all was that not your face in the pool."

"What, no, it's some kind of trick."

Jez went back to the pool and looked in. The figure's head was still there.

"No it's some kind of trick" Jez said putting his hand in the pool to disturb the water. When the water calmed once more the figure's face was still there.

Jez looked at it more closely and then at the figures. They weren't quite the same.

"So what now" Jez said but deep down he knew that it was going to happen anyway.

"One more night and it might even be a short one."

"This evolvment thing, does that mean that I will even think like you?"

"You nearly already are, for we seem do be agreeing with each other more."

"Err... So?" Jez said in puzzlement.

"When we think as one then surely we are one" the figure said and disappeared. A voice from above said, "Don't worry Jez. I'll come and visit sometimes."

Jez sat down and relaxed. He knew that nightfall would soon be upon him. He wondered what the pain was going to be like. He did not mind pain; well he could tolerate it anyway. It was getting quite dark now but Jez seemed to sense a strange kind of darkness. It seemed heavier and brought with it a sense of discomfort. As the discomfort grew then so did the atmosphere and Jez felt that there was a presence in front of him? He looked over at it. It was like waiting for somebody to appear.

"What do you want of me?" Jez asked.

"It was you who called me" a voice seemed to come into Jez's mind.

"Oh" Jez thought, "You must be telepathic. Well it saves talking. Are you my doubt?"

"Do you have one?"

"Well I don't think so."

"But you are not sure? Nobody can be really sure."

Jez thought. "No I have no doubts" he answered.

"Well if you have no doubts then I cannot be one."

"What are you then, if I'm not being nosy?"

"I am the final shedding of skin so to speak."

"Oh, well what do you actually do?"

"I suppose I halt your progress. Stand in your way as it way."

“Why would you want to do that?” Jez thought in surprise, “I thought that it was in everybody’s interest.”

“I don’t know. I have never really thought about it before” The presence spoke for it was now stronger, “It’s my job I suppose.”

“Your job” Jez said, “A talented thing like you should be able to do more than that.”

“I enjoy it.”

“What stopping people going forward?”

“Yes, well somebody has got to do it.”

“No they don’t, that’s a fallacy. If it’s going to happen anyway what can you do about it?”

“I could slow it down” the presence said starting to get flustered.

“Yes but you can’t stop it,” the presence seemed to get weaker when we said it. “So you are trying to slow me down then” Jez said looking at the presence. “How do you plan to do that?”

“Oh you’re good Jez; very good. But you are not that good. For if you had no doubts then I would not be here.”

“You see I know that I have no doubts but you are still here so that can’t be the reason.”

“But you can’t really be sure.”

“Is that what’s its coming to, petty doubts. You once had a great desert and a huge mountain.”

“How did you know about that?”

“For knowledge defeats doubt and that is what is left of you. Soon you will be no more.”

“That’s a good enough reason to hold you back. While you are here I still live.”

“Well while you are here, we might be some time. Why don’t you tell me what your name is?”

Chapter 20.

Jez stepped into the brightness and felt the warmth in every part of his body. “Oh yes” he said with a wide grin on his face. He stepped through the brightness and found himself inside a castle. Its old stone walls were brightly endowed with ornate paintings. Most of the paintings were knights on horseback. “Lucky I’m not afraid of horses” Jez thought to himself.

“You have not finished yet Jez” a voice came from behind him. Jez turned around to see a large round table with figures sitting around it. It was one of those figures that had spoken to Jez.

“Oh, Starlan” Jez said aloud, “I forgot about the question. I forgot about the telepathy too. I’ll have to remember to keep my thoughts to myself.”

The figures around the table had lost their cassocks and were dressed like knights. Jez recognised Starlan but another figure seemed familiar as well. Jez studied the figures face and it dawned on him.

“Colin?” Jez said looking slightly puzzled.

“Yes ... well no”, the figure replied, “Actually my real name is Callan.”

“Callan ... Colin, I don’t think I recognise you anymore” Jez said with a hint of despair.

“No, I haven’t changed Jez; it is you who has changed. You have evolved. You could soon be one of us, Jez. Imagine it?”

“Imagine what, I don’t really know what it is.” Jez said getting angry.

“You could be that bee flitting from life to life. You could do anything you wanted, imagine it.”

“Why do you keep saying imagine it anyway?” Jez said changing the subject.

“Because that is all you have to do, imagine it,” Callan said with a smile on his face.

“Alright it sounds good, what happens now?” Jez said looking down at Starlan.

“Sit down Jez” Starlan said beckoning Jez to sit down.

Jez sat down and waited.

“We have to ask you a question. But we are generous for the answer only requires a yes or no.” Jez looked at Starlan impatiently. “It’s up to you to decide the correct one” Starlan finished.

That sounded easy to Jez so he said, “Alright what’s the question?”

Starlan looked at Jez and said, “Congratulations Jez. You are in the light. The question is, do you want to go back and help somebody else to get into the light.”

Jez thought but it did not take long before he said, “Yes.”

Starlan smiled and said, “Well done Jez, we have somebody special for you although it’s against the rules. It won’t be for a few years yet.”

Jez smiled in a knowing way and Starlan said, “So tell me, how you think you got on with the quest?”

“Well I’m here, so I must have done alright”, he said with half a smile on his face.

“Did you think that Callan told you too much?” Starlan asked and Jez looked at Callan said jokingly, “I’d like to think that I did it on my own.”

Callan smiled and said, “Cheers Jez.”

“Yes” Jez said in a serious tone, “He did help me a lot.”

Callan had a proud look on his face but it was not for himself. Jez saw the look and said, “Mind you he did make mistakes though.”

“I did?” Callan said with a look of puzzlement.

“Yes with that funny tobacco of yours” Jez said, “You sent me off to find the light but you didn’t give me a match.”

Callan smiled and said, “Well we all have out faults still. And when you know about them then you are half way there.”

“Yes” said Jez and went quiet.

“Tell me Jez. Do you know your faults?” Callan asked.

“I get a bit big headed sometimes” Jez said getting sheepish.”

“Don’t I know it” a voice said from inside him. Jez looked down and said. “Who are you by the way?” to the voice.

“About time too” the voice answered and went on; “I am your Higher Self.”

“You are my Higher Self?” Jez said in astonishment.

“Don’t you know Jez that it has to come from within first?”

“But I thought that these were the Higher Self” he said looking around the table

“No Jez they are a Higher Self” Callan said, “And you have just entered it. Promoted so to speak.”

“And that means that I have to put up with this voice” Jez said.

“Well it does have its drawbacks, but after a time you and the voice will just blend into one” Starlan said interrupting.

“You mean he’s going to take me over?” Jez said half as a statement and half as a question.

“No, nothing like that you will evolve into him”, Callan said taking over from Starlan.

“But that sounds painful” Jez said half heartedly.

“No well you should know that that’s not true Jez” Callan carried on, “After all you are already doing it.”

“I am? ...Oh you mean hearing the noise.”

“Do you mind” said the voice.

“Yes, because you can hear it you are nearly there” Callan answered.
“But didn’t they lock up people who used to do that?” Jez said with a serious look.
“Yes, but you are hearing yourself, they were hearing different people.” Starlan interceded, “Just think of yourself shedding a skin like the one you saw in the desert.”
Jez thought for a while, “Yes” he said after a moment, “That doesn’t sound too bad. I could put up with that.”
Jez was quite relieved. He was not afraid of death but he thought of evolving or being taken over did not really appeal to him. It was the snake that changed his mind.
“So”, he said after a while, “How long does it take to evolve then?”
“Who knows”, Callan answered, “How long is piece of string. You have to bring another into the light.”
“Sounds like a journey of a lifetime.”
“Maybe a thousand lifetimes Jez” Callan said.
“So I could be there quite a few times.” Jez said getting slightly down.
“No, not many now. You are halfway there. You are in the light and now you must take someone with you. You give and you take so to speak” the voice said.
“So what happens when I am helping somebody?”
“As I said you have made it to your Higher Self. Your Higher Self has joined and will remain up here” Callan answered.
“He will help you”, Starlan added, “Much like Callan helped you.”
“So I have to get somebody to go into the light but first I have to get them to want to look for it first.”
“Yes, I suppose that’s a good job description”, Callan said and laughed. “Actually it’s quite fun really. I think you will enjoy it.”
“Yes” Jez said smiling, “It should be fun.”
“Plus by helping them you are helping yourself”, Callan said.
“I know” Jez said but Callan continued, “You learn a lot about yourself.”
“Very true” the voice said out loud.
“So when’s my first assignment then” Jez said looking at Starlan.
“It won’t be for a few years yet but don’t worry for a year is not a long time up here” Starlan answered.
“Mind you” Jez said, “I still have to put up with the voice until then.
“I am afraid so” Callan said.
“I am afraid so” the voice said.

#####

It was another day in another generation in another lifetime that found a small child holding onto his mother’s hand. They were standing at a graveyard and the child was reading the names of soldiers that had died in battle. “John Lorimar, David Mansfield Mum was this the battle that daddy died in?” the small child said looking up to his mother.
“No”, his mother answered with a smile but a sad tear lurked behind sad eyes, “That was the Vietnamese War.”
“Oh”, the child said carried on reading, “Brian Minter, James Minter....so what war was this one?”

he asked looking through his deep blue eyes at his mother.

“Oh, it’s the civil war”, his mother said getting quite angry.

“Oh”, the child said and carried on, “David Molloy.” All of a sudden a shiver went up his back.

His mother had been distracted by a friend and told the child to remain where he was. As the child stayed he had a look around. It was a peaceful day and the birds were signing merrily in the trees.

He was seven years old with dark brown hair and quite an unkempt manner. A voice from behind the hedge distracted him from his study. It was singing a song that the child seemed to know. The boy approached the hedge as cautiously as any child would. Peering over it he saw a small man. He was definitely a man but he was the size of a small child. Dressed in green he was smoking a Black pot pipe and singing....

“I’ve been a wild rover for many a year

And I’ve spent all my money on Whiskey and Beer”

He stopped at this point and looked at the child, “Oh, I’m sorry” the little figure said, “Did I disturb you?”

“No” the child said laughing for he found the whole scene amusing, “Who are you?” The little figure bowed in military fashion and said, “My name is Jez and I travel the worlds.”

This sent the child into hysterical laughter. The child stopped laughing and bowed saying, “My name is Davy and I don’t get out much.” Jez detected a note of sadness in the child’s voice so he said, “Would you like to travel then Davy?”

“Oh yes, but mummy won’t let me”, Davy answered sadly.

“And when you can travel Davy where would you like to go?”

“I want to fight them Vietnamese” Davy said sharply.

Jez thought to himself, “Fighting Pirates, fighting Vietnamese it never stops” then he said to the child, “Tell me Davy why do you want to fight the Vietnamese?”

“Because they killed my daddy” Davy snapped back.

“But if you kill these Vietnamese won’t there be a lot more children without any daddies.”

“Yes, I suppose you’re right”, the child replied and Jez knew that he was ready. “Come with me and let mummy see you” he carried on.

“Oh no, your mother can’t see me David only you.”

“Me” Davy said in surprise, “Why me?”

“Because you’re special Davy and while I am here no harm will ever come to you” Jez answered with a tear in his eye.

Ego Ergo

I

Go

Chapter 1.

The cold rain lashed upon Davy's already sodden body. It cut through his eyes making it difficult to see. Not that there was much to notice on this wet December night. He was at war but he did not know who with. He felt frightened though he did not know why that should be. Then he heard it. It was like a drone and it was getting closer. He heard a voice further down the road. He had a vague recollection but he could not place it. "Artillery," it shouted but Davy was already crouched behind one of the few spartan bushes that dotted the mud infested terrain. The drone got louder and Davy knew that it was coming for him and he was scared. Louder and louder it got and with it Davy's fear grew. "No," he shouted but to no avail. "No," again and again.

"Wake up Davy," a voice said softly next to him, "It's only a dream."

This seemed to comfort Davy and he found himself back in the reality of his own consciousness.

"Are you alright?" the voice said with a genuine tone of compassion, it was a man's voice.

Davy looked up and saw his step father looking down at him.

"Yes," he answered, "It was just a dream."

"Was it the same one?" his step father asked because Davy had, had that dream on numerous occasions.

"Yes dad," Davy answered for he looked on this man as his father, his own father having died nearly ten years before.

"It's alright son it is only a dream it can't harm you."

Davy sat up a while and thought about his step father, he had left the room by now. He was a good man and Davy was happy to be around him. Davy's life had changed dramatically since his mother had met and married him. In fact he was not even living in the same country. He had left America when he was 10 years old and moved over to Ireland with his mother Anne and her new husband Brendan Kelly. His thoughts were interrupted by a small voice that came from the corner of the room. "Sure it was just a dream Davy or maybe a past life?"

Davy looked to where the voice had come from and from the darkness came a small figure dressed in green.

"Jez," Davy said in surprise, "Where have you been? I thought that you would let no harm come to me."

Davy had a good memory for he had only seen Jez once and that was in the grave yard.

"But I haven't Davy boy for no harm has come to you."

"But what about the night mares?"

"Just signals Davy," Jez said mysteriously.

"Signals?"

"Yes for now is the time that you must find out who you are." Davy said nothing so Jez continued,

"Would you like to travel without your body leaving the room?"

"You mean astral travel," Davy said much to Jez's surprise.

"Yes, how did you know about that?"

"Oh I must have read it some where but what makes you think that it's a past life?"

"Well I wouldn't know until you tell me the dream," Jez said and so Davy told him. Jez's smile grew broader and broader. When Davy had finished Jez said, "Yes Davy that was definitely a past life."

"How do you know?" Davy said in surprise.

"Because Davy I was there."

"What, do you mean that I knew a leprechaun in my other life?"

"Well for a start you have a lot more than one life and I wasn't a leprechaun in my last life."

"Oh, then what were you?" Davy said laughing to himself because he still found Jez's new form funny.

"I was your brother and you looked a lot better than you do now," Jez answered, Davy's inner laugh hurt him somewhat.

"Well I guess that I will never know that," Davy said. He had also read about re-incarnation but did

not know too much about it.

“Does that mean that you would like to astral travel then?”

“I thought that I already had.”

“True, but I meant under your control.”

“But to what purpose?”

“Well it will stop the night mares for a start.”

Davy thought for a while before he said, “Is it dangerous?”

“No Davy because you are in control at all times. You can come back when ever you want.”

A voice came into Jez's mind, “That's not strictly true Jez.” It was Callan. Jez answered him in his mind saying, “I'll look after him Callan.”

“You can not always be there,” came the answer.

“Yes you are right Callan,” Jez replied quietly and then to Davy, “When I say that you can come back whenever you want that is not strictly true.”

“How do you mean?”

“While I am here I can keep an eye on you but if you do it on your own you must specify beforehand how long you want to be there for.”

“What must I do?”

“Just lie down and relax and I will guide you through it,” Jez said walking to the bed.

Davy lay back and Jez told him to close his eyes. Davy closed his eyes and felt that he was at the foot of some stone stairs.

“What do you see?” Jez said and Davy told him.

“Now start to climb the stairs and tell me when you reach the top.”

Davy started to climb the stairs and as he did it seemed that his mind was lifting in the same way. With each step that he took he seemed to get lighter and lighter. Soon he was at the top and he felt like he could float. He told Jez.

“Very good, now tell me what you see.”

“I see a wooden table and two chairs.”

“Turn to your right Davy and tell me what you can see.”

Davy turned to his right and saw a dimly lit corridor, on either side were doors and at the very end was another door. Davy told Jez all of this.

“Walk down the corridor to the door on the end,” Jez said and Davy dutifully obeyed. Jez told him to go through the door and not to be afraid. Davy entered into the dark room that was behind the door and floated through with no disturbance. When he told this to Jez it perplexed him slightly because Davy had heard no voices.

“What do you see now Davy,” Jez said not wanting to labour the point.

“I see a large Library and in the middle of it is a table and two chairs.”

“Do you see a book on the table?”

“Yes,” Davy answered and Jez told him to go over and pick it up. When he had Jez asked him what the title of the book was.

“It says Ego Ergo I go,” Davy read. Jez told him to open the book and tell him what was in it. Davy opened the book but the pages were stuck together and a hole had been cut into them. In the hole he found a crystal. He told Jez.

“Very good Davy, now go back to the door after you have put the book down. Go through the door. Do you see a corridor to your right?”

“Yes,” Davy answered still holding the crystal.

“What do you see at the end of the corridor?”

“I see a door with a light behind it.”

“Well go to the door and open it and tell me what you can see.”

“I see clouds it's like a sea of clouds and sky.”

“Have no fear Davy, step onto the cloud, it will take your weight.” Jez said and much to his surprise

Davy did it without hesitation. Once on the cloud Davy's form started to change into that of an eagle. He told Jez and Jez told him to fly. Davy obediently took off and found himself flying quite easily.

“What do you see below Davy?”

“I see a great valley with mountains either side. This is good this is Jez.”

“Stay on the same route and tell me what you can see.”

“I see bright green and yellow fields and a few houses scattered around. I see it turning into sand.”

“Keep going Davy. Soon you will come to a huge mountain that reaches above the clouds.”

Davy carried on but he never saw a huge mountain only a small plateau that led to darkness. After a few seconds the darkness disappeared and everywhere around him had turned to light. He told Jez all this. Jez told him to change back and not to worry because he would not fall. Davy changed back and felt himself being lowered. A new feeling came over him. It felt like he was wearing boots. He told Jez all this.

“Look down Davy and tell me what sort of boots they are.”

“They look like army boots but I can not be sure,” Davy answered and Jez told him to look up and tell him what he could see.

“It looks like I am back in that dream.”

“Now close your eyes Davy and go back three days and tell me what you see.”

Davy closed his eyes and opening them again said, “It looks like I am in a bar during western times but I don't see any cowboys only soldiers. I am sitting on a stool by the bar.”

“Is there anybody with you?”

“Er yes, he looks a bit like you but I can't be too sure.”

“Fine Davy. Now on your left is a big mirror behind the bar. Turn around and see what you look like.”

Davy turned and looked at the mirror. As he saw his reflection a shiver went up his back. He remembered when it had happened before. It was at the grave yard when he had first met Jez.

“David Molloy.”

“Close you eyes and feel yourself being lifted,” Jez said and Davy obeyed. When he opened them he found himself on the top of the stone stairs. He told Jez.

“Walk down the stairs,” Jez said and Davy obeyed. As he went down he found himself getting heavier and at the bottom he felt that he was back to normal. “Now open your eyes Davy.”

Davy did and found himself back in the bed room. “That was me then,” he said when he saw Jez.

“Yes Davy that was you.”

“And you were my brother?”

“Afraid so,” Jez said laughing.

“Why did you show me that?”

“To get rid of your nightmares and to help you get into the light.”

“To get into the light, what is that?”

Jez was about to tell him but a voice pulled him back.

“Look,” Jez said to Davy, “I must go back,” and disappeared.

Davy slept well that night and the nightmares disappeared as Jez had told him they would.

Chapter 2.

“When the arrogance of youth is replaced by the wisdom of experience, then you shall know your God,” Starlan said looking into Jez's very soul.

“But I am in the light,” Jez said with an air of over confidence, “Surely I can not climb higher.”

“You have done well Jez,” Starlan said with a sigh, “And you can be proud of what you have achieved but you are being held back.”

“I am?” Jez said with a puzzled expression, “I don't feel held back.”

“If you are happy to stay where you are then so be it but what about Davy?”

“Davy will be alright. No harm will come to him while I am about,” Jez said, his temper starting to rise.

“No Jez you are harming him,” Starlan answered in a calm voice which seemed to make Jez's temper subside.

“I could never harm him,” Jez said softly, “I think of him as my little brother.”

“I know Jez but that is the tragedy of it all. Maybe you were not up to the job and is that was the case then I am afraid that I must take responsibility for that.”

“You?” Jez said, “Surely I must take responsibility for my own actions?”

“Tell me Jez,” Starlan said changing his tact, “Can you remember when you first learned the alphabet?”

“Yes, although it was a long time ago.”

“How did you feel?”

“Er good I suppose. I can't remember.”

“Did you feel like you could...I don't know, write a book,” Starlan said, his eyes never leaving Jez and this unnerved him a little.

“No I had only learned my alphabet. I could barely write a word or two but that was about it. Look what are you trying to tell me?” Jez said getting impatient.

“Well Jez, basically you have just learned the alphabet.”

“What, do you mean to tell me that that is all I have accomplished?”

“Don't be down hearted Jez,” Starlan said as if to comfort him, “You have come a long way.”

“I have come into the light, surely I can't climb higher?”

“That's right Jez you can not climb higher. Now you have to go deeper,” Starlan said with a smile.

“You mean that I have to go through all that again?” Jez said, his voice had lost its arrogant edge.

“Oh but it's not that bad Jez. Think of it as writing a book but this time you know the alphabet.”

“It sounds like another long trip,” Jez said, his voice disheartened.

“The journey of a lifetime or the trip of a foot but that depends on you.”

“What must I do Starlan or do I have to find that out for myself,” Jez said and Starlan saw the frustration in his soul.

“You are in the light. At present that is your stage of development. You are enlightened for you know that your essence lives on.”

Jez interrupted him at that point, “My essence, what is that?”

“Your essence is your life force, some call it a Soul.”

“My Soul, I thought that was something to do with the church,” Jez said sitting down on the chair that was behind him.

“Yes in a way it is. Tell me Jez do you know the legend of St. Patrick?”

“What, that fellow that got all the snakes out of Ireland?” Jez answered as he sat up to attention.

“Yes that fellow,” Starlan answered smiling, “He also helped to bring Christianity to Ireland. Do you remember the shamrock?”

“God the father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit. Yes I remember.”

“All three are part of the same, are they not?” Starlan said sitting himself down on a nearby chair.

“Yes I see that but what has that to do with my Soul?”

“Patience Jez everything will come to those that wait.”

“Sorry. Please go on.”

“Well what they are all made of is called the essence.”

“You mean that my Soul is part of God,” Jez said quietly laughing to himself.

“Yes,” Starlan said looking at Jez seriously, “But you must have known that already?”

“Well I may be big headed but I never saw myself as a God,” Jez answered deep in thought.

“But you are evolving into one as surely as day follows night for have you not been through the darkness already?”

“So you mean to tell me that one day I will be a God?” Jez said happily.

“Yes Jez, when you stop holding yourself back,” Starlan said leaving the point open.
 “There you go again talking about being held back. How am I being held back?”
 “Arrogance, but before you respond to that I would like you to define God.”
 Jez thought for a while. He had never been much of a church-goer, in fact you could count the number of times that he had been on the fingers of one hand. He had never thought of God as anything but a myth.
 “That's very tricky Starlan. I suppose He is all knowing, all seeing and depending on your religious belief either all forgiving or vindictive.”
 “Very close Jez but over time man had adapted the teachings to suit himself.”
 “Sorry, I don't understand.”
 “God is neither forgiving nor vindictive for only man can be his own judge. He is all knowing though and will gladly share His knowledge when you are ready to hear it.”
 “You mean He is like a pool of knowledge?” Jez said trying to reconcile this new idea.
 “Well that's one aspect of the spirit I suppose but He is a lot more than that.”
 “I remember the church saying that He created Man in his own image. Is that true?”
 “Yes, well nearly anyway.”
 “Nearly, do you mean that He is a She?”
 “No Jez it is not as easy as that. It is not your body that is in His image but your Soul. Your Soul is neither male nor female for it is without real physical form.”
 Jez thought for a while before he said, “I think that sounds about right but why do I keep coming back in different bodies?”
 “Maybe the journey of a lifetime became the journey of many lifetimes.”
 “Yes but to what purpose?”
 “You have to recognise your Self for once you know your Self then you can love your Self.”
 “I thought I did.”
 “You do Jez, in fact maybe too much.”
 “I suppose that brings us nicely back to arrogance,” Jez said looking at the ground, “I know I might be a bit arrogant sometimes but you make it out a big crime.”
 “It's not just a little big headedness that we have to deal with it is the arrogance of man-kind that is still within.”
 “Why must I still take the blame for others,” Jez said, his temper rising slightly. It seemed to him that he was always taking the blame for others actions.
 “No Jez for man-kinds arrogance is that he only sees the God in himself to the detriment of others. Do you think that Man is the only being with this essence?”
 “I never really thought about it.”
 “Tell me. When you were in the desert you were surprised that the fly could talk. Why is that?”
 “I don't know. I don't think that it was a conscious thing.”
 “No Jez that's very good it is not a conscious thing, it was a conditioned arrogance.”
 “Conditioned, conditioned by who?”
 “By Man of course for is that not his wont?”
 “But why, what profit is there in it?”
 “It put life on levels when it should not be for we are all of the same spirit. If you look upon a tree as inferior then you are being held back because light without love is a dangerous thing. Look around the world and see the forests disappear, does not your heart grieve?”
 “Well no er not really,” Jez said sheepishly.
 “What about the Queen of the Inner World. Did her death not mean anything to you?”
 Jez thought for a moment. He felt guilty because he had been too busy trying to rescue the crystal to take any notice, “I never gave it much thought.”
 “Well? Starlan said waiting for an explanation.
 “I did not really know her,” Jez said by way of an excuse.

“You did not really know her,” Starlan said not wanting to let the matter drop, “Did not her death signify yours?”

Jez remembered the howl of the banshee and it brought the message home. “But,” he said eventually, “That was in my mind, it was not real.”

“Define reality to me,” Starlan said patiently.

“Real is something solid, something I can pick up I suppose.”

“Reality is a state of mind Jez for when you were in the valley did you not think of it as real?”

“I think that I have a lot to learn,” Jez said sadly.

“We all still have but now you know the alphabet you have the tools of the trade so to speak.”

“Will you help me Starlan? It is not for me but for Davy for he means a lot to me.”

“I will help you Jez but not for Davy for you because Davy has his own life to lead.”

Jez thought that maybe his arrogance was holding him back and Starlan recognised this. Jez looked at Starlan and said, “How can I control my arrogance?”

“First you must know what it is,” Starlan said and this confused Jez slightly.

“I thought I knew what it was. It's being big headed isn't it?”

“That is only on the surface Jez but its manifestation comes from within. When you can define it then you can control it.”

“What do you mean like I did with my doubt?” Jez asked. He did not fancy going on a vision quest again.

“Well you don't have to go to such an extreme if your heart is in it.”

“Can you give me your definition of arrogance?”

“Well I have gave you one definition already but there are many more,” Starlan answered and as an after thought said, “But I would not be arrogant enough to say it was my definition.”

“Point taken, please go on.”

“Arrogance I suppose is self worth on an enlarged scale,”

“Yes I can see that,” Jez said as is Starlan had finished.

“That is only a collective definition Jez, to get the whole definition you have to go deeper.”

“Once you are in the light you don't go higher you have to go deeper,” Jez said and Starlan smiled.

“Like I said Jez you have learned the alphabet. You have got to the stage that you can see beyond rational acceptance. You can learn the true and hidden meanings of the spirit for pursuit of knowledge goes in many directions. Maybe it should be you defining arrogance to me.”

“I'll give it a try,” Jez said. He thought about the times he had been arrogant, the ones he could remember anyway for sometimes he did not realise he was doing it, “Arrogance is to think that you are a God in the company of men and other beings,” he said triumphantly.

“Yes that is one form Jez but it is still a collective answer. Let's go deeper for arrogance transcends many levels.”

“But I thought that we were all on the same level?”

“We are Jez. It is Man's arrogance that has created these levels, bear with me and I will explain.”

Jez was silent so Starlan carried on, “If you can run faster than someone does that make you better than him?”

“Well it makes you a better runner but I don't see it making you a better person.”

“But if you were arrogant you would because you would think that you are on a higher level of development. Now Jez if you were more intelligent than someone would that make you a better person than them?” Jez went silent for a while. “Now that is the arrogance of Man on a subconscious level. When you realise that levels are not important then you can conquer arrogance and find unconditional love.”

Jez thought again before saying, “Arrogance is greed on an ego level,” and on seeing Starlan smile carried on, “Arrogance is being pretentious on an intellectual level.”

“See how easy it is. Arrogance is vandalism on an emotional level.”

“Sorry, how do you work that out?”

“Don't you think that others have this essence as well? We are all part of the same thing are we not?”

“I never really thought about it,” Jez said sheepishly, “So arrogance tries to steal another's self worth.”

“And you asked me is it was a crime,” Starlan said triumphantly.

Chapter 3.

Jez sat back and relaxed his body. His mind could not relax though. It raced through the possibilities but still he could not see the harm that arrogance was doing to himself. He could see how the arrogance of Man had decimated the countryside but he felt aloof from it all. He reasoned that he was not arrogant in that sense.

“Arrogance is dismissing views that interfere with your own,” Starlan said picking up on Jez's thoughts.

“This is difficult Starlan.”

“I tell you what Jez,” Starlan said after a while, “Let us try this another way, do you believe in good and evil?”

“Yes,” Jez said straight away.

“So tell me then, what is good and what is evil?”

Jez thought awhile before he said, “Good is something that helps you and evil is something that harms you.”

“Yes that's as good an answer as any but arrogance itself is not evil.”

“What, but you said that it was.”

“No Jez. The effect of arrogance is evil to others but the cause of arrogance is harmful to you.”

Jez went deep into thought and Starlan could see that he was confused. Eventually Jez said, “Sorry?”

“As I said before,” Starlan said patiently, “When you hurt others then you hurt yourself. It manifests as guilt in some people and believe me Jez guilt can be more harmful than any crime.”

“Guilt, but I don't feel guilty.”

“To impart wisdom through ignorance is arrogance.”

“Yes I can see that but what has that got to do with me?”

“You were going to help bring Davy into the light. That was what you were sent down to do but Jez you only had half the story.”

“I know enough to get into the light. Surely there can't be much more.”

“Oh but there is Jez, a lot more,” Starlan said and told him to close his eyes. When he did Starlan told Jez to ask 'How much more do I need to know?'

Jez asked the question and through the darkness a wheel appeared and started to get smaller. Another wheel appeared alongside the first but this was a lot bigger. The whole picture got smaller and Jez could see that they were in an open white box. As the box got smaller other boxes appeared around it. These got smaller only to be over taken by a bright light that covered the whole of Jez's vision but still it got bigger and bigger. Jez's head began to feel like it would explode and the pain made him open his eyes, “Yes I see what you mean Starlan.”

“So how were you going to explain that to Davy?”

“I couldn't. I would not know where to start.”

“And how would he explain that to anyone else?”

“Explain it to some one else?”

“Yes, for does he not have to bring someone into the light as well.”

Jez went quiet for a while. How was Davy going to help anyone? Would he even know that he had to help someone? Jez had completely forgotten about that. That must have been what Starlan meant when he said that he only knew half the story. How had he managed to forget something as important as that? His arrogance could have caused Davy a lot of unnecessary trouble. He had also

forgotten all his previous lessons about it being the journey to the answer that mattered more than the answer itself. He had learned a lot about himself during his travels and it had made him a lot better and more confident person. He was stopping Davy from all of that. He was definitely hindering his progress or holding him back as Starlan had said. Jez felt guilty and Starlan sensed it. “Now imagine how much more guilty you would have felt if you would have carried on with your plan for you feel guilty just thinking what could have happened.”

“I see what you mean about arrogance but how can I help Davy?”

“First you must lose your arrogance.”

“Back to square one,” Jez said half jokingly, “But what about Davy?”

“If it makes you feel better Jez you did him some good.”

“I did, how?”

“Davy had taken a lot of learning from his previous life forward and by you taking him back he will rationalise that his essence must live on.”

Jez thought for a while before he said, “He will rationalise, how can you be sure? I mean I only just left him and I imagine that he was quite confused. I mean a leprechaun appears and tells him about something called the light, takes him back to a previous life and disappears. What would you think?”

Starlan laughed loudly before he said, “I wouldn't mind but you only wanted him to stop having night mares.”

Jez went quiet for a moment before saying, “I hope I haven't added to his night mares.”

“That's the trouble with guilt Jez it escalates until it takes over your life. Look as I said before he will rationalise it.”

“Yes maybe Starlan but you can not know for sure,” Jez said sadly.

“Tell me Jez, when you took him back to his previous life you went back three days didn't you?”

“Yes. Are you trying to tell me that you can go forwards as well as backwards?”

“It is only your body that is held by time. Your mind can transcend all that.”

“I never knew that.”

“Knowledge is light Jez for if you are in the dark you can not be in the light. Don't forget though you learn all about yourself by helping others and believe me Jez you can learn from anyone once you have lost your arrogance. To blindly uphold your views without listening to others is arrogance. You will learn a lot from Davy if you give him a chance.”

“Yes I think that you are right. Thanks Starlan you saved me from a lot of guilt and Davy from a lot of pain.”

“Ego ergo I go Jez, ego ergo I go.”

“That was the title of the book in the Library that Davy picked up. What does it mean?”

“It's called the Book of Life,” Starlan said with a smile but Jez was none the wiser.

“The Book of Life Starlan, what's that?”

“As above then so below, ego ergo I go,” but this only seemed to add to Jez's confusion.

“Carry on,” Jez said after a while.

“No Jez I am afraid that, that is your job now for as you said earlier it is not the answer but the journey to find the answer.”

Jez racked his brain for a while before he said, “I think I know how Davy must be feeling now,” and sat back into his chair. “Where do I start, I think that this is beyond me.”

“Well you know the alphabet now Jez, write the Book of Life,” Starlan said and wondered how Davy was getting on.

Chapter 4.

“To help me to get into the light, what did he mean?” Davy said after Jez had disappeared.

“Are you alright,” a voice called from behind the door.

“Yes,” Davy called back, “Dad, what is light?”

“Sorry Davy,” Brendan said coming through the door, “What light?”

“Do you believe in life after death?”

“Well I believe that if you are good you go to Heaven and if you are bad you go to Hell so yes I suppose I must believe in life after death. Why do you ask?”

“It is something to do with the light,” Davy said mysteriously. It was a very confused Brendan that left Davy's room.

After he had left Davy was alone with his thoughts. How could going back to a past life help me get into the light and what is the light anyway? These were two thoughts that would not leave his head. After an hour of thinking a voice inside him seemed to say, “Why don't you go back and find out?”

“Why hadn't I thought of that before?” he thought to himself. He shut his eyes and pictured himself climbing the stairs. He felt himself rise with every step that he took. There seemed less steps this time but he thought nothing about it. At the top of the stairs he turned and walked towards the door at the end of the corridor. He was going to turn left at the top but a voice inside him told him to go through the door. Davy opened the door and walked straight into the Library. He saw that there were two books lying on the table. He recognised the first book as the one he had got the crystal from but the second one was unfamiliar to him. He picked it up to read the title but it did not have one. Davy opened the book and read the lines,

“My light is the light that was given to me so that I can help others to see

My love is the love of the spirit for it was unconditional love

My power is the power of the universal spirit who gives to those who see

To know my name it would be wise it might help you to philosophise.”

It was a very confused Davy that left the Library.

He wrote the verse down when he came round but forgot about it as he had a lot on his mind as his exams were in progress. He had always been an avid reader and eventually he got around to re-incarnation. It triggered off a memory about David Molloy and set Davy thinking once again. He was married now and worked in a local factory making plastic kettles. It was not that good a place to work but in the economic climate at the time he was lucky to have a job. It was his reading that helped him cope with the boredom. His wife was called Megan and it was her that had given him the book. She was heavily into spiritualism and had often tried to bring him into the fold. He had taken no notice before, that was until he had read the book.

“Megan,” he called through the door, “Do you know what the light is?”

Megan came into the living room and said, “The light, what sort of light?”

“Do you believe in leprechauns?”

“Leprechauns, why do you ask?” thinking that maybe Davy was working too hard. He had been doing 12 hours a day for the last 3 weeks.

“I used to know one years' ago,” Davy said sadly and Megan could see that he was telling the truth,

“He told me about the light and took me back to a previous life.”

“Oh re-incarnation,” she said remembering the book that he had just read, “I didn't think that leprechauns had anything to do with that. Didn't they used to trick people though?”

“Oh no he definitely took me back to a past life it was just like the dreams that I had, had before,”

Davy answered as if Megan knew what he was talking about. She did not but guessed anyway for she had read somewhere that sometimes you go back to past lives in dreams. “He was in that life as well.”

“What as a leprechaun?”

“No he was my brother. My name was David Molloy and he was Jez.”

“A leprechaun called Jez, what was he in the other life?”

“A soldier.”

“But why did he turn into a leprechaun?”

“I don't know I forgot to ask. Is this relevant?”

“Well it proves that he could change his shape, just like you did.”

“Like I did?”

“Well you were different weren't you?”

“But the question still remains what is the light.”

“I suppose that when you are in the light then you know what you are. You are not in the dark.”

“But I don't know who I am. Am I David Molloy or am I me.”

“Does it matter who you are? It doesn't alter the fact that you have traveled two lifetimes. That surely must make you immortal, can you see that?”

Davy thought a while before he said, “Okay so I know I'm immortal but to what purpose,” he had remembered that Jez said he may come back many times.

“Now there's a question. Did you learn anything from your last life?”

“Well the first time that I went it was just to learn that I was David Molloy once. Jez said that it would help me get rid of the night mares.”

“Looks like it's out of the frying pan and into the fire. You said the first time, does that mean you went back?”

“Well not quite I got stuck in the Library.”

“Now you have confused me.”

“On my first visit I had to go into the Library to pick up a crystal.”

“A crystal, doesn't that store knowledge?”

“I don't know I was just following Jez's instructions. I went into the Library took the crystal and went through another door changed into an eagle and flew.”

“You changed into an eagle, the shamans used to do that. I think the druids were supposed to be able to do that and the Native Americans, they call it shape shifting.”

“Well I don't know about that. All I remember is flying to a past life.”

“Fair enough but you said that you had been back, what happened?”

“Well I didn't stop that time I only got as far as the Library.”

“You got as far as the Library, what stopped you?”

“I went in and saw two books on the table. I had not seen the second book before so I picked it up. It had no title but inside there was a verse.”

Megan was starting to get really interested, “What was the verse?”

“I can't remember,” Davy said and after a while, “I wrote it down though.”

“Right, so where did you put it?”

“Now there's a question,” Davy said with a smile, “I've only just remembered the incident.”

“I think it might be important.”

“I shouldn't think so it didn't even rhyme,” Davy said laughing. Davy thought a while before he said, “I know where it is.” he walked over to the cabinet behind him and opened the door. He took out a piece of paper from a pile of letters and gave it to Megan. She read it out loud,

“My light is the light that was given to me so that I can help others to see

My love is the love of the spirit for it is unconditional love

My power is the power of the universal spirit who gives to those who see

To know my name it would be wise it might help you to philosophise.

To know my name, that does that mean Davy?”

“That must be the name that was on the book or supposed to be anyway.”

“So you think that when you know the name of this book you will be in the light?”

“I don't know but it will be fun trying to find out.”

“Yes why not, so what was the first line?”

Davy picked up the paper and read, “My light is the light that was given to me so that I can help others to see.”

“My light, is that the light you were looking for?”

“I don't know. I suppose that it must be.”

“So it has been given you to help others to see and it is not physical light is it.”

"No," Davy sad after he had thought a while, "I don't think that it is."
"If it's not physical then it must be spiritual," Megan said going deep into thought.
"Spiritual, how do you know that?"
"Well I thought that being immortal was spiritual, wouldn't you think so?"
"It brings on thoughts of Heaven and Hell Megan."
"Does this life look like Hell then?" Megan said teasing him.
"No lady but it may be Heaven," Davy answered slyly.

Chapter 5.

"As above so below ego ergo I go," Jez said slowly, deep in thought, "Is this something to do with Heaven and Hell?" he asked after a while.
"Only the Hell of your own making," Starlan said laughing.
Jez thought for a while before he smiled and said, "The first bit is to do with my essence isn't it?" Starlan was still smiling so Jez carried on, "It is the same as the Great Spirit's isn't it?" He sat back triumphantly.
"That's good Jez but it's only half the story."
"Yes," Jez said deep in thought, "Only half the story."
"What is the ego?" Starlan said after a while.
"Something that I have on a large scale eh Starlan," Jez said smiling.
"Sarcasm is a comic manifestation of arrogance Jez," Starlan said laughing.
"Quite a bit of a philosopher or have you swallowed the Blarney Stone?" Jez said mocking Starlan. He was only trying to change the subject because he did not think he could answer the question.
"A philosopher is what you need to be for it is not the answer but the journey to the answer," Starlan said for he knew Jez's game, "And Jez when you talk about the Blarney Stone do you mean that I have the gift of the gab or do you mean that I know all the answers?"
Jez thought a while before he said, "Ego, what is an ego," and carried on thinking. After a couple of minutes he said, "Is it my essence Starlan?"
"If it sounds right go with it."
"Yes it sounds right. Ergo what does that mean?"
"Therefore."
"My essence therefore I go, what does that mean?"
"You're too close now Jez see if you can work it out. Think group ego though."
"My essence is also called my Spirit and without it I would not go or should I say our Spirit."
"Congratulations Jez and yes you are right you should have said our Spirit."
"And that is the Book of Life, as above so below with my essence I will go."
"Yes I would say that about sums it up," Starlan said and started to get up
"Just a minute Starlan," Jez said stopping him, "I remember that you once said you have to give in order to receive."
"Yes," Starlan said slightly puzzled.
"I have to answer a question and then I get to ask one."
"Alright Jez what would you like to know."
"What's the Magic Eye?"
"The Magic Eye, some call it the brow chakra, why?"
"Chakra, what's a chakra?"
"You have to answer my question first Jez," Starlan said laughing, "Don't you remember?"
"The Giant Gate Keeper was guarding it. It was the nail that held the inner and outer worlds together," Jez said and smiled to himself on seeing Starlan's puzzled expression.
"The nail, what are you talking about?"
"Don't forget my question Starlan, what's a chakra?"
"It is an expression from the Indian Sanskrit. It is where the three Nadis meet," Starlan answered

but Jez was no better off. He was about to ask him what a Nadis was but remembered Starlan's question, "You wanted to know what the nail was Starlan." Jez said and saw Starlan's face drop. "I had to persuade the Giant Gate Keeper that Man was ready to have the Magic Eye back so he could get into the valley, well try anyway. I used the nail to say that without the eye Man would not see the valley and both would deteriorate."

"Funny that Jez for the brow chakra or Ajna as it is known helps you to get in touch with the Spirit. In fact you could not get into the light without it. I don't know about the valley deteriorating though."

"Starlan I was just a boy. It sounded good anyway," Jez said the second part as an after thought.

"The Spirit only shows you what you can understand Jez and shows you in a way that you can understand it."

"It's kind of rational isn't it," Jez said although not as a question.

"Rational spiritualism, isn't that what philosophy is all about."

"So anyway Starlan, what are Nadis?"

"Prana is the life energy of the Universe. It flows in three principle channels Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. These are called Nadis in Sanskrit. Ida carries the life energy to the left side of the body Pingala carries the energies on the right side of the body and Sushumna down the middle of the spinal column. Now it's my turn for a question Jez. Why are your questions a lot harder than mine?"

"For you know a lot more than me Starlan. So to you my questions seem childish and surely a child's questions are a lot harder to answer. Besides I think you could ask me a lot harder questions if you wanted to."

"Your turn Jez," Starlan said mentally congratulating him on his progress.

"This is quite fun really. Right let me think of a question," Jez went silent for a while before he said, "Tell me more about the Nadis, are they the same energies or different?"

"No they are different. Sushumna is the most important for it is the light and is represented by a snake called the kundalini, it has the power of light. It looks like a snake that's curled around your spine. When it gets activated it gets power from the Spirit. Ida carries the energy to the left side or the negative side of the body. It is also known as the female energy and represents intuition and love to go with the Mother aspect of the Spirit and like a mother's love it is unconditional. Pingala carries the energy on the right or positive side of the body as some would say. It is also known as the male energy and represents power or truth for truth is the ultimate power. So now you can imagine the power of the chakra, light love and truth," and then as an after thought, "Positive and negative are equal Jez just as male and female are. It is only arrogance that creates levels."

"Oh well I suppose it is your turn now."

"No I'll let you have one more before I have to go off," Starlan said.

"Alright, tell me more about the chakras. I know it is not a real question but I don't quite know how to phrase it."

"The chakras well as I said before they were where the three Nadis meet. They converge at six main centres and are called the Muladhara or the root chakra, Svadhisthana, the spleen chakra, Manipura, the naval chakra, Anahara, the heart chakra, Vishhuddha, the throat chakra and Adja the brow chakra. There is a seventh chakra called Sahasrara which is located at the crown. In Eastern music it is represented by Si, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni and in Western as Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti. So now you know your ABC and your Do Re Me. Why don't you have a word with Dominic he's a bit of a stargazer?"

"Dominic, oh I know who you mean. Will he be of any help?"

"If you ask the right questions Jez," Starlan said and disappeared.

Chapter 6.

Davy's pursuit of the light was interrupted by a knock on the door. "I'll get that," Megan said getting up, "It's probably Brendan."

Megan opened the door and Brendan came in, "It's bitter cold out," he said by way of greeting. Megan and Brendan did not really get on together, her views on spiritualism were a bit too unorthodox for him and they were both quite headstrong.

"Come in," Megan said smiling, she quite liked Brendan, it was only his orthodox views that she disliked. Brendan walked through to the living room, greeted Davy and sat down "Busy day at work Davy?"

"Not too bad, they want us in on Sunday again though," Davy said it as if it was not unusual.

"You want to get a decent job lad, you've got your head screwed on you could get something better than that," Brendan said taking out a packet of cigarettes. He offered Davy one, which he politely declined.

"They'll be the death of you," Megan said coming into the room.

"We've all got to go sometime," Brendan said lighting a cigarette, "As long as I get to Heaven half an hour before the devil knows I'm dead."

Davy laughed and said, "We've just been talking about Heaven and Hell."

Brendan laughed and said, "Yes I remember when you were a kid and you asked me if I believed in life after death, after you were having all those night mares." Brendan had a nasty habit of unintentionally embarrassing Davy.

"I'm sure that must have been a long time ago," Megan said.

"Do you still believe in Heaven and Hell?" Davy said unabashed.

"Sometimes I think that this is Hell but yes I guess I still do," Brendan said slightly embarrassed,

"Why do you ask, are you still looking for the light?"

"I never told you what happened did I? Would you say that I was a rational man?"

Brendan thought a moment and said, "Yes I would say so."

"If I told you that I saw a leprechaun that took me back to a past life what would you say?"

"I would say when and how much drink did you have," Brendan said laughing.

"That was the night I asked you about immortality."

"You were just a child Davy with a child's imagination."

"I was 17 dad," Davy said patiently, "I was a rational human. I was doing my 'A' levels."

"Yes but a lot of good that did you. Making plastic kettles."

"There's more to life than money."

"Well that's your point of view," Brendan said with a sigh, "But do you seriously expect to tell me that you saw a leprechaun and that I'll believe you?"

"Well I believe me but I think it was a symbol."

"Where is Socrates when you need him," Brendan said with a mock sneer.

"Sarcasm is a comic manifestation of arrogance," Megan said with a smile. Brendan did not know how to take this so he said nothing except, "What do you mean symbols, who uses symbols?"

"Well your church for a start," Megan said, "What's the cross, is it not a symbol of immortality?"

"What," Brendan said in surprise, "What are you talking about?"

"You have to answer a question before you can ask one. I read it somewhere."

"Well I don't know about that I haven't been following it recently."

"Well he died on a cross and was resurrected again. I would have thought that was immortality."

"Yes but he went to Heaven and Davy is talking about a past life, it's different."

"True but surely him going back to a past life would make a mockery of your Heaven and Hell."

"How do you make that one out?" Brendan said. He was having a bad day.

"Well if he had, had a past life then that would make this either Heaven or Hell and I don't feel hot."

"Yes but how can you be sure that it was a past life. I don't believe in them for a start."

"I don't believe in them either," Davy said, "I know one."

“You are asking me to believe in something that I can not. What about the Bible?”
“You and your Bible,” Davy said mocking him.
“There is a lot of knowledge in the Bible,” Megan said, “If you know where to look.”
“Are we talking about symbolism again?” Davy said.
“Back to the cross again,” Megan said, “But if you look deeper you get more meaning.”
“How do you mean?”
“It is also the sign of strength. When the chakras are balanced and your mind is in balance you are strong. Jesus said that you should love one another and that is your strength.”
“Really,” Brendan said, “How did you work that one out?”
“Oh I must have read it somewhere,” Megan said modestly.
“That must have been a very clever book,” Davy said, “You will have to let me read it sometime.”
It's called the Book of Life but you'll have to write it first,” Megan said mysteriously.
Davy said nothing but wondered how well he really knew Megan.
“What are chakras anyway?” Brendan said.
“Don't worry about it Brendan it wasn't really important,” Megan said, “What about Davy's past life?”
“Alright you are a rational man but it goes against all the teachings.”
“Only the Christian teachings,” Megan said, “Not the Bible teachings as some would say.”
“I think that you are getting a bit deep for me,” Brendan said, “I thought that the Christian and Bible teachings were both the same.”
“Some people are still waiting for the Messiah to come,” Megan said, “And others can not agree on what he said.”
“Yes, well I'll take your word for it,” Davy said, “But what about the light?”
“You are still looking for it then,” Brendan said, “And you must think that being immortal has something to do with it?”
Davy told Brendan the full story and gave him the paper with the verse on. Brendan read it and said,
“Well the love of our God is unconditional. Is God and the Spirit the same thing I wonder?”
“Like a mother and father,” Megan said.
“So you think that being immortal is being in the light?” Brendan said.
“No it's something more but I don't know what,” Davy said, “In the poem you have to help others to see. What good would helping some one to see they were immortal be?”
“Anyway,” Megan said getting up, “I'd better get off. I'll leave you to you card game then,” she kissed Davy, said good bye to Brendan and left.

Chapter 7.

“Ah Dominic,” Jez said to a large balding man, “Just the fellow I'm looking for.”
“Why didn't you call me then, it would have saved a lot of time.”
“I forgot that I could do that.”
“There is no crime in using what is freely given Jez. So anyway, what's the matter?”
“Starlan said that I ought to talk to you. He mentioned that you liked star gazing.”
“Yes I find it fascinating, why?”
“Oh no reason. I think he was trying to get rid of me. He had to get off. So do I get a question to ask then?”
“Sorry?”
“When you answer a question you can ask one. Is that two now?”
“Well it was but now it is only one.”
“Oh I had better be careful then. So what has astronomy got to do with the light?”
“All knowledge is light Jez. Have you forgotten all that you have learned?”
“I suppose I seem to drift off occasionally. All this knowledge is a bit hard to handle.”
“So you won't be asking me another question then,” Dominic said laughing.

“So what had astronomy got to do with the light?” Jez said only to change the subject.

“It helps to predict through planetary alignment.”

“I thought that astrology did that. Oh well I have a lot to learn.”

“It's the same thing to some people you know Jez. It was only when Nicholai Copernicus published his book 'De Revolutionibus' which said that the Earth orbited the Sun that the split happened.”

“Why would that be?”

Dominic thought for a moment before he said, “Well originally men thought that it was the other way round. It was not really a big point because the Spirit only reveals to people what they can understand at the time. The arrogance of Man said that everything must centre around him and when this was disproved the actual information lost its credibility for it did not alter the fact that you could make predictions and be influenced by the stars.”

“How would that be?” Jez said forgetting that it was his turn to answer.

“One step at a time Jez, I believe that it is my turn now.”

“Oh sorry I got carried away.”

“What do you actually know about astrology,” Dominic asked for he was interested in Jez's progress.

“Well,” Jez said going deep into thought, “I know that there are 12 signs of the zodiac but I don't think that I could tell you what they are.”

“Actually the 12 signs of the zodiac are Constellations and the Earth seems to pass around them in the Great Year. The Earth year is also divided into 12. The Spirit teaches that we are made out of the 4 elements, Earth, Air, Water and Fire which are held together by the essence. There are three constellations that influence each element and when the Earth passes around them we come under their influence. It is hard to make predictions though as free will is a double edged sword.”

“Well I guess it is your turn now.”

Dominic thought awhile before he said, “How do the elements influence you?”

Jez thought awhile and said, “I'm afraid that I can not answer that.”

“Now you must pay a forfeit,” Dominic said laughing.

“What. I didn't know anything about this.”

“Don't worry Jez you are immortal.”

“What must I do?”

“You must say this seven times in the morning and seven times at night. I surrender my will to the greater will the will of the divine. I will to will thy will.”

“What is that all?”

“It's not that easy Jez for you will have to mean it.”

“Oh I suppose I don't get any more questions now then.”

“We are not that cruel Jez for you have to ask to learn. So how can I try and help you?”

“So what is the relationship between the elements and the zodiac?”

Dominic thought awhile before he said, “Water influences one side of the body and Fire the other. Air influences the Spirit and Earth influences the Soul. Now they say that the Great Year lasts for about 26,000 years. The Sun seems to pass through the constellations as seen from the Earth during this time. The periods of influence last about 2,000 years or thereabouts.”

“Oh there is a lot more than I thought.”

“Are you up to another question then?”

“Yes, I think that it must be my turn now.”

“I'll have to get up early to catch you out,” Dominic said laughing.

“Yes and on a good day you wouldn't even bother to go to bed,” and they both laughed.

After a while Dominic said, “You turn then Jez.”

“Well I think that I understand what you are saying but could you tell me the Sun's imaginary path and which elements it meets on the way.”

“That's two questions really but I'll see what I can do,” he thought awhile before saying, “It passed

through Leo between roughly 10,000 and 8,000 B.C. which influences the Fire element, between 8,000 and 6,000 B.C. it passed through Cancer which influences the Water element, between 6,000 and 4,000 B.C. it passed through Gemini which influences Air, 4,000 and 2,000 it passed through Taurus which influences Earth. Between 2,000 and 0000 it passed through Aries which influences Fire, between 0000 and 2,000 A.D it passed through Pisces which influences Water. We are now about to enter a new Age, the Age of Aquarius which will influence Air.”

“That's a lot of information to give all in one go Dominic.”

“You always get a better return from the Spirit Jez. I guess it must be my turn now.”

“Oh,” Jez said getting desperate as he did not know if he was up to astronomy, “I'll see what I can do.”

“What has the sign of the cross got to do with the elements?”

Jez thought for a while before he said, “I was going to say nothing at all but I don't think you would ask such an easy question.” Dominic remained silent and Jez started to think. He racked his brain before out of desperation he said the mantra to himself. Nothing happened for a while and then all of a sudden he started talking. “Air is God the Father or your brow chakra, Earth is God the son or your heart chakra and the Holy Spirit is the male and female aspect of God, Fire and Water or intuition and intellect. You touch the sixth chakra to represent the Spirit and heart chakra to represent the Soul.”

“Well you came a long way. What happened?”

“I just surrendered my will and it all seemed to just flood out. How did that work?”

“Well at least the questions get easier. When you surrender your will you lose the arrogance of man-kind. I am afraid that it is my turn to leave now Jez but before I go I will give you two pieces of advice that you might be able to use. Just because you surrender your will it doesn't make your life indolent so don't become that way and don't major on the minors for the orbit dates are not exact.”

Dominic disappeared and left Jez to contemplate.

Chapter 8.

“Right Davy,” Brendan said after Megan had gone, “Where's the cards then?”

“What about the verse then dad, don't you want to try and work it out?”

“I'm not sure. I think it goes against my teachings.”

“Yes but didn't Megan say that the teachings were ill defined until you know how to look that is.”

“Yes but Megan says a lot of things. I don't know where she is half the time.”

“What do you mean?” Davy said getting defensive, “She talks a lot of good.”

“Yes but she spouts about Buddha one moment and the Bible the next,” Brendan said taking out a cigarette, “I mean it has to be one or the other doesn't it.”

“Why, why can't it be both?”

“The Bible says so doesn't it? I read it somewhere or did a priest tell me I'm not sure.”

“I don't think that it does. Have you read it lately?”

“When do I get time I work all hours?”

“You have got to have time to play or like those cigarettes it will be the death of you.”

“These, I can take them or leave them,” Brendan said and took a drag, “When you've got to go you've got to go.”

“Don't you ever wonder where? You have to go to I mean. I thought that would be your main concern when you are immortal.”

“There you go with your immortality again,” Brendan snapped.

“Yes, but dad you believe it. You told me that yourself.”

“I don't know about that anymore. I just seem to be working. I guess that's why it upsets me to see you in a dead end job. Where did I go wrong?”

“Sorry dad?” Davy said for Brendan had never talked to him about this before, “You have not done

anything wrong. I'm happy to be where I am.”

“But you could have done better, you could have been someone.”

“And so could anyone,” Davy sang.

“Alright, I don't know why I bother.”

“Because you love me dad,” Davy said getting serious, “But you have to allow me to love myself as well.”

“But how does working in a kettle factory do that. I mean the pays no good that is why you have to work all those hours.”

“It's only temporary dad, things will pick up soon I will get a better job then. I mean unemployment won't be high forever. I'm happy to do it at this time.”

“But you don't know for sure.”

“No but I can see the signs. Speaking of signs don't you think that where I work is insignificant compared to the light?”

“You don't even know what it is.”

“Yes but this verse will help me.”

“I'm still not sure, what will God say?”

“God gave it to me, well something did anyway.”

“He wouldn't do that.”

“Why not I think the trouble with you dad is that you would rather see the man in God than the God in man.”

“But how will that verse help,” Brendan said and then in desperation, “Are you sure that it was not just a dream?”

“No dad,” Davy said and then went on to tell him about when he had, had the shiver in the grave yard.

“It might have been cold. You were only 7 then anyway.”

“I don't think that you see the point dad,” Davy said getting impatient, “David Molloy was a soldier who died in the American Civil War. My dream was his death but I was him.”

“You can't be sure,” Brendan said running out of arguments.

“Jez took me back to the dream and told me to go back three days and I saw my reflection in the mirror. I knew that it was me.”

“But the church says...” Brendan started to say.

“Which church, East or West, Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile, they are all man's versions surely?”

“Well they were written by men but that does not make them man's versions for the scriptures were given by God.”

“But you have just answered your own question for doesn't Jesus tell you to love one another same as most of the scriptures. That has got to be the main thing. The verse said that God's love was unconditional and your church says that it isn't. Read the Bible again.”

“It's time Davy, I don't have the time.”

“Well why don't you want to help me with the verse, we have time now.”

“I can't see the point Davy. I guess deep down I want to believe you but I can't.”

“Well,” Davy said after a while, “Humour me then.”

Brendan smiled and said, “Alright then let's have another look at the paper.” Brendan read it again and Davy got up and fetched them both a can of lager.

“My love is like the love of God for it is unconditional love,” Brendan said, “That must mean that your love must be like that.”

“Yes I can see that. Do you think that these are instructions?”

“Yes but even if they weren't you would be a better person for doing it.”

“Yes,” Davy said opening his can, “I can see that. What about the light though?”

“Could that be a form of Heaven? When you are in the light you don't have to come back.”

“You do believe in re-incarnation then?” Davy said in surprise.
 “Well you believe in what you saw because you believe that you have done it. I'm not sure.”
 “Okay, yes I can put up with that but how do I get into the light? Wait a minute light is knowledge isn't it?”
 “How do you work that out?”
 “Well when you are in the light you are not in the dark.”
 “But...”
 “Humour me dad, there's nothing on T.V. tonight.”
 “Well maybe you are right. Isn't it telling you to read the Bible then?”
 “And the other scriptures dad as there is more than one faith.”
 “Okay fair enough,” Brendan said and went into thought. He was starting to get interested, “But you said earlier that they all said one thing and that is that we should all love one another so the message is the same.”
 “It is telling you that if you love one another then you will get to Heaven,” Davy said and sat back.
 “Well that's it then. If you love one another then you will get to Heaven. Does it matter where you have been surely it matters where you are going.”
 “I'm not sure about that. What about the last line, it mentions power?”
 “Well that could be Heaven. You will get to Heaven by loving one another.”
 “Maybe,” Davy said hesitantly, “But I think it's more than that.” He thought for a moment before he said, “If light is knowledge then power must be Truth.”
 “Well changed the words around and see what it says.”
 “My knowledge is the scriptures that were given to help me to help others to get to Heaven. My love should be unconditional like God's love and my Truth is God's Truth as written in the scriptures. What about the last line though?”
 “Well it sounds like the scriptures do you think it is the Bible?”
 “No it doesn't seem right,” Davy said and went deep into thought. After a while he said, “The Bible tells you how to get to Heaven doesn't it or how to live your life some would say.”
 “Yes, well why don't you call it the Book of Life then?” Brendan said with a laugh.
 At that moment a shiver went up Davy's back, “Yes why not. It must be. What did Megan say about the Book of Life?”
 “What would Megan know?”
 “Don't get off the point dad. Besides she is a very well read person.”
 “I'm sorry Davy. Didn't she say that you haven't written it yet?”
 “Yes she did but she was quoting from it and it seemed a very deep book.”
 Brendan went deep into thought before saying, “Maybe you have to write your own book?”
 It might help to philosophise, if I knew about life then I can philosophise maybe.”
 “Maybe but you can only write the Book of Life by living it surely. Why not go back and see if it's right?”
 Much to his surprise Davy agreed.

Chapter 9.

“That sounds good to me,” Davy said and finished his drink.
 “Can you then?”
 “How do you think I got the verse?”
 “Isn't it dangerous?”
 “Well if I'm not back in 5 minutes you can bring me back,” Davy said with a laugh and told him to say softly, 'Davy come out' and it would bring him around. Davy closed his eyes and two stone steps appeared. He walked up the steps and felt better. The table and chairs were still there as was the corridor. He walked to the door that led to the Library and walked in. He saw the table with two books on and walked over. He picked up the two books and read the titles. They were both the

same. "Ego ergo I go," he said aloud, "So it isn't the Book of Life."

"But it is Davy," a voice said from behind him.

Davy turned around quickly and said, "Who are you and what are you doing in here?"

"Do you know where you are?"

"In the Library," Davy said and thought a moment before he said, "And knowledge is light so therefore I must be in the light."

"Yes you're right. You don't just read the title you live the contents. Jez would learn a lot from you."

"You know Jez, how is he?"

"He's doing alright and so are you Davy. My name is Starlan and you called me."

"I did, how?"

"You invoked the Will of Karma as they say. When you answer a question you can ask one."

"I think I read that some where."

"Then it will be in the Library along with the rest of the knowledge."

"And I can come here whenever I want?"

"Yes, whenever you need to."

"Somehow I thought the journey would not be over."

"No for after the trip of the foot comes the journey of a lifetime," and started to laugh.

"What, is that some sort of joke?"

"Yes," Starlan said still laughing, "But only on Jez."

"Oh, so that means I get a question then."

"Well I think that you've probably used it up but you can have one anyway. You and Jez have a lot in common."

"That's because deep down we are all the same."

This surprised Starlan, "You've come a long way. So what's the question then?"

Davy thought for a while. There was something odd about the man. A voice inside him told him to ask him what his proper name was, "What is your proper name?"

"I have told you once, it's Starlan."

"Would you invoke the Law of Karma," Davy found himself saying and with that the person disappeared. Davy was about to open his eyes but a voice told him not to. He found himself back in the Library talking to Starlan but Davy sensed that it was not the same one.

"Now what was your question?" Starlan said smiling.

"What happened?"

"You cast out a demon," Starlan said as if it was an every day occurrence, "And now you have cast him out I can contain him. You wanted to know my proper name?"

"Its humility isn't it?"

"Yes that's right but you still have a question if I remember rightly."

Davy thought a while. He was not sure what had actually happened so a voice inside him told him to ask Starlan, "What exactly happened then?"

"Now there's a question that says a lot about you. You could have asked for any knowledge from the Universe but the significance of that transcended them all."

"I thought that would be how do I love my neighbour?"

"No the scriptures and life tell you how to do that but what you did made you a God."

"What?"

"You have cast out a demon, Lucifer to be precise. It's a long story so get comfortable. Do you know the seven deadly sins?" Davy said no so Starlan continued, "Pride, avarice, lechery, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. They are demons just as I am an angel or virtue. You have cast out pride but you can not kill it."

"What exactly are demons then?"

"Demons are tempters I suppose. They stop you from real enjoyment of life and keep you from the

light. Do you know about cause and effect?"

"You cause something and it has an effect on others?"

"Well that's one meaning but on a deeper level the cause comes from the subconscious and the effect ends up in the conscious thus your ego manifests itself from either pride or humility depending on your state of mind. Pride being a demon always leads you to harm but you can't harm it, if you confront it though I can contain it."

"A bit like get behind me Satan kind of thing?"

"Well nearly except that one is anger."

"I didn't realise that each one had a different name."

"Oh yes. Lucifer is pride, Mammon is avarice, Beelzebub is gluttony, Leviathon, envy, Asmodeus, lechery and Belphegor is sloth."

"There is so much to know."

"Davy come out," a voice crept into his mind.

"No," he said but he seemed drawn to it. Soon he was back in another reality.

"What did you bring me back for," he said quite angrily.

"You told me to."

"I was just talking to an angel."

"What you had a dream?"

"No, he was in my mind."

"What is it your turn to humour me now?"

"No I'm serious, he talked about demons," and went on to tell him the story.

"That drink must be strong," Brendan said laughing.

"You know you ought to get into the Library and see what your book is," Davy said with a wicked grin.

"No chance, no way."

"Well that's your choice. It looks like you will have to take my word for it."

Brendan thought for a while. He was a bit frightened but he did have a slight curiosity about it. Eventually he agreed and Davy took him through the steps. He got into the Library and much to his dismay the book was the Bible.

"Was that some sort of joke?" he said when he came back.

"Well you could do with a bit of reading you get more philosophical. I think it wants you to look deeper into the Bible. I wonder what for?"

"Why don't you go back and find out," Brendan said, "I could bring you around again."

Davy did not take much persuading and soon found himself back in the Library. Starlan had gone and Davy was on his own. The two books lay shut on the table and he walked over and opened the first. On the first page he saw a Caduceus, all the other pages were blank. He opened the second book and inside it he found a verse,

Names mean nothing it's all Greek to me

Though my symbol is there for all to see

To understand me that's your quest

For I traveled east and now I'm west.

Davy came back and told Brendan what had happened. "What's a Caduceus?" he said after Davy had finished.

"It's a symbol dad, a very old symbol."

"Another symbol I'm afraid I'd better go now Davy I'm up early tomorrow. I'll leave you to it.

"They're working you too hard," Davy said as Brendan left.

Chapter 10.

Jez remained after Dominic had departed, he had a lot on his mind. Thoughts of astronomy, the elements, chakras and masculine and femininity thought for his attention. It was something Dominic had said about the Spirit and Soul being separate. He had always thought of them as the same. Maybe the Spirit was his Higher Self? That would make sense. The more he thought about it the clearer it seemed. The Soul must evolve to the Spirit. That was what the evolvement thing that Starlan had mentioned must be. Jez thought for a while, he had not heard his inner voice for quite some time. Had he evolved into it already? No, that did not seem right. "Where are you," he thought to himself, "Have you deserted me?"

A voice came back to him, "No Jez I am still here."

"Where have you been?"

"I didn't think that you needed me. I thought that you were happy enough to be where you were."

"No for I don't even know where I am."

"Your evolution is happening all the time for your knowledge grows by the day. Be patient Jez for soon we will be as one."

"But why didn't you think that I needed you?"

"You have got to the stage that you can call me for help so if you don't then I assume that you don't need help."

"I thought that it was Starlan that helped me."

"He is a very helpful messenger but you think of him as a saviour Jez. It is not his sacrifice that is needed but yours."

"My sacrifice, what do you mean?"

"You must sacrifice your will so you can be at one with yourself and then your Soul and Spirit are one."

"I think I did that earlier when I asked about the sign of the cross."

"The elements you mean."

Then it dawned on Jez, "It was you that answered the question."

"Yes, that's right." the voice said but was interrupted by another. "You look deep in thought Jez I could always come back later if you like."

"No," Jez said after he had got over the initial shock as he had not heard Starlan arrive, "I was just going over a few things in my mind. It was not important. So tell me Starlan how was your trip?"

"Not bad. I was actually called to see Davy."

"Davy, how is he?"

"He's doing very well. He was asking after you."

"Can I go and see him?"

"Any time that you want but he is with his wife now. Why not stay a while and keep me company."

"Alright then, so he's married now?"

"Yes to Megan, he's a very lucky man."

"She must be a good woman then." Jez said deep in thought. He was starting to realise more and more that he was a different Davy than he had known before.

"And he is a good man, they make a perfect couple. So anyway how did you get on with Dominic?"

"Well not that good actually. I had to pay a forfeit because I could not answer one of his questions."

"A forfeit, what was that?"

"Oh it was nothing bad I have to say this mantra seven times for a day and a night."

"Starlan burst out in laughter when he heard this. Jez stood there looking bemused and this seemed to make Starlan worse. After he had stopped laughing he said, "I take it that you have never read Irish mythology."

"No I never really got around to it."

"Well you have plenty of time now. Maybe if you do you won't get caught out again."

"Caught out again?"

“Why don't you read the Wooing of Etain, then you will understand why I am laughing.”

Jeze went quiet for a while before he said, “Well you could tell me. It might save a lot of time.”

“Just this once Jez for you have the ability now and Jez you have plenty of time,” and started to laugh again.

“Is this something to do with time?”

“But seriously Jez it is a very poetic tale. The actual piece that concerns you is when Oengus gains possession of Bruig Na Bionde by tricking Elcmar.”

“Oengus and Elcmar. I've never heard of them.”

“Get comfortable Jez I think this is going to be a long story. Have you heard of a place call Tir Na Nog?”

“No, I don't thing so.”

“You might know it better as the Land of the Ever Young.”

“The Valley of the Ever Young that was the name at the entrance of the valley I went into.”

“Yes that's right. Legend said that men and Gods lived there in peace in a timeless world of beauty.”

“It didn't seem that way to me.”

“Well,” Starlan carried on unabashed, “It is also know as the Sidhe or otherworld. The Tuatha De Danaan were vanquished there by the Milesians. They had brought the light over with them from Northern Greece when they emigrated to Ireland. They also brought the Stone of Fal on which the kings were inaugurated. This was purported to come from Falais which was one of the four cities that they had come from. It's Master of Wisdom was called Morfessa which means great knowledge. It was he that gave the stone to the Tuatha De Danaan. The stone was supposed to shriek under the rightful king's foot. They also bought the Spear of Lugh which came from Gorias which was another city. The spear gave victory in battle. They brought the Sword of Nuada from another of their cities Findias. With this sword no one could escape uninjured and the Cauldron of Dagda from the City of Murias. Nobody came away unsatisfied from this cauldron. Tradition says that these represent the four elements, the sword and spear, the cauldron as the cup and the stone of destiny as the pentacle.”

“I think this is going to be one of your longer stories.”

“Well you have all the time in the world to listen. Anyway where was I? The Tuatha De Danaan were vanquished to the Sidhe in Irish legend. Dagda was one of their kings and he wanted to sleep with Elcmar of Bruig Na Boinde's wife Eithne and she consented but she feared Elcmar and his power. The Dagda cast a great spell on him and charged him with a great commission so that nine months seemed to pass in a day. The Dagda slept with Eithne and she bore him a son who was named Oengus who he took to be fostered. Elcmar returned with no idea of what had been happening.

Oengus grew up and found out who his parents were. He went to the Dagda who was also known as Echu Ollathir, King of Ireland for acknowledgement and land. It was decided that Oengus would go to Elcmar and threaten to kill him unless he granted him a request. The request was that he was to be King of Bruig Na Boinde for a day and a night. After that Elcmar returned to reclaim his throne and an argument arose. Oengus said that he would not yield the land for he had requested the land for a day and a night and as the world passes in days and nights by law it was now his for eternity.”

“You mean to tell me that I have to say it seven times for the rest of my life.”

“Yes Jez,” Starlan said laughing, “And the rest of your life will surely be an eternity.”

“I think that I had better start reading a bit more,” Jez said with an air of resignation.

Chapter 11.

As Davy studied the verse he never heard Megan come in.

“I'm back Davy,” she said as she came through the door, “Brendan didn't stop long.”

“No he has to get up early tomorrow.”

“Oh, do you fancy a cup of tea?”

“You sit down I'll make you a cup, you must be freezing.”

“Thanks Davy,” Megan said sitting down, “What have you been up to?”

“Just writing the Book of Life,” Davy called from the kitchen. Davy made the tea and brought it back, “So how was your mother then?” as he passed the cup to her.

“Fine. How was your card game?”

“We didn't play. We were a bit too busy with the verse to play cards.”

“Well,” Megan said after she had taken a drink, “What was the title?”

“It was the Book of Life but Starlan called it Ego ergo I go instead.”

“Starlan, who is Starlan?”

“He is an angel,” Davy said expecting Megan to laugh but all she said was, “A symbol Davy for the Spirit manifests in ways that are understood by those who see.” Davy did not quite understand but said nothing. “Wasn't that the title of the other book?”

“Yes, as above so below.”

“So what happened when you went back,” and Davy told her all the events. After he had finished Megan said, “What's a Caduceus?”

Davy told her that it was an ancient symbol of healing.

“Yes but what does it look like?”

Davy drew a wand with two serpents twinned around it. They crossed over at four points along the wand and their heads looked at each other further up. Above the serpents heads were two wings and above that was a hand knob. She studied it a while and said, “Is this the symbol of the four elements?”

“I don't know. What makes you think that?”

“Well the snakes could represent Ida and Pingala, the male and female aspects of us all which come out as Fire and Water. The wings signify Air and the actual wand signifies Earth.”

“Oh I did not know that but what about the verse?”

“Well the first line tells you what its called well the Greek name for it. The second line says though my symbol is there for all to see.”

“That must mean what it says for it looks like a symbol I have seen in other places.”

“To understand me that's your quest for I traveled east but now I'm west.” Megan studied the symbol once more and said, “The snakes seem to cross in four places.”

“Yes, why, do you think that's important?”

“Well if you counted them as the base, spleen, naval and heart chakra it might be.”

“So you must think that the hand knob is the crown and the wings are the brow but what about the throat chakra?”

Megan studied the symbol again and thought a while before she said, “In Reiki healing you don't actually touch the throat chakra.”

“So you think that the snakes' heads are the throat chakra.”

“Well you did say that it was the symbol of healing.”

“I think that it might be the symbol of balance too.”

“When you are healthy I suppose that you are in balance. Whose symbol is it anyway?”

“It is the symbol of Hermes who was a messenger for Zeus.”

“A bit like an angel then.”

“Yes I suppose you could say that mind you he could be a bit of a devil sometimes.”

“Sorry?”

“He was a bit of a trickster and also the guide of the Souls into Hades. In Greek mythology he was the son of Zeus and a mysterious nymph called Maia who was known as Mother Night.”

“Some people call Hell Hades don't they?”

“Yes, he was the brother of Zeus and Poseidon, the son of Cronus and Rhea. His realm was called the underworld. I suppose that's how it got its name.”

“Wasn't Poseidon a representation of Water and Zeus Air?”

“Yes that's right.”

“So who was Earth and who was Fire?”

“I suppose Demeter would be Earth, they say that her daughter Kore was snatched by Hades and she withdrew her energies and nothing would grow on Earth. The other Gods pleaded with her but to no avail. Zeus sent Hermes to Hades with a request to have her returned. She had been renamed Persperone by then. Hades grudgingly agreed but managed to persuade her to eat a few pomegranate seeds and this sealed their union. When she returned Demeter found out and this meant that she would have to return to Hades. Zeus compromised by saying that she could live for third of the year in Hades and the rest with her mother and Hephaestus was the God of Fire.”

“Was he a creative God?”

“Yes he was highly gifted, very ugly though. He was Hera's son but she was appalled by his appearance and threw him out of Olympus. It was only his creative genius that got him back. Now although he married Aphrodite his counterpart I suppose would be Hestia for she represented the domestic sort of fire as opposed to his creative fire.”

“Do all the elements have counterparts?”

“I don't really know I never looked into it.”

“It doesn't really matter I was just wondering.”

“Well I suppose Zeus counterpart would be Hera but Apollo was also a God of light and his counterpart was his twin sister Artemis. It is said that they represent the masculine and feminine aspects of the brow chakra.”

“So if that's the case who is Hermes counterpart?”

“Now there's a question, the nearest one I could come up with would be Pan but he was not one of the Olympians.”

“Oh and I suppose that Zeus would be the crown chakra,” Megan said thinking aloud.

“I suppose so. Now immortality was actually the domain of Dionysus the twice born, he was a child of Zeus and Semele who was a mortal woman. Hera was furious at Zeus' infidelity and tricked Semele into testing Zeus devotion by getting him to reveal his true form. On seeing it Semele was consumed in flames but Zeus rescued the unborn child. Hermes sewed up the foetus in Zeus' thigh and Dionysus was born. Hera sent the Titans to tear him to pieces but Zeus rescued his still beating heart. The heart was transformed into a potion and Hades fed it to Persperone who became pregnant and Dionysus was born in the underworld. He was hounded by Hera until he was finally established and could live on Mount Olympus. It was only then that Hera accepted him and he became a God.”

“Does Dionysus represent mankind?”

“Yes I suppose he does. How did you know that?”

“It sounds like a story of God realisation.”

“Yes it does really. He had to win over the Gods to become one.”

“Or his chakras were balanced through the struggle that he had to overcome.”

“Very true for the Gods were always arguing with each other.”

“For I traveled east and now I'm west.”

“So it's more than healing then, it's equilibrium, do you want another cup of tea?”

“I'll get them this time,” Megan said getting up and going into the kitchen. After she returned she said, “So what is Greek mythology all about?”

“I suppose it tells you how to get this equilibrium. For example Athene was a warrior Goddess who realised that strength alone was not enough and battle for battle's sake was pointless. She would only fight for a just cause and with wisdom. She defeated Ares who only fought because he liked fighting thus her wisdom controlled his anger.”

“Definitely a lesson in life.”

Chapter 12.

“Do I look upon you as a saviour,” Jez said to Starlan suddenly and much to his surprise.

“What? What makes you say that?”

“It was something that my inner voice said. It said that you were a helpful messenger but it was me who had to make the sacrifice.”

“Well that's true Jez. then that's only a question that you can answer.”

Jez thought a while before he said, “I suppose that I must do. First its Callan and then you. I don't think that I am my own man anymore.”

“Don't worry Jez it is just that you are finally getting rid of your arrogance.”

“How do you work that one out?”

“Even arrogance is a double edged sword for if you think that you are better than someone else more than likely you will think others better than you. It creates levels.”

“Oh, I never really thought of it like that.”

“Mind you it is good that your Spirit has returned to you. That means you must have called him.”

“I think that I was relying on you to give me answers that I should know myself.”

“Nobody knows all the answers Jez that is why we pool all our resources so when you ask a question you gain knowledge and when you answer one you give knowledge.”

Jez thought for a while before he said, “You are a very patient man Starlan.”

“That is because I see how you will be and when you can see it yourself you will be it yourself.”

“I don't understand that.”

“That is where your patience comes in Jez but by admitting it, it gives you a good start.”

“Sometimes I think I'm still in that dream Starlan but it is a pipe dream.”

“Listen to your dreams because sometimes they are visions ask any druid,”and laughed.

“I heard they didn't give much away.”

“No for if they would have shared all their knowledge they would have lost their privileged position. It's all about levels again.”

“But surely by withholding all that knowledge people lived in ignorance, that can't be a good thing.”

“It would only be good to the people that had the knowledge. The saddest thing is that with that knowledge the world would have been a better place. But it wasn't just the druids after all when Adam sowed and Eve span who was then the gentleman.”

“That's good that it. I like that.”

“It wasn't one of mine but I think it sums it up nicely.”

“It's a cruel world Starlan and no mistake.”

“Times change and people with them, listen to your dreams for they will not guide you wrong.”

“It's difficult Starlan for surely they are all not visions.”

“Some are literal, some are symbolic, some are a mixture of both but they are all there to help you when you can understand them.”

“But I don't think that I can.”

“Are you still looking for that saviour Jez? You can do anything that you want to.”

“But what do all the symbols mean, how am I supposed to know?”

“Has arrogance turned to sloth Jez or do you still not recognise your Spirit but you are right it is a tricky subject. Only you can understand the true meanings of the dreams for you understand your personal symbols.” Starlan looked at Jez's bemused expression so he decided that he would have to elaborate. “Do you remember the story of Joseph and his interpretation of the Pharaoh's dream?”

“That was seven fat cows grazing in the meadow and they were eaten by seven thin ones. Joseph said that they would have seven good years followed by seven years of famine. He told him to stock up his barns.”

“Well the Pharaoh had a second dream with seven ears of corn later on it was along the same lines as the cows. As well as being a prophetic dream it was also a spiritual dream.”

“In what sense?”

“He was being told that the battle was also on an inner level. He was to build up his inner strength, to balance his seven chakras.”

“Ego ergo I go, but which is which?”

“Take your pick if you think that it matters. A cow could mean an adversary, physical or mental because to see a dead cow means that you will triumph over an adversary or your enemies. An ear of corn could symbolise mental fertility as well as physical.”

“I think that I might have been majoring on the minors.”

“You're learning all the time Jez but at the time the Israelites did not know about the chakras therefore Joseph only gave his answer on a material level.”

“I'm sorry Starlan but how does that help me to understand my symbols?”

“It doesn't but think of yourself as the Pharaoh. He had to get some one else to interpret his dreams and only got half the answer. Joseph became his saviour for he did the job the Pharaoh should have done himself.”

“I still don't understand.”

“He never evolved spiritually. He never learned by his struggle. He might have been a Pharaoh in that life but that doesn't mean that he would come back as one on his next. He stuck at that level.”

“And you think that is happening to me?”

“It's what you think that counts Jez, if you get stuck you know how to ask for help.”

“Yes you are right. You are a very patient man Starlan.”

“Look deeper for then you will learn by your mistakes. Turn negative into positive, that's the only way forward. That was why you went into the valley in the first place, to fight your doubts.”

“The Giant Gate Keeper and the Magic Eye, I think that my trouble is that I don't learn by my mistakes.”

“Don't dwell in the past for you are now in the present. You can still learn by your mistakes, recognise the God in yourself then recognise the God in others.”

“I still haven't come to terms with my arrogance. Can't seem to get rid of it.”

“You can't get rid of it Jez for you can't kill it. You have to control it.”

“Like the tiger in the Tower,” Jez said upon realisation, “How could I have forgotten that.”

“Don't worry about the past Jez but learn by it. Remember the struggle that you had to go through, it will help.”

Jez remembered and surrendered his will once more.

“Are you ready for another question then Jez?”

“Well I guess I owe you that at the very least,” Jez said humbly.

“I've got a riddle if you want to hear it,” Starlan said smiling, he was pleased that Jez had finally come to terms with his pride but wanted to make sure.

“Yes go on then I haven't heard one of them for a long time.”

“I'm fleet of foot and sharp of mind

I can be cruel, I can be kind

I can do you good or I can do you harm

But it's up to you to keep me calm.”

Jez thought it might be arrogance but the voice inside him told him it was not. He knew he was on the right lines though for the voice told him to look deeper. It asked him what arrogance was on a fundamental level. 'It's a thought isn't it?' he said to it. The voice told him to tell Starlan and see if he was right.

“Is it a thought Starlan?” Jez said not quite sure.

“You should never answer a question with another question for I can not be both a buyer and a seller.”

“It's a thought Starlan,” Jez answered in a tone of surety.

“Yes Jez it is a thought, now it is your turn to ask me one.”

“I think that I have asked you enough Starlan for anyway we have other things to do.”

“We have Jez for now you are ready.”

“Do I have to go back down as a leprechaun,” he asked more by way of conversation because he felt a little nervous at seeing Davy again. He still felt a little guilty.

“Only if you want to, you can go down as yourself if you prefer.”

“Are you coming with me?”

“If you want me to come then I'll come.”

“If you don't mind.”

Chapter 13.

After retiring to bed Davy fell quickly to sleep. He could have a lie in the next day as he had booked a day of work. He was going to replace the back door. He found himself driving a car which was unusual for he could not drive. He had always rode motorbikes and had never felt the urge to learn. David Molloy must have been in the cavalry he thought to himself as he drove along. He was not alone for Jez was sitting next to him. Jez was wearing a long white hooded cloak. Davy looked at what he was wearing and found that he was dressed the same. Starlan was sitting behind them and he was similarly attired. He seemed to be driving to Stonehenge but he did not know why.

“Look over there,” Jez said and pointed to a raven that had flew in front of the car and landed on the verge. Davy did not take too much notice of this as he was more interested in driving. It did not seem that bad in fact he thought he might even learn to drive himself. Starlan told Davy to stop and they pulled into a car-park near Stonehenge. Davy along with the other two got out of the car and looked up to the sky.

“What are we looking for Jez,” he said, “Why am I here?”

“The Spirit is sending healing to the planet,” Starlan said because Jez did not know either, “I thought that you might like to see it.”

“That sounds like a sight worth seeing,” Davy said but Starlan interrupted him before he could continue, “Look can you see that triangle?”

Davy looked up and saw a large fluffy triangular cloud that seemed to be emanating a light through it. It was an unusual sight and it left Davy and Jez standing in awe.

After a few minutes Starlan said, “Come with me,” and went towards the stones. Davy and Jez followed. Davy seemed almost in a trance and just drifted behind Starlan. The air around him was cold, just like a February morning. They walked towards the stones and in the middle was an altar. At the altar Starlan told them to invoke the spirit.

“How do I do that?” Davy said and had a worrying thought as anyone would standing by a sacrificial altar.

Starlan laughed as he read Davy's thoughts and said, “It's alright Davy the Spirit is vegetarian, besides he wants your Will not your body.”

“Oh,” Davy said with a sigh of relief, “How must I do that?”

“You must say along with me and Jez seven times, I surrender my will to the greater will the will of the divine, I will to will thy will.”

They said the mantra seven times and waited. From the left a group of ravens flew in and landed, one to each of the upright pillars. Starlan told Jez and Davy not to worry.

'It's a pity Callan isn't watching,' Jez thought to himself.

'He's watching Jez but from a different place,' Starlan's thought crept into Jez's head.

They stood there for about five minutes and in groups of twos and threes the birds flew off the stones and landed on the green grass about fifty yards away from the trio. After they had all gathered there for a minute they flew back to the left heading towards the copse.

“They must be going to their nests,” Davy said on seeing this.

“They are Davy,” Starlan said, “Be patient.”

Before they got to the copse the birds suddenly veered upwards towards the cloud and disappeared

into it.

“Look at that,” Jez said as he finally managed to speak.

“Keep watching,” Starlan said, “Notice the Sun.”

Davy found that he could look into the Sun which was quite unusual. The Sun seemed to grow strange. It seemed to pulsate in two halves consecutively like a giant heart. With every beat colour shot out in pinks and gold and orange. It seemed to rise higher still pumping but not as strong. A purple orb left the Sun and hovered five feet off the ground about ten feet away from Davy. As they watched a figure that Davy took to be the Virgin Mary transformed around the orb. This lasted for around three minutes and then she disappeared.

“I've never seen anything like this before,” Davy said, “What power, it's out of the world.”

“It's not over Davy, look at the Sun.”

Davy looked up but the Sun was no longer there, “I can't see it Starlan.”

“Look behind you,” Starlan said laughing.

Davy turned around and the Sun seemed to be a hundred and eighty degrees to where it had been before. It was only about three minutes since he had last seen it. It was still pulsating and emanating colour from it. The colours mingled and formed a rainbow which shot across to where the Sun had previously been then vanished.

“I've seen something similar to this before,” Davy said, “But I can't remember where.”

“Think hard,” Starlan said, “Because it is important.”

Davy thought but for the life of him he could not remember. He closed his eyes and saw a Tower. From the Tower a rainbow emerged. His eyes left the Tower and he looked down to see a leprechaun. 'Colin' a voice said inside him. He looked at another figure and recognised it as Jez. As he did a shiver went down his back. Davy opened his eyes and said, “I was in what seemed to be a valley with Jez and some one called Colin, it was very hot.”

“Do you remember Colin,” Starlan said, “Was he familiar to you?”

“No er...I don't think so,” Davy said trying hard, “It was a voice that came into my head.”

“Close your eyes and try again,” Starlan said.

Davy obeyed and found himself back by the Tower. The rainbow had turned too many and gold shafts of light rose up to the clouds but it was starting to haze.

“It's disappearing,” Davy said and started to panic for some reason.

“Keep calm Davy,” Starlan said, “Just say that mantra again.”

As Davy did it started to clear again. He heard a voice saying, “Look Jez there is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.” The voice sounded so familiar to him but he could not remember it.

The shafts of gold cut through the haze and patches of bluey purple appeared and grew, rapidly joining each other. The whole sky became a mass of blue and purple. The colour worked its way down to them and covered the ground. Davy seemed to be sitting now and the colour engulfed him. He thought his hardest and it came back to him. He was in Jez's valley and he was his step brother. Memories came back, memories of his last mother, the famine, everything from his past life in fact and this started to frighten him.

“Relax Davy it will do you no harm. In fact it can only do you good.” Colin said to him and he just seemed to relax and feel its warmth. He saw the whole of his previous life flash in front of his eyes. It all seemed to register with him. The process started to reverse itself and he felt strong and good inside himself.

“That was amazing. I've never seen anything like it,” Davy said and opened his eyes. He looked at Jez and said, “So you were once my brother.”

“You remembered?” Jez said unsure.

“That was when you healed the valley wasn't it with the crystal at the top of the Tower.”

As they walked towards the car Jez answered him, “That's right Davy but which Davy are you?”

“I could never be the old Davy for he had moved on.”

Jez was slightly disappointed when he heard that.

“Don't forget,” Starlan said, “That you are a different Jez to the one that was in the valley.”

Jez did not really believe Starlan so he asked Davy.

“You do seem different actually.”

“Yes but I had a stomach wound,” Jez said not really wanting to accept that he had changed which was unusual because deep down he knew that he had.

“No it's more than that. You seem different.”

“In what sense?”

“You seem a lot more confident, more wiser, I got that feeling that you weren't in control.”

“Sorry, what do you mean?”

“I just mean that you seem a lot more confident.”

“I always thought that I was.”

“You might have thought that Jez,” Starlan said, “But you did not project that.”

“Oh,” Jez said shrugging his shoulders, “That was then and this is now.”

“You're learning all the time Jez,” Starlan said.

Jez looked at Davy and said, “You are still Davy to me and I will always remember you.”

“I'm still the same spirit Jez just the same as you. Think of me as Davy for that is who I am.”

“But just like me you have moved on,” Jez said with a smile, “I'll come round and give you a hand with that door tomorrow.”

Davy thought that it was strange that Jez should know he was going to hang a door the next day but said nothing, “Make sure that you do. I remember the last time that you disappeared I didn't see you for years.”

As they walked to the car they did not notice another raven. It was perched on the toilet block shed. After they had passed it, it took off and flew up into the triangular cloud.

Chapter 14.

It was a new Davy that woke up bright and early, well not that early as he had not heard Megan get up. He felt so alive that he could not believe it. After making some breakfast he got down to the job in hand. The door soon came off after he had scraped the paint from the screw heads on the hinges and he tried the new one for size which luckily for him fitted. Then he hung the door and was drilling the lock when Jez appeared.

“Am I too late?” Jez said on seeing that Davy had nearly finished.

“No I think that you are just in time,” Davy said laughing.

“So anything you want doing?” Jez said as he took a chair.

Davy thought a while before he said, “Can you help?”

“Yes,” Jez answered slightly hurt, “I've hung doors before.” He had not but he thought that it looked easy.

“No,” Davy said in surprise, “Can you pick things up?”

“Yes, although I've never really tried.”

“Try and pick up this chisel,” Davy said and Jez got up and picked up the chisel, “Yes I can,” Jez said in an excited tone.

“Well here's the mallet you can finish the lock off.”

Jez soon came back to Earth again and started chiseling. He tried the lock and much to his surprise it fitted.

“There you are,” he said quite proudly, “I told you I could hang a door.”

“Yes you did didn't you.”

“So are you putting the kettle on,” Jez said and started laughing.

“That's funny that is. Mind you it gets less and less each time that I hear it.”

“Two sugars please,” Jez said getting comfortable.

“Have you seen the T.V.?” Davy said out of the blue.

“A T.V animal, vegetable or mineral?”

“Have a look at this,” Davy said ushering him into the living room. Jez walked in and saw a large rectangular box. Davy turned it on and a soap opera came on. Jez just sat there watching in awe, “They're so real,” he said in surprise, “I just can't believe it.” Davy switched it off and said, “Here's your cup of tea Jez.”

“Thanks Davy,” Jez said and took a sip. It tasted good to him because he had not had a drink in years.

“So how do you manage it Jez?”

“Manage what?”

“To pick things up, to drink, to be here.”

“I don't know. I've never thought about it before. Does it matter?”

“Not really I suppose,” Davy said with an air of disappointment.

Jez thought for a while before he said, “Maybe it is because you are more developed than you think?”

“I think you'll have to explain that one to me.”

“I think I'll have to explain that to me first,” Jez said and laughed. He thought for a while before he said, “If some one else came in do you think that they would see me?”

“I don't know I'll have to think about that one,” Davy said and after a while said, “The more evolved you are the stronger the imagination.”

“Yes it could be couldn't it?”

“So soon I may be able to visit you,” Davy said as if it had suddenly come to him.

“I thought that, that was what you did last night,” Jez said but it had only just dawned on him.

“You were actually in my dream,” Davy said confused, “How did you manage it?”

“No Davy, have you thought that you might have been in mine.”

“It doesn't really matter. Maybe it was that good a dream it was meant for two.”

“I think that we'll make a great team Davy.”

“So what did that dream mean to you?” Davy said getting into the subject in hand, “You must have seen what I did.”

“Maybe it was a message,” Jez said drifting into thought.

“I got that much when I saw the Virgin Mary.”

“It's a task that's too big for two. I bet Starlan knows it already though.”

“I think that maybe he doesn't Jez. We don't know how quickly we have evolved. Maybe we have caught up with him.”

“But he knew what was going to happen,” Jez said trying to shake the thought that he would have to start thinking a bit more for himself.

“I thought that, that was what you were doing anyway,” Davy said aloud and then it dawned on him he was telepathic. It was a toss up between him and Jez at who was the most surprised.

“Now I never knew that,” Davy said thinking of the fun he could have at Jez's expense with his new found talent.

“Telepathy is a bit like Karma, it cuts both ways,” Jez said and smiled.

“Oh well so what about the dream?”

“Work out the symbols and we will understand it but what if Starlan already knows?”

“He doesn't Jez and besides we can do all those things ourselves now.”

“How do you know that?” Jez said surprised at Davy's conviction.

“It could be part of that journey of a lifetime.”

“I hope that its only a trip of the foot.”

“Maybe, for we already have the letters. The information is all around us.”

“Then it will be the trip of a foot,” Jez said relieved.

“Didn't Starlan tell you?”

“Tell me?”

“The trip of the foot becomes the journey of the lifetime,” and started to laugh.

“Anyway about this dream, maybe it will help us on the journey.”

“Yes,” Davy said thinking that Jez may be a little behind him on their travels, “We'll find out one way or another.”

“Starlan knew that it was a healing thing.” Jez said getting the ball rolling.

“The Virgin Mary must be a symbol then,” Davy said after a while.

“Oh healing.”

“What about the Sun then?”

“On a larger scale and deeper.”

“And it shot to where the old Sun used to be that's healing on another level.”

“The rainbow is also healing, balancing the chakras.”

A knock on the door stopped their conversation.

“What shall I do then,” Jez said, “Do you want me to disappear?”

“No they probably wouldn't see you anyway. I'll get rid of them as soon as I can.”

Davy went to the front door and opened it, “Dad,” he said, “What are you doing here. I thought you were at work.”

“The load never arrived it got stuck in France. Do you fancy a pint?”

“No thanks dad,” Davy said. Something inside him told him to invite Brendan in, “Sorry where are my manners come in dad.”

Brendan entered the room and said, “It seems strange in here today.”

“Strange, in what way?”

“Oh it doesn't matter. Have you had any luck with the Caduceus?”

Davy started telling Brendan all that he knew. When he was halfway through the story though Brendan said, “What are you getting mixed up in Davy?”

“Sorry?”

“Who is that figure sitting over there?” and pointed at Jez.

“That is what you could say proof of my story,” Davy said smiling.

“Then you must be Jez. I've heard a lot about you Jez.”

“You too Brendan he's a bit of a lad is Davy.”

“He is that. So I thought you were a bit of a drinking man?”

“This is the first drink I've had in a hundred years and it's only tea. I think that I've evolved more than I thought.”

“So carry on with the story Davy,” Brendan said, “I think that, that beer will keep.”

Davy brought him up to date and he quickly caught up.

“The Sun moved on,” Brendan said, “Do you think that it's a dream about moving into a new Age?”

“Well it moved on so you could be right,” Davy said, “But why would it need healing?”

“Old wounds perhaps before the new Age could begin.”

“Maybe,” Jez said, “So what about the orb?”

“It split into two and disappeared into two bushes, maybe that's positive and negative.”

“Healing of both so maybe they can merge,” Jez said.

“Isn't the orb symbolic of the world and its colour the colour of healing?” Davy said. As soon as he said that Starlan appeared.

“Do you know the answer Starlan?” Jez said.

“You know as much as I do.”

“Would you care for a drink Starlan?” Davy politely asked.

“No thanks Davy I haven't had a drink in 900 years.”

“I thought I was bad,” Jez said, “900 years, that's a long time. So tell me Starlan what did you used to be?”

“Actually I was a Viking,” Starlan said sheepishly, “Lucky I've moved on really isn't it.”

“So I guess you must know about Norse mythology?” Davy said.

“Yes I guess I do. You'll have to bare with me though it has been a long time.”

Chapter 15.

After a few moments thought Starlan said, "I think that Ida and Pingala was represented by the two trees the ash and the elm. Odin created man out of the trees and the Earth from the body of the giant Ymir."

"He was a forgiving God yet very aloof," Jez said as a thought went into his head.

"Yes he was most concerned with the nature of man kind though it must be said he found them, well their antics anyway pretty amusing."

"He was also a healer as well," Brendan said and then as an after thought, "Well I didn't want to feel left out."

"True," Starlan said, "So anyway, he lost an eye in the pursuit of knowledge and also swallowed a draught from the fountain of Mimir."

"Or Vishuddha the throat chakra," Jez said, "Do re me Starlan."

"So by chanting Mimir he opened his throat chakra and got to his next chakra."

"Or the next stage of the Tree of Life," Davy said.

"He gained further knowledge by hanging on Yggdrasil for nine days and night and became clairvoyant," Starlan said, "That is the actual Tree of Life that stretched from Asgard to Hel, the tree bounded together all the kingdoms of Aesir and Vanir. It had 12 regions, each ruled by one of the Gods. They could be the ravens though Odin himself had two."

"Odin's ravens," Brendan said, "Are we talking about thought and memory?"

"Well Hugin and Munin to be precise. It's amazing how quickly these things come back."

"How does this help with the vision?" Brendan asked.

"Well we saw 12 Gods at Stonehenge."

"So if we can find out what this means," Davy said, "The journey might get easier."

"Well they left the stones and flew into that cloud," Jez said.

"Why?" Starlan said.

"Why did the Gods leave us," Davy said, "Was it because they were from the last Age?"

"Last Age," Jez said, "Are we talking about the end of the world?"

"Only their world Jez," Starlan said, "For symbols are not immortal."

"I thought that they were."

"No, 10,000 years may be a lot to us but to the Spirit it is just a drop in the ocean."

"What about the cloud though," Brendan said, "Where did they actually go?"

"Back to Valhalla?" Jez said.

"Do you think that, that represents heaven then?" Starlan said much to Jez's surprise.

"Oh, I thought that you knew."

"No I'm in the dark just as much as you are. I'm re-awakening ideas and putting them in a new, well maybe a stronger light."

"What did they say about the end of the world?" Davy asked.

"Well I haven't seen any Valkyrie about so it must not have happened," Starlan said, "They used to take the slain up to Valhalla."

"But what about the end of the world?" Brendan said impatiently.

"Ragnarok it's called, the last day of time when the Gods and frost giants will have a fight that will involve the whole of creation. It is the most complete description of the end of the world."

"I wish that you wouldn't make it sound so casual, Brendan said, "I find it quite nerve racking."

"Oh sorry," Starlan said, "So anyway it will be preceded by three terrible winters called Fimbul-winter, man will be destroyed from his own self destructive ways. Loki's offspring Fenris appears at the last moment at Ragnarok and devours the Gods. His other offspring are Hel who is a bit of a Hades figure as she used to receive those who died of disease and old age."

"So whilst the warriors went to heaven the peaceful people went to Hel?" Jez said.

"And you thought that you lived in a bad era," Starlan said and smiled, "Loki's was Odin's brother by the way. Anyway his other offspring was the Midgard Serpent. Which grew and grew until its

body encircled the world and it captured its own tail. It was placed at sea by Odin and its writhing caused tempests. It will be destroyed at Ragnarok. So man's self destructive ways will make Fenris and Hel strong for they feed on evil. Fenris will break his chain which is as strong as Creation itself and attack Asgard, thus the Gods will die.”

“What?” Jez said, “No Gods or men, is that it?”

“Certain of the Gods will survive and go and live in Gunli which are the highest heavens while the evil ones are sent to Nastrad.”

“So that was it then,” Jez said, “We have just witnessed the end of the world.”

“Well,” Davy said, “No more to know.”

“Don't you want to know where you go from here?” Starlan said,

“I'm not sure.”

“Are you happy to stay at this level then?”

“Oh, shall we move on?”

“I don't know where though,” Starlan said.

“Maybe I can help,” a voice said from behind them.

They all turned around quickly and saw Megan standing at the door.

“I forgot that you were coming back so soon,” Davy said, “This is Jez and this is Starlan.”

“What were you doing anyway and what's up with Brendan he looks like it was the end of the world?”

“How do you know about the dream?” Davy said.

“What dream? I wasn't being serious.”

Davy went on to tell her the full story. He did not know how she would react but her response still startled him.

“Oh I know about that. I saw it a couple of years ago, 1995 I think it was.”

“February by any chance?” Davy said.

“Yes you remembered. I asked you to come along but you wouldn't.”

“Ah er yes, I remember now.”

“So what are you actually trying to do?”

“We were trying to rationalise it,” Starlan said, “To work out all the symbols to try and make sense out of it.”

“Well why don't you go back into the Library? It worked last time.”

“Yes,” Davy agreed, “If it will help me move on.”

They settled down and Davy was soon back in the Library. He saw the two books and opened them both. In the first one there was a pyramid and in the second there was a verse.

Numbers now, that's the game

The more you climb the more you gain

By helping others you help yourself

With your guide and Spirit to increase your wealth.

He took the verse back and they all mulled over it.

“That was a pyramid shaped cloud,” Jez said after while, “Where all the birds went I mean.”

Starlan thought a while before saying, “Anybody know anything about the pyramids?”

“They were widely spread,” Davy said, “Egypt and South America.”

“They were also transformers for energy,” Megan said.

“Well transformed could also be purified I suppose and it would fit in with the healing theme, maybe it is a higher heaven then,” Starlan said, “So what about the verse, it mentioned numbers, how many tiers were there Davy?”

“Seven. That's 1, 4, 9, 16, 25, 36 and 49,” Davy added up the blocks and it came to 140, “That doesn't make sense,” he said afterwards.

“It's 142 with the extra two but if you add that together it becomes seven again.”

“What's that all about?”

“Look deeper,” Jez said, “7, 142, 7.”

“That's re-birth,” Megan said, “The symbol must be re-birth.”

“So they were reborn,” Brendan said, “That third line looks familiar, by helping others you help yourself.”

“My light is the light that was given to me so that I could help others to see,” Megan said smiling.

“The more you climb the more you gain?” Davy said.

“That sounds like net work marketing,” Brendan said and then laughed.

A shiver went down Davy's back, “Pyramid selling, yes why not. The more you put in the higher up the pyramid you climb.”

“So by helping others you actually do help yourself,” Megan said, “Though how does all this fit in?”

“There is something holding the pyramid back,” Starlan said.

“Why don't we put all the symbols together and see what we get then?”

“A raven landed on the verge,” Jez said, “A messenger perhaps. Then a triangle appeared, could be a symbol of re-birth. Then the ravens appeared.”

“They flew in from the left,” Brendan said interrupting.

“Does that matter?” Davy said.

“Well yes,” Brendan said, “The intuitional side that makes them symbolic.”

“True,” Jez said, “So they landed on the pillars of Stonehenge which was a calendar so maybe they were the Ages.”

“What about the Vikings?” Davy said.

“This one sounds better,” Jez said, “Besides it works on many levels. They left the stones and went to the left and went back into the clouds so moved up a level. Then the Sun started to send healing to the world to prepare for the new Age then moved up a level to signify a new Age and say goodbye to the old.”

“The old Age of Pisces with its symbol the fish” Davy said.

“Right,” Jez said, “So then the ball split in two, more healing and the Sun moved 180 degrees to signify that we are in a new world or had moved on.”

“Then the rainbow did the same,” Starlan said, “But there is something missing.”

“Can I call it a day now?” Brendan said, “It's six o'clock.”

“That went quick,” Davy said, “It always does when we are talking.”

Brendan said his goodbyes and after he had left Jez said, “He's a nice fellow.”

“Are you are work tomorrow Davy,” Starlan said.

“Yes, but we're getting close now aren't we?”

“Yes but tomorrow's another day,” Starlan said getting up, “I must get off I suppose.”

“You're welcome to stop,” Davy said, “Have dinner.”

“It's a long time since I've had a bite, yes I'll gladly stop.” and sat back down again.

“You hungry Jez,” Davy said going into the kitchen to see what there was. He came back and said, “There's a novelty Jez, Irish stew in a can,” and passed it over to Jez.

“It's certainly got a lot lazier this world,” Starlan said.

Chapter 16.

After dinner the conversation got back to the vision.

“What's missing,” Starlan said, “We have been through everything.”

“Not everything,” Megan said, “We must have missed something.”

“We've been through it all though,” Davy said, “Over and over again.”

“It looks like we'll have to go back as a collective,” Starlan said.

“Can we do that,” Megan said, “I thought that it was just a personal thing.”

“Sure,” Starlan said, “Have you still got the verse about light, love and power?”

“Yes,” Davy said and got up and brought it over to Starlan. Starlan told them to sit in a circle and

relax. He then told them to close their eyes and recite the verse omitting the last line.

“My light is the light that was given to me so that I could help others to see

My love is the love of the spirit for it is unconditional love

My power is the power of the universal spirit who gives to those who see”

“What must we need to know?” Starlan thought to himself on a collective level. The room seemed to fill with energy and they felt themselves lift up in a collective astral body and travel towards the dream. “We are here,” Starlan said and they opened their eyes. It was unusual to say the least but it was true to form. Everything happened again. After the rainbow had finished its span it disappeared and they stood around for a while.

“There is something that we have forgot,” Davy said.

“Do Re Me,” Starlan said, “Colours, how could I have forgot. Substitute red for Re, orange for Me, yellow for Fa, green for So, blue for La, indigo for Te and violet for Do, when in balance you have a rainbow.”

“Right,” Davy said, “So what happened to the angel?”

“What angel?” Jez said.

“The raven where did it go?”

“What do you mean where did it go?”

“All the other symbols went back into the clouds but I never saw it again, what about you Starlan?”

“It was on the toilet block roof,” Megan said.

“That was the messenger to announce the vision,” Davy said.

“It was different from the other birds,” Megan said, “It didn't fly to the left before it went into the cloud.”

“That means that it wasn't symbolic for the other ravens were symbols of the great Precessional Age,” Davy said.

“A messenger to herald the formation of the new age perhaps?” Jez said.

“But who could it be?” Megan said, “Mind you he's gone back now hasn't he?”

“No he hasn't,” Jez said, “I haven't seen him anyway.”

Megan thought for a while before she said, “He should have gone by now but look he's still on the shed.”

“What is he waiting for,” Jez said, “Unless we haven't finished the message.”

“He's waiting for us to make sure that we understand it,” Megan said and then realisation hit her,

“Isn't he Starlan?”

But you have got the message,” Starlan said, “Now it's time to ask a question.”

“Sorry,” Jez said, “I don't understand.”

“You answer a question to ask a question,” Megan said.

“Oh yes I know that. I mean are you trying to tell me that Starlan is the raven?”

“That's right,” Starlan said.

“What,” Jez said, “So you mean that you knew it all along.”

“No,” Starlan said, “I work in a different way to you.”

“How?”

“How good is your memory?”

“Try me,” Jez said shrugging his shoulders.

“What's your favourite insect?”

Something strange then happened to Jez, as he thought of a bee a load of other information flooded in. He saw the bee flitting from flower to flower but it had Starlan's face on it.

“You are the bee that I want to be aren't you?”

“That's right Jez but did you notice what happened? That symbol set off a chain of thoughts. By recognising symbols I release knowledge.”

“From where?”

“From my subconscious, from my spirit, all over. It's called collective gathering.”

“That's amazing.”

“Pretty amazing yes, as you get deeper into the light all the symbols trip on a collective level. The deeper you get the more information you get. So Davy, what's your question?”

“Fair enough,” Davy said, “How does helping others help yourself?”

“Well the more you help people the stronger you get. That could be physically, mentally or spiritually. How much better do you feel when you help people?”

“Yes,” Davy said upon realisation, “I have noticed now you come to mention it. I didn't know that it worked spiritually though.”

“The Spirit is generous to those that help it but what it gives it can also take away.”

“Sorry?”

“Cause and effect, that is why you hurt yourself when you hurt others. Your spiritual powers disappear when you have that guilt. It manifests in silly doubts and stops you from being who you want to be. Jez?”

“I think that you have told me enough,” Jez said, “Besides I know how to ask now.”

“That must bring it to my turn,” Megan said, “Mind you it's probably more for Jez.”

“Yes,” Jez said, “How can I help you?”

“Well it's not really a question.”

“Alright, let's hear it anyway.”

“When you first came down to Davy you came as a leprechaun, now when you came down this time you came as yourself.”

“Yes?”

“Does that mean that you have evolved from a nature spirit to a higher level?”

“We don't really put life on levels,” Jez said, “It's more of a collective thing.”

“No I understand that,” Megan said getting flustered, “What I really want to know is why did you come down as a leprechaun?”

“I don't know,” Jez said, “Colin, er Callan was like that when I first saw him, I guess I just followed suit.”

“Oh so Colin must have been Irish as well.”

“Well actually,” Starlan said, “It was a bit of humour.”

“I'm sorry,” Jez said, “I can't see the joke there.”

“Well,” Starlan said smiling, “He isn't from Earth and he liked the idea of being a little green man.”

“Well,” Davy said, “He should have been Irish he has a great sense of irony.”

“You don't seem shocked,” Starlan said, “That surprises me.”

“The world moves on along with the people, it is obvious that there is life on other planets.”

“Has Man's arrogance about being the centre of the Universe changed then?”

“Not the people in power because they want to keep it. There's a lot of people that do believe though.”

“Well I live and learn.”

“One last question,” Davy said, “What shall I tell Brendan?”

“Good question,” Starlan said and thought a moment, “Tell him to look deeper, the Kabbalah or Gnosticism or just to go in the Library a lot more.”

Starlan said his goodbyes and disappeared. The raven flew off the toilet block and straight up into the clouds.

“Who'd have thought it,” Jez said after he had gone, “Callan was from another planet.”

“Well you can go and visit him anytime that you want,” Davy said, “I'm sure that you have a lot of catching up to do.”

“You'll soon be ready to come and visit me,” Jez said, “But I'm afraid that I have to go now.”

“I understand but don't use that as an excuse not to visit.”

Jez smiled and said his goodbyes leaving Megan and Davy alone at Stonehenge.

“Well I guess that's it,” Davy said, “Are we going back for a cup of tea?”

“My aren't you the cool one Davy Molloy.”

Chapter 17. Epilogue

Starlan found himself looking into a mirror. “Are you ready to meet your maker?” his reflection said to him.

“What took me so long?” Starlan said on realisation and then as an afterthought, “When the arrogance of youth is replaced by the wisdom of experience then you shall know you God.”

“So then you will also remember why you were there?”

“To bring people into the light and to help to guide them on their journey.”

“That was the effect but what was the cause?”

Starlan thought for a while before he said, “To find my patience and that is why you introduced me to Jez I dare say.”

The reflection laughed and Starlan found himself laughing. The glass disappeared and became a doorway. Starlan was reluctant at first so the voice said, “Come into the light, come forth and be at one with your Self welcome home.”

Starlan stepped through the door into no thing for that was what he was.

“Self reliance on a collective,” Jez said, “I wonder what trouble went into that thought?”

“Sorry?” Davy said looking at him in a funny manner.

“What wisdom went into that for it must have been said through experience.”

“I don't remember you going through any kind of experience like that and I have known you through two lifetimes.”

“You don't need to experience it consciously for your sub conscious contains all the records.”

“You mean from every lifetime?”

“No, from life and life is everywhere.”

“You mean to tell me that the subconscious contains the records of everything.”

“Yes that's about it. So where did Starlan go?”

“He just moved up a stage I guess. And what is that stage for that is your next step.”

Jez thought awhile and said, “Patience.”

“You mean that you are not quite ready?”

“No, I could go onto the next stage I suppose but when is a guide's job finished?”

“How will you know when you are ready then? Do you think that you haven't done enough guiding by now? You know that you can only take me to a certain stage and then your job is done.”

“So you think that you are ready to bring someone into the light now Davy that smacks of arrogance.”

“Patience Jez for I was about to say that your job was only to bring me into the light.”

“Yes I know but I thought that I would try and help.”

“And I appreciate it Jez but your work is done now and mine must begin.”

“How can that be for I don't know the full extent of my job?”

“When the arrogance of youth is replaced by the wisdom of understanding, then you shall know your God. That was the full extent of your job, it is over Jez.”

“I am finished then for once I embrace my Maker there is no turning back.”

“Don't you want total peace then, to be at one with your self for eternity?”

“Probably just a little fear of the unknown.”

“But you know that what ever the fear is, it's for the greater good.”

“I'll see you when I get there,” Davy said loudly after Jez's departure.

And Jez became a thought that was hidden in the records until he might be called upon once more for help. For knowledge is light as above then so below.

I

Know

Therefore

I

AM

Chapter 1.

Davy found himself floating in a muddy landscape in a dream he had not had in a long time. It was different though for although the scenery was the same he felt different. He felt like he was a conscious bystander where as before he was in the scene. He looked around and saw a figure in the distance.

'That must be Jez,' he thought to himself as he drifted in its direction. Davy got closer and found, much to his surprise, that it was David Molloy.

"How can this be?" he said as he approached the figure.

The figure turned and looking at Davy said, "All that has happened has yet to come just as all that will be has happened already."

This confused Davy more than slightly and he stood there motionless and pondered the statement as he looked at the figure.

"Are you not David Molloy," Davy said after a few moments of useless contemplation.

The figure looked at Davy and said, "Are you not David Molloy?"

"I was at one time but that was another life time in a different world."

"Time is a state of mind Davy just as I am to you."

"Confusion is also a state of mind and you seem to revel in it."

The figure laughed and said, "I am the essence of time, part of the cycle of life if you like."

"Why have you brought me back to the scene of the death of David Molloy?" Davy said. He had thoughts of himself dying in his sleep.

"Death and re-birth Davy. I am death to your re-birth for was not Davy dead to you?"

"Well he was at one stage but I transcended that."

"Correct Davy you transcended time and with it death for surely in an existence based on time you must have a beginning and an end."

"But you are here in my dream you must be here for a reason?"

"Well," the figure said laughing, "I have left my cloak and scythe at home so it can't be the reason that you are thinking. But you are right I have come here for a reason and that is to help you in your spiritual quest."

"Purification of the Soul is that what this is all about?"

"Merge with your Spirit Davy and become at one with the Universe."

Davy thought for a while before he said, "I'm not sure. How do I know that I won't lose my personality, my ego."

"I think that you'll have to explain that one to me or are you trying to get your own back by confusing me?"

"Well I lost my identity as David Molloy, how do I know it won't happen again?"

"That's a good point Davy, do you feel evolved enough to take that chance?"

"I'm sorry, I don't understand."

"Have you crossed the great abyss through Daath," the figure said but Davy was none the wiser,

"Do you think that I would be here if you were not ready?" it carried on.

"The Spirit only reveals what you need to know when you are ready to know it," Davy said as if by sudden inspiration.

"Good Davy, so tell me, do you think that you are ready. Are you strong enough to cope with immortality?"

Davy stopped and thought 'What did he mean by that.'

"Immortality is a long time and yet it is a fraction of a second, but first you must come to terms with time."

"Do you mean that I must defeat you?"

"You can not defeat me in the world of matter for death is a natural law of time."

"True, but we are in a dream a different reality where time has no hold."

"You have a good mind Davy and what you say is true. You have already crossed the River Styx

and now you are looking for a sign, an accolade if you like.”

“How did you know that I mean I didn't know it until now.”

The figure laughed and said, “As above then so below. You have come far Davy and would like something tangible to prove it to yourself.”

Davy went quiet for a while

“That's not a bad thing,” the figure said by way of reassurance, “You can not live on blind faith alone for it won't stand the test of time. My test if you like.”

“But what about astral traveling what about Jez and Starlan?”

“Time is only a good healer because of its amnesic quality soon you will put the astral traveling down as just a dream.”

“But surely that's what it was, a different reality.”

“Yes but with a dream time retracts from its power and then it becomes aloof from reality.”

“Yes,” Davy had to agree, “I could see that happening over time, I would just rationalise it away. But what about Jez and Starlan, I could never forget about them surely?”

“Over worked in an underpaid job you are evolving out of a relationship with Megan.”

“What, my relationship with Megan is strong and will last a lifetime.”

“All that has happened has yet to come just as all that will be has happened already. Maybe if your will is strong enough though you will transcend fate.”

“Why not for have I not transcended death but are you trying to tell me that I will rationalise Jez and Starlan away in time?”

“In time you will put it down to your imagination and forget that your Imagination is part of your reality.”

“I don't think that it would ever happen.”

“You are a spiritualist living in a world of matter, a fish out of water. You may not even be conscious that you are doing it.”

“I thought that we have just entered a spiritual Age, doesn't that mean anything?”

“In time Davy but it might take a couple of hundred years to come about.”

“And what are you going to show me that I could never forget I mean what could you show me?”

“Do you agree to come to terms with me?”

“You mean that you are my Spirit, I thought you were time.”

“I am all things to all men. Do you agree to let me into your life?”

Davy looked at the figure and said, “What does it involve?”

“It involves recognising me as part of your life but on a different plane of existence. I have always been with you but only now will you be conscious of my existence. You must make the conscious decision to recognise me as what I am.”

“If it is part of my next stage of evolvement then I will gladly agree.”

With that something strange happened. Something that surpassed all the telepathy, all the astral traveling, everything that Davy had seen up to date. He felt light. He felt that he was the genie that had been let out of the bottle. The only difference was that the bottle was his body and he seemed to come out of the glass. He felt his whole essence grow and spread out taking everything in its path. He felt like the smoke in the burning building. It felt better than anything he had ever experienced before. He could see nothing only the sky yet even that seemed part of him. He was everywhere but he was still in a conscious state. He was everything. And then he woke up.

Chapter 2.

Davy saw Megan asleep next to him but was reluctant to wake her up. He had a lot on his mind and felt somehow different. He felt that nothing that had previously been important to him mattered now. He felt like the fish out of water that the figure had mentioned. He quietly got dressed and went down stairs to make himself something to eat. He let Megan sleep as it was only 6.30 and she was not at work that day. He wondered what the figure had meant when it said that they were

evolving out of their relationship. This preyed on his mind as he walked the short distance to the kettle factory.

The first part of the day went slowly but that was normal in a factory like that. Davy never wore a watch to work because with such a tedious job five minutes seemed more like half an hour. This disappointment of this realisation had found him looking at his watch every five minutes and then the day seemed even longer. He had toyed with the idea of getting a job that he actually liked and the economic climate was changing enough that he might even find one.

Dinner time slowly made its way around and Davy took a walk to the job centre. He felt different as he looked through the cards. He had found that he could do most of the jobs on the boards but the money was no better. He had visions of himself receiving a golden kettle when he retired. A voice brought him out of his thought chain.

“Davy I thought it was you. I saw you from the window. Are you looking for a new job now?”

Davy turned and saw Brendan, “Yes but I don't think I would be any better off with these.”

Brendan smiled and said, “I'm afraid it's not what you know but who you know nowadays.”

“I think that it always has been like that. So tell me, who do you know?”

“Funny you should say that I've just bumped into an old mate of yours, John Coxen.”

“John, I haven't seen him in years. What's he doing with himself now?”

“Looking for workers well more precisely looking for you.”

“Is he still in the building game?” Davy said getting intrigued.

“No he knocked that on the head about 6 years ago. Couldn't make it pay, recession and all that.”

“So what's he into now then?”

“Logistics, got his own business and contracts coming out of his ears. He wants warehouse men.”

“Warehousing, there's no money in that.”

“Well above the minimum wage and over time if you want it. It's not forced on you if you don't.”

“Sounds good to me.”

“And me, that's why I've already give my notice in.”

“Honest. I thought that the only time you would leave that place was in a box.”

“Times change Davy. Meeting Jez and Starlan was a real eye opener. I feel different, more confident. I feel that I can do anything that I want.”

Davy knew what he meant for when you lose your fear of death the fear of failure seemed to go with it.

“How many people is he looking for?”

“Twenty or so I heard. Why, do you know anyone else?”

“A kettle factory full,” Davy said laughing.

“Go and have a word with him then. His office is only around the corner. If you're quick you can start next Monday.”

Davy looked at his watch and said, “I don't know, I'll be late for work.”

“Loyalty on the minimum wage,” Brendan said laughing, “Or has that job taken away your self respect?”

“Yes you're right,” Davy said with a smile, “Lead the way.”

Davy followed Brendan and soon found himself in John Coxen's office.

“How's it going Davy?” John said standing up and shaking his hand.

“Sound John long time no see.”

“Yes, you looking for work?”

“Any going?”

“Yes to the right people. I haven't advertised it yet as I wanted to do it through people I know first.”

“Yes I can understand that. What about me?”

“Oh yes,” John said as if the question did not need asking, “Stands to reason but I would like you more on the managerial side of things.”

“Really. I've never really thought about that. I thought that it would just be order picking of

loading.”

“Go on Davy,” Brendan said, “Mind you it will mean that you have to start thinking.”

“What will it involve this job,” Davy said to John.

“Initially recruitment. Getting the place up and running and then keeping it running.”

“I'm not sure if I would be up to it.”

“You were virtually doing that at the place we worked for at the temp. agency but you were only on a pittance there but if you don't feel up to it you are welcome to a job on the floor.”

Davy thought for a while and said, “When can I start?”

“Tomorrow if you like or next Monday if you have to give your notice in.”

“Tomorrow sounds good,” Brendan said, “I mean at what they pay it's pocket money. I wouldn't call it a real job and I wouldn't respect it as one by giving my notice in if I were you.”

Davy had a sly smile on his face as he said, “No I'll see my notice out besides it's a good place to recruit staff for the ware house.”

“Good thinking Davy,” John said, “I'm looking for 17 people initially, 2 on the yard, 5 on the loading docks and 10 order pickers.”

John passed Davy some forms with the job descriptions and the wage details on.

“I'd best get back to work I suppose John. Do you want my phone number or anything?”

“I thought that you might join me and Brendan for a pint tonight, sort of a celebration. Besides we can finalise the arrangements.”

“Sounds good to me. Where and when?”

“The bar at the Barley Mow at 8.30 sound good? If you find anyone interested tell them to come along.”

Davy and Brendan said their goodbyes and left.

“Things are definitely looking up Davy,” Brendan said with a smile.

Certainly are,” Davy said thinking about what he was going to say to the foreman. This seemed to put a broad smile on his countenance.

Davy arrived back and clocked on. He was three minutes late as he walked through the large entrance into the spacious factory.

“You're late,” the foreman said on seeing him, “You've lost a quarter of an hour's pay.” He said the last statement as if it was a lot of money.

“What, oh no. £1.50 you can't do this to me, how am I going to eat?”

“You should have thought about that earlier,” the foreman said. He had not quite worked out irony but if it was in the dictionary he would get around to it eventually.

Davy laughed to himself as he went to his spot. His work mate Martin Davies was waiting for him.

“What kept you?” he said on Davy's approach.

“I got another job,” Davy said smiling.

“Lucky bastard, when do you start?”

“Monday,” Davy answered and then as an after thought, “I suppose I had better write my notice out.”

“What just like that,” and shook his head, “Some people have all the luck.”

“They're looking for others why don't you give it a go. You've done yard-work before haven't you?”

“Yes but the pay was no good and besides they would never accept me, I'm too old.”

“You're only 45 man what do you mean too old?”

“Well the money was no good the last time.”

“£3 above the minimum wage and I get to pick the work force how does that sound?”

“This is a wind up isn't it?”

Davy studied him and said, “You're happy to work here for a pittance aren't you but why are you always complaining to me?”

“It sounds too good to be true. I mean is it a safe job or will I be laid off next month.”

“I can't answer that but then again you might be laid off here next month it's all ifs and buts isn't it?”

“Okay but you don't just come and offer me a job that you have just found. I mean how did you get it?”

Davy smiled and said, “It came to me in a dream.”

“What?”

“No only joking. My dad bumped into an old mate, John Coxen. He's got a business and he's expanding. Come down to the Barley Mow at 8.30 tonight, we'll be in the bar. Think about it.”

Martin said that he would and Davy wrote his notice out. He also had a word around the work force and recruited 6 people as definites on meeting John Coxen. It was with a broad smile that Dave gave the manager his notice and left the factory.

Chapter 3.

“I'm home Megan,” Davy said as he walked through the door. Megan was not in so he went through to the kitchen and made himself a cup of tea. He brought it back to the living room and made himself comfortable. Davy soon nodded off and went into a world of his own making. He found himself back in the Library of his mind but this time there was a large mirror in the far corner of the room. He seemed to be pulled towards the mirror as if it was a magnet. He looked into the mirror and saw a reflection but it was not his. Davy studied the reflection of David Molloy for a few seconds and was just about to turn around when the reflection said, “Time is to us as reason needs to be.”

“What?” Davy said in shock for he was not used to a talking mirror.

“One of the riddles of life,” the reflection continued unperturbed.

“Is this my next test?” Davy said coming to his senses.

“Think of it more as a game, the game of life.”

“You are time, well you were the last time I saw you.”

“Only on your side of the mirror Davy for time does not exist on this side of the mirror.”

“Then you are reason,” Davy said more by way of humour.

“Well you are right but how did you know that?”

“It was just a guess. So tell me then if you are reason why must you need to be?”

“I need to be because I am,” the reflection said and on seeing that Davy was confused went on, “I am your reason for living the evolvement of your logic if you like.”

“Then you can be anything that I rationalise. Do you mean that you are my Imagination?”

“Good question but is it not you that are your Imagination.”

“Me?” Davy said and then thought awhile, “I always thought that I was my Will.”

“You are both and yet you are neither for you can not have one without the other.”

“So what exactly are you?” Davy said reverting back to a bemused expression.

“I am a thought inside your head. I am an emotion, I am love.”

“Do you mean that I am controlled by an emotion, is that what you are?”

“Well Davy for a start it is you that is in control for am I not part of you? Besides surely in a spiritual sense you would be better off listening to your heart.”

“Love conquers all,” Davy said more as a statement.

“No Davy but if your will is love then what need have you to conquer?”

Davy thought for a while before he said, “I think that, that fish out of water is a very apt description.”

“Put your imagination behind you and become a flying fish. Rise above the mundane and become whatever you want to be.”

“What about the reality of existence. Love doesn't put food on the table I have to live in a material world.”

“What is the reality of your existence but only to love for were you not born out of an act of love?”

“There are some that might say that they were accidents,” Davy said as if it was a valid point.

“Davy you surprise me majoring on the minors like that. Creation was an act of love and so when

you go against it you against yourself. Are you not the creator of your dreams?"

"No at least not consciously."

"Your mind is expanding but you can only go so far because you can not rationalise the irrational that's why you need your imagination."

"Because reason needs to be, is that not a bit of a contradiction?"

"Logical Davy as logical as time maybe."

"Time. Where does that fit in?"

"In the beginning of course, when did you start with logic?"

"In the beginning with the word."

"And the word was love, the reason that needs to be for creation."

"The creation of time so time for me was for my creation for I need to believe in you, to learn how to love so that I may join with you and become one with the Universe."

"The cycle of life Davy, can you cope with all that knowledge?"

"I could always put it down to my imagination," Davy said and laughed.

"Good to see that your feet are firmly on the ground. You don't want to live in the clouds."

"Food's on the table and not in the sky and love has to be shared."

"Good point. Megan and you are going to have problems Davy."

"No I could never see that and don't forget that I have a good imagination."

"I wish you well Davy your journey has just begun."

"Is that it? You mean we are to part in our ways?"

"No Davy we never part in our ways. As long as you still believe in me you will see me everywhere you look."

"Love is all around so to speak," Davy said with a smile.

"It's up to you to see it. Believe in love and you believe in your Self."

"You said that my journey has just begun do you mean that I have more tests to do?"

"Only the trials of life Davy but if you believe in me then I will always be there to help you."

"Will I see you again, like this I mean?"

"Yes you know how to get in touch just meditate in my direction."

With that the mirror disappeared leaving Davy alone in the Library. He looked around the shelves but found his eyes wandering towards the table. He saw a large book on it and so walked over towards it. He picked up the book and opened it. Inside he found a verse,

If ignorance is bliss then it's folly to be wise

A wise man must have said that to fill your head with lies

For ignorance will tell you that you must know your place

And arrogance will follow to throw it in your face

The evolving state of existence is just a state of mind

So get the balance right and see what you can find.

Davy read the verse and thought about its contents. He found himself back on the sofa so he wrote the verse down. He studied again and said aloud to himself, "A state of mind."

"Sorry Davy?" Megan said from across the room.

"Megan," Davy said in surprise, "When did you get back?"

"About ten minutes ago. You were asleep so I thought that I wouldn't disturb you."

"Oh I gave my notice in today," Davy said in a cool tone and watched Megan's face.

"Are you having me on?"

"No I got another job, remember John Coxen?" Davy saw no hint of recognition so he carried on,

"No, well it doesn't matter. Anyway he wants me to start Monday."

"That was quick Starlan must have left some magic behind."

"I've got to meet him tonight down the Barley Mow at 8.30."

"Are you sure this isn't some excuse," Megan said giving him a sly look.

"No, anyway when do I need an excuse," and laughed.

“True, so what are you going to be doing?”

“Management.”

“Now I know you're lying, that goes against the grain.”

“It's about time that I started thinking for a living.”

“You've changed your tune.”

“Oh don't worry I'll still be getting my hands dirty.”

They talked a lot more and Davy told Megan everything that had happened in both dreams. Megan seemed to take everything in her stride and this confused Davy, “You seem to know all about it,” he said.

“I think you've achieved Nirvana but I can't be sure.”

“I don't know what you call it, well weird maybe.”

“You'll be judging yourself next or maybe you have already.”

“Well not to my knowledge. Why, is it necessary? I mean I thought that you had to die first.”

“Die Davy,” Megan said teasing him, “But I thought that you were immortal.”

“Not my body Megan that will fall along the way. I was talking about my essence.”

“So I suppose in theory you could do it before you die. I was only joking by the way.”

“Anyway,” Davy said bringing the conversation down to Earth, “What about our future?”

“Our future, what do you mean?”

“Well with all that extra money we can have a real future.”

“Can I come along tonight?” Megan said and then looked at her watch, “Well in half an hour anyway.”

“What?” Davy said and looked at his watch, “That went quick. Yes sure you can come. Brendan will be there too.”

“Sound. Have you had anything to eat yet?”

“No, how about we get some chips on the way?”

Davy and Megan were outside the pub at 8.30.

Chapter 4.

“I said we'd see him in the bar,” Davy said pushing the door open, “What can I get you Megan, the usual?”

“No just a cola thanks Davy.”

Davy got served and brought the drinks back to Megan and looked around the pub. The pub was empty and this surprised him. “I thought that Brendan would be in at least,” he said looking at Megan, “They'll probably be along shortly. Do you want to sit over there?”

They both walked over sat down and waited. “So,” Davy said, “Looks like a good start to the future.”

“Here's Brendan now. Are you sure this is not just an excuse?”

“Alright Davy,” Brendan said coming over, “Hello Megan, are you after a job as well?”

“So he wasn't joking then, I thought it was just an excuse to get out.”

“No, well I hope not anyway as I've give me notice in.”

“Here he is now,” Davy said, “What are you having dad?”

“Lager please Davy,” Brendan said sitting next to Megan.

“Sounds good this Megan,” Brendan said when Davy was at the bar.

“About time too Brendan I see you are still smoking.”

“I'm thinking of giving up,” Brendan said. John Coxen walked over and Brendan introduced him to Megan.

“Not many turned up,” John said, “Never mind who wants to mix business with pleasure anyway.”

“True,” Brendan said, “Mind you I would have thought that would have snatched your hands off for work.”

“Some people get set in their ways, I've been there myself. You think that this is all there is and put

up with it.”

“Ignorance is bliss,” Davy said putting the drinks on the table.

“Ignorance is never bliss,” John said laughing, “That message lost its path over time. Ignorance keeps people down through ill education and saps your self esteem as well as takes your drive away.”

“Six people were supposed to turn up,” Davy said, “Good workers as well.”

“That's their loss Davy and it would probably be ours if we employed them.”

“Tell me John,” Megan said out of the blue, “Why do you pay such high wages?”

John thought for a while and said, “I believe that if you pay peanuts then you get monkeys. If I want to run a successful business I don't want monkeys. Oh don't get me wrong Megan it's a hard job and they will earn it but I want people who can think on their feet. I wouldn't call what I pay a high wage anyway.”

“Well in comparison with a lot of wages that are around.”

“Wages have stagnated for the last 15 years due to the economic climate I guess. Sure I could pay low wages but I would get a large turnover of staff as the wage rate climbed and waste more time training them. Fool's economy for short term gain besides if I have a good staff that are loyal then they are worth every penny.”

“You sound like a wise man,” Megan said and smiled. “Mind you when ignorance is bliss they say its folly to be wise.”

“A wise man must have said that to fill your head with lies,” Davy said.

“Hey that's good,” John said, “I didn't know you were a poet in your spare time.”

“For ignorance will tell you that you must keep your place and arrogance will follow and throw it in your face.” Davy carried on.

“Very true that, was it one of yours?”

“Well sort of, it came to me in a dream.”

“Very apt though, any more?”

“The evolving stage of existence is just a state of mind so get the balance right and see what you can find,” Davy finished off and took a drink.

“Balancing the mind?” John said, “Is that the Will and Imagination?”

This stunned Davy, he looked at John in a funny manner and said, “How did you know about that?”

“I too have dreams mind you I don't seem to get verses like that.”

“No seriously, what path of life are you on?”

“I don't follow a set path. As long as I play fair all roads lead to Rome.”

“True, but you have changed since I last met you. What happened? I mean you were drifting without purpose and now you have your own firm.”

“Oh I've been through the mill I won't deny it but I did realise eventually that it was just a state of mind.”

“So how did you manage to get that balance right in the end?” Megan asked.

“Oh it wasn't easy Megan, first I had to blow my mind.”

“What,” Brendan said having second thoughts about giving his notice in, “You mean you cracked up?”

“Well not exactly Brendan,” John said laughing, “Conditioned reasoning. I had conditioned myself to be a follower. I suppose because it was easy to follow blind instead of thinking for myself. That was my mind's reality so I had to blow it to believe in myself.”

“Yes,” Davy said, “I think I can understand that. How did you do it?”

“Well don't laugh but I tried to rationalise my existence to try and get some meaning into my life.”

“You were looking for the meaning of life?”

“It works on vibrations Davy. The instinctive mind through the intellectual and into the spiritual.”

“Are you into spiritualism then?” Davy said with surprise.

“Well I wouldn't put a label on it. Besides the spirit I'm talking about comes from within.”

“Tell me more about this mind thing,” Brendan said taking out a packet of cigarettes and offering them around.

“Well I believe,” John said after a while, “That we are all of the same essence, not just us though, animals vegetables, all types of existence.”

“Do you mean matter?” Davy said, “Or are you trying to say that they all have a mind?”

“Mind over matter, it does not have to be one or the other it could be both?”

“Well I suppose,” Davy said laughing, “If you don't mind then it doesn't matter.”

“There's a lot in that,” John said in a serious tone, “For a lot of these trouble are all in your mind.”

“No,” Brendan said, “Not the ones I seem to have anyway.”

“What about those cigarettes?” John said, “That will give you more trouble than anything else I know.”

“What this, I can take it or leave it. Anyway, tell me more about this mind thing.”

“Well I believe, well Davy said it earlier, the evolving stage of existence is just a state of mind. A rabbit see something move and it will run, that's an instinctive thing. A dog is more intelligent than that he is more developed and you will find him on the lower stages of the intellectual scale. Humans have the potential to climb the scale though intellectualism into spiritualism through education.”

“Education,” Davy said, “What power to the mind kind of thing?”

“Well knowledge is power, ask any black mailer.”

“So what does arrogance come in?” Brendan said, “Or does it?”

“I suppose it is just a stage of evolvement. On the lower level of intellect you have ignorance and on the higher level you have arrogance which goes into the lower levels of spiritualism.”

“How would you define arrogance?” Megan said, “Just as a matter of interest.”

“I suppose,” John said after a moments though, “You could always say that it is recognising the God in yourself to the detriment of others.”

“That's not bad,” Davy said, “So when you get the balance right you recognise the God in others as well as yourself.”

“Yes and when you can do that you can believe in yourself and the world that you live in.”

“You have found heaven, Davy said, “A paradise on Earth.”

“Well it works for me. I don't want to change the world Davy only my own.”

“Wheels within wheels,” Megan said, “For if everyone felt that way the world would change.”

“That's their choice, if their will is strong and good.”

“So I wouldn't call you a crusader,” Davy said with a smile.

“Only for myself I've been told what to do and how to think for most of my life so I'd be foolish to start doing that to others.”

“Some people might call that selfish,” Brendan said.

“I don't interfere unless I am asked to, as long as my will is good my life seems to run smooth. That's what I've learned and that's how I live.”

“So what is the meaning of life then?” Megan said.

“Development I suppose. Existence from ignorance through arrogance to oneness.”

“That could work on two levels,” Davy said finishing his drink.

“Sorry?”

“The ignorance of a child to the arrogance of a teenager to the balance of an adult.”

“I suppose so. I never really thought about it.”

'As above so below, mind and matter,' Davy thought to himself.

John looked at his watch and said, “I'm sorry but I guess I had better be off.”

“Alright John,” Davy said, “I'm sorry about the others.”

“Their loss not ours. Look if they're interested they will come back to you but don't worry if they're not. Like I said earlier I am not a crusader.”

John said his goodbyes and left.

Chapter 5

"He seems a nice bloke," Megan said after John had left.

"Yes," Davy agreed, "I've known him years."

"I'd better get off myself," Brendan said, "Do you want a lift back?"

"Yes go on the," Davy said, "If that's alright with you Megan."

"Yes, Megan said, "Besides I've got work tomorrow."

"Me as well," Davy said and laughed.

Brendan dropped them off but declined their offer of a cup of tea.

"I'll put the kettle on," Davy said going into the kitchen, "Any thing on the T.V.?"

"Not much, beside I thought you wanted to talk about our future."

"You didn't seem too keen earlier," Davy said bringing in the tea.

"I'd never met John before. I wasn't sure if it was just pie in the sky."

"What about now?" Davy said giving her, her tea.

"Sounds like a genuine man. You'll do well with him but why should the fact that you have a better paid job make a lot of difference.?"

Davy thought for a while. Megan was right it would not affect their plans for the future because they had not made any. "Well you could give up that job for a start," Davy said eventually.

"I like working there Davy it gets me out the house, besides we can look at it as pin money now."

"Yes I suppose so," Davy said with a sigh, "I think that I had better keep my feet on the ground."

"Enjoy life, that's what its there for."

"Don't you want to plan for the future?"

"Davy, you have been happy just to drift through life without making any plans, now you want to all of a sudden. Let me get used to it first."

"I'm sorry I don't know where I am at the moment. The Spirit said that we would have problems and I guess I got scared. Maybe that's why I want to make plans for the future to make sure that we have one."

"We'll always have a future Davy. If there is going to be any problems they will only be in your mind."

"I hope so Megan," Davy said a little unsure of himself, "Because if it is only in my mind then I can deal with it."

"Self reliance in a collective, I will always be there for you but I need a life as well."

"Yes I get carried away sometimes. I suppose we had better get off to bed."

Davy and Megan retired to bed and Davy soon found himself in a dream except that he was still awake. He knew that both he and Megan were wide awake and fully conscious but it still felt like it was a dream. He felt like he had done this before but not in his lifetime or any other. He felt like he was talking to Megan on two levels and they were playing a game. Megan was trying to get him to say that it was a dream and he felt like if he said it was they would both wake up but to what he did not know. He seemed to be connected to Megan's Spirit. Megan was unaware of what was happening and put Davy's actions down to the beer. Davy was unaware that Megan was not on both levels and so carried on. All of a sudden he made the conscious decision that they would say it together so he looked at Megan and said, "Wake up."

He seemed very disappointed that they never but then something else happened. He felt that he had the power to switch off the Universe not unlike a television set and this scared him more than slightly. Then another feeling came over him. It was a feeling of total love. He held Megan in his arms and said, "I love you. I have never loved anyone else only you. Have my baby."

Megan was stunned and said, "What just happened then?"

Davy told her everything that had happened and they thought it through. The only conclusion that they came up with was that they had felt the Spirit's power and then the Spirit's love.

"What am I getting into Megan," Davy said, "Am I going mad?"

"Maybe that was what John was on about when he said you had to blow your mind?"

Davy thought awhile before he said, "I thought that I did that in my dream."

"Maybe it had to happen in dream-time first before it can come down to Earth?"

"That would make sense. I felt that when we were talking that I had done it before. I don't remember dreaming it though."

"You are not always conscious of your dreams but that doesn't mean that they don't occur."

"True, mind you I'm a bit reluctant to go to sleep now."

"You don't have to go in tomorrow, you're in control now."

Davy smiled and said, "It feels good Megan, to be in control I mean. No but I'd better go in, see them fellows."

"Fair enough but let them come to you. Don't forget you're doing them a favour."

"Yes you are right. I'll see you in the morning, well hopefully anyway."

"Night Davy," Megan said laughing.

Davy soon fell asleep and found himself back in the Library. The mirror was still there so he walked over towards it. When he got to it though he saw that it had no reflection and he could put his hand through it. A voice came from behind it, "How did you get on with the verses Davy?" Davy jumped back in surprise, "What?" he said still shaken.

"The verse in the book on the table?"

"Oh, it sounds like some sort of conspiracy theory."

"In what way?"

"Hidden knowledge, deliberate interference to keep people in the dark."

"Not strictly true for don't forget that it is the journey to the answer more than the answer itself."

"I know your voice. Can you come out and let me see you?"

"First you must tell me the answer to the verse for knowledge is power."

Davy thought awhile and said, "It's not the meaning of life is it?"

"Are you asking or telling?"

"It's the meaning of life," Davy said, more sure this time.

"You'll do," the voice said and a figure stepped through the mirror.

"Colin?" Davy said unsure, "Is that you?"

"You do remember me," the figure said coming forward, "I was not sure."

"Very vaguely it was a long time ago. Another lifetime even."

"I hear that you are married now," Callan said shaking Davy's hand.

"That's right Colin or do I call you Callan?"

"Callan, I've come to help you in your progress."

"Surely there can't be much more."

"The journey of a lifetime and besides you'll get bored if you don't move forward."

"True," Davy answered humbly, "So what was all that verse about?"

"It was just a play on words really to test your knowledge. Different states of mind really."

"Starlan told me you were from a different planet, is that true?"

"Not strictly, I'm from a different dimension."

Davy thought for a while before he said, "So what dimension am I in now?"

"Dream-time Davy, you can be anything you want here but if you want to know what I am just think of me as an evolving Soul on the path of life. Human nature being what it is you will accept me better."

"Tell me Callan," Davy said with a smile, "Is it human nature or is it conditioned reasoning?"

Callan went quiet for awhile before he said, "You have evolved a lot more than I have given you credit for."

"You must have had that fear of the unknown once, before you learned to look deeper."

"We all have but humans seem to revel in it. There's hatred between sexes and colours. How would you cope with another species?"

"Time is a great healer. Mind you that's only because you forget that pain."

“Love is the best healer, especially the love of oneself, just don't over do it. In time as your race evolves more fully we will join you and open up the Universe for you.”

“That could be dangerous if you are not careful, conditioned reasoning being what it is.”

“Jez had the same trouble getting into the valley,” Callan said with a smile, “It's just the next step up the ladder.”

“Have you left me another riddle?” Davy said looking over at the table.

“Not yet Davy you've got a lot on your mind what with the new job and everything.”

“You seem to know a lot about me,” Davy said in surprise.

“We are always with you it's just that sometimes you don't see us.”

“Well that's nice to know.”

“I must leave you now, your alarm clock is just about to go off,” and disappeared.

Chapter 6.

Davy woke up with a light heart. He was actually looking forward to going to work that day. He kissed Megan and she awoke next to him.

“I haven't been woken up like that in a long time,” she said looking at Davy in a funny manner.

“Enjoy life Meg because that's what it's there for.”

“You seem different Davy, like you have just came out of hibernation.”

Davy thought for a while before he said, “I feel different now. Maybe my old self had been asleep. Funny though it feels like the first day of spring.”

“Yes, but have you the patience to watch a flower grow?”

“Sorry?” Davy said slightly confused, “Is this something to do with spring?”

“A new season, things are going well but be patient and it will make things even better.”

“I feel like nothing could go wrong and besides I like gardening.”

“You must have had a good sleep I usually have to drag you out in the morning.”

“Days gone by. Finish the week and I'll start to be really happy. I think I've found that zest in my life once more. I feel like I can do anything that I want.”

“Well you can make the breakfast then,” Megan said laughing.

“Oh you must have misheard me I said that I could do anything that I want.”

“I bet David Molloy would have made his wife breakfast.”

“Hypothetical for he died a single man.”

“Do you remember much about him?”

“Not really. His essence is in me. Jez said that he was a bit of a lad and I've seen the flash backs but I feel a different person to him.”

“I don't know you can be a bit of a lad sometimes.”

“My personality is not his though. I'll ask Callan about him the next time I see him.”

“You've met Callan, you kept that quiet, when was that then?”

“Last night, in my dreams I seem to learn more in my dreams than anywhere else.”

“You'll be wanting an excuse to stay in bed all day soon. Two boiled eggs by the way.”

“You're quick careful you don't catch yourself coming back.”

Eventually after much mock protest Davy made the breakfast and got off to work. He clocked in two minutes early and jokingly asked the foreman it that meant he would get an extra quarter of an hour's pay.

“I hear you're leaving Friday,” the foreman said.

“Yes, I suppose you could say I was doing a Robinson Crusoe.”

“Well I'll certainly miss your humour. So what are you going into?”

“Warehousing with a fellow I used to know, John Coxen.”

“That name sounds familiar did he used to work at Slammac about 10 years ago?”

“Yes that's right. You must know him then?”

The foreman's tone changed, “Any jobs going?”

"You serious. You not happy here?"

"You don't know the half of it Davy lad. I get flack from both the workers and the managers I'm like a piggy in the middle."

Davy thought awhile. He had not really thought about the foreman's job before. He knew that he was not that much better paid than him and he saw the grief that he got from the workforce.

"Yes," Davy said, "Plenty of jobs. Mind you I bet it's a long time since you got your hands dirty," and laughed.

"Wrong again I have to do a lot of unpaid overtime. I'm a cleaner, a slave driver and heaven knows what else besides, I've got a very wide job description."

"Yardman, loader or order picker take your pick."

"I've done a lot of loading that sounds good to me."

"I'll get you the forms later," Davy said going to his workplace.

"Oh I'll have to give a months notice, would that be a problem?"

"Shouldn't think so, I'll give John a bell and see first though."

"You could do it at the office if you like, whilst there is no one about."

Davy phoned and cleared it with John. The morning went quietly by. The other workers who were supposed to turn up the night before kept out of his way. It was almost as if they wanted Davy to come to them but Davy left them to it and carried on working."

His work mate Martin was a bit more forthright, "I've been thinking what you said," he said eventually, "If you still have any places that is."

"I might be able to fit you in," Davy said in an aloof manner, "You want a yard job?"

"Well I was hoping for order picking."

"Have you any experience in order picking. I mean it's a quick job and as you said before you are getting on a bit."

"Well," Martin said slightly confused by Davy's manner "No, not really. I thought you said that age didn't matter."

"It doesn't matter to me but it seemed to matter to you earlier."

"You seem a bit odd," Martin said getting defensive, "Are you alright?"

"I'm a bit miffed actually," Davy said and changed his tone, "Sorry Martin it isn't really your problem. Look I'll be honest with you. If you are not up to the job John will have me sack you. He's a good business man, he's fair but he's hard."

Martin thought a while and said, "Well a yard's man is a good job."

Davy got him an application form and Martin filled it in. The rest of the morning was uneventful and Davy went home for dinner. Megan must have had the same thought because she was there when he got back.

"How you getting on Davy?" she said as he walked through the door.

"Great morning Megan, sort of makes you good to be alive."

"Did you see them men?" Megan said putting the kettle on.

"No, they were there but they didn't come over."

"Playing hard to get eh," Megan said laughing.

"Yes," Davy said laughing, "I suppose you could say that."

"No recruits then," Megan said as she made the tea.

"Well actually I got the foreman and Martin."

"That's not bad going."

"Well I'm not going to put myself out. I'd better sort myself out first."

"One step at a time Davy, don't forget that flower."

The dinner time flew by but that was not unusual and Davy found himself back at work. The afternoon went slowly but Davy's mind was occupied by other things. In such a mundane job Davy had plenty of time to think. He started to think about Starlan and Jez and how he missed them. His thought train plodded on to David Molloy and his short time on Earth. Davy reasoned to himself

that he must have been his age when he died and this played on his mind some what. He knew that his essence was immortal but that did not really mean that he was. A voice brought him back down to earth. "Davy." He turned around and saw the foreman standing next to him, "The manager wants to see you," and then afterwards, "I hope that I haven't dropped you in it."

"I'm sorry," Davy said following him, "What do you mean?"

"When I gave my notice in he went up the wall," the foreman said rather sheepishly, "Watch him he can be a vindictive bastard."

Davy laughed quietly to himself as he reached the door and knocked.

"Come in," a voice said from behind the door.

"Good luck," the foreman said.

Davy entered, only to be greeted by a very angry manager.

"Is there a problem?" Davy said in a cool manner that was like a red rag to a bull.

"Don't play the innocent with me," the manager bellowed.

"Don't raise your voice to me," Davy said in a menacing tone, "Who do you think you are talking to?"

This unnerved the manager more than slightly, "I hear that you have been poaching my staff," he said less angrily than before but there was still a hint of rage.

"Like I said, is there a problem?"

"You don't do that," the man said, his confidence rising again.

"Is it illegal?" Davy said in mock surprise.

"No, but it is not ethical."

"Neither is your wage rate."

"You were happy enough to take the job in the first place," he said in a triumphant manner.

"Happy or desperate but that is water under the bridge. If your work force is happy then they will stay with you."

"Don't play games with me don't forget that you have 3 days left."

"You wouldn't be threatening me would you?" Davy said in a mildly patronising tone.

"I'll have you doing all the crap jobs that I can think of."

"You are a vindictive bastard aren't you."

"That's why I am the manager."

"Well I've got 3 days left and 15 vacancies left to fill and as for threatening me, make your play."

"Get out before I have you escorted out," the manager said unsure of himself.

"What a guy," Davy said as he left the office. The last part of the day was uneventful and Davy soon found himself back at home.

Chapter 7.

Megan was not in when Davy came back from work. He had forgotten that she would be at her mother's that evening. Davy went into the kitchen and made himself something to eat. After he had eaten he settled down in front of the T.V. but there was nothing worth watching so he soon nodded off.

He found himself in a large rose garden on a beautiful summer's day. The warming Sun set his senses tingling and the smell of the flora soon captured his nose. He saw an entrance to his left and above its metal gate was a sign that said 'Know Thy Self.' The entrance led to what looked like a maze for he saw high hedgerows fringing what looked like a corridor.

Davy was unsure as to whether to enter the maze at first because he was happy where he was. Eventually he decided to go in though and see what he could find. He walked briskly down the grassy aisle and turned left at the top. He followed the trail for what seemed like hours but never got anywhere. The hedgerows blocked all the vision to the side of him so that all he could see was the path ahead. He wished that he had stayed in the garden as he was still encapsulated by its beauty. He knew though that if he turned around it would take hours to get back though so he carried on his

way. He was starting to tire now and each step sapped at his strength.

"Nearly there," he said as if to reassure himself. He turned the next corner and saw another entrance up ahead. His heart picked up and he walked briskly to it. He walked through the entrance and much to his dismay found himself back in the garden.

"What a waste of time," he said aloud with a mixture of disgust and dismay.

A voice behind him broke him out of his mood, "Is that how you see life Davy, as a waste of time?" Davy turned around and saw Callan standing there, "Was that life, walking through a maze just to get back to where you started?"

"What did it say on the entrance?"

"Know thy self."

"It's not the answer Davy but the journey to the answer."

"I'm sorry?" Davy said, "I don't understand."

"When you were in the maze you had all that time to develop your mind but you carried on blind."

"But I didn't know that. How was I supposed to know? I wasn't told."

"Existence from ignorance but you already knew that."

"Another lesson in life Callan," Davy said getting frustrated.

"Tell me Davy. What was going through your mind as you went through the maze?"

Davy thought a moment before he said, "Just to get to the other side I suppose, to find out what was there."

"Were you happy to be in the garden?" Callan said in a surprised tone.

"Yes," Davy said guardedly for he knew what Callan was going to say next.

"Well you know my next question," Callan said picking up on his tone.

"Why did I leave the garden? Maybe I thought that there was something better. Maybe I was just curious, I'm not sure."

"And that is life Davy."

"Sorry?"

"It's that big it can be anything you want it to be as long as you are in control."

"So maybe I should have stayed in the garden and watched the flowers grow."

"Have you the patience to watch a flower grow?"

"No," Davy said honestly, "I don't think that I have."

"Nor did Adam and Eve you see you have to go through life to find out your strengths and weaknesses. When you can turn those weaknesses into strengths then you can truly know thy Self."

"I was tempted to stop about halfway."

"A sort of mid life crisis eh. Remember Davy, stagnation leads to self delusion or self doubt, it's a bit like those flowers, take your pick."

"So why did they leave the garden, Adam and Eve I mean?"

"They had to for they developed past their instinctive stage. They took free will, the right to think. The journey through the maze was to develop their intellect and find their spirituality."

"To get immortality," Davy said as if by sudden inspiration.

"Got it in one, how can you cross the great abyss through Daath by staying in the garden? Adam needed the apple and that is why he carries it around with him as a reminder.

"And where does arrogance come in or is it just a stage of development?"

"Human nat... conditioned reasoning Davy. Because Adam and Eve were made in God's image they thought that they were greater than the other animals. The next stage that would automatically follow would be that some men would think they were better than others."

"The Bible sounds a lot different when you say it Callan, it makes more sense. Would the serpent be the Kundalini?"

"The activation of your spirituality Davy, to give you the power to become immortal."

"That's a lot of knowledge I could stay here forever."

"Don't forget that you are still in the maze. Your personal development is paramount and besides I

think that Megan might have something to say about that.”

“Yes,” Davy said laughing as he thought about what she had said earlier.

“She's a wise woman you'll go far with her.”

“All the way down the path of life Callan.”

“How is life going at the moment, are those kettles making your blood boil,” and laughed.

“No it's not the job,” Davy said softly and with an air of resignation, “It's the people.”

“Those six that didn't turn up you mean. You can't help everyone Davy, they too have free will.”

“Yes you're right I shouldn't be a crusader.”

“The trouble with crusaders is that they spend that much time on others problems that they forget their own. I mean look at Richard the Lion Heart.”

Davy looked at Callan and burst out laughing, “Starlan was right about you, you do have a sense of humour.”

“That's right,” Callan said laughing, “Don't think of me as E.T. Think of me more as tee hee.”

“Tell me something,” Davy said changing his tone a little, “How do you know so much about me?”

“It's not that difficult I just tap into the Akashic records.”

“I've heard of them mind you that's all.”

“We use them as monitors to gauge the Earth.”

“To gauge the Earth to what purpose?”

“To check your evolution, to see how much love is coming out your world.”

“Do you think that we'll ever be ready,” Davy said thinking about all the wars and injustices that seemed to have become a way of life.

“Yes,” Callan said with a smile, “But I have the patience to watch a flower grow.”

“So if you can tap into these records why is there all these U.F.O. sightings and alien abductions?”

“Well I could say that we are just letting you know that we are still about, as for the abductions I guess that other species monitor you in a different way.”

“Oh,” Davy said laughing, “So you don't want to take over the world and make us your slaves.”

“To what purpose, oh it might look good on a film but that's all. It seems to me that it is your own race that wants to make you slaves.”

“It's a sad world,” Davy said with a sigh, “And of that I have no doubts.”

“People are changing and the world will change with them. With every year that passes more and more of them come into the light.”

“Why is the light so important. I can understand it on a personal level but not being funny with you, why should it bother you?”

“Two reasons. As above so below. Your collective conscious must be pure for the sake of the balance of the Universe and secondly on a personal level you'll soon have the technology to travel to other worlds, think about that.”

Davy thought a while and said, “That could be catastrophic.”

“For everyone concerned but enough of this gloom. Have you ever heard of Descartes?”

“I think therefore I am, he was a French philosopher.”

“Yes that's right. That was the first stage of development when you left your instinct and went into the intellect.”

“Yes I can understand that. Mind you I have never thought about it like that before.”

“Well the next stage into spirituality concerns immortality.”

“Yes, and that would be?”

“I know therefore I am. It might help you through the trials of life.”

“Right I'll bare that in mind. So what's the next step in life?”

“When you join the collective conscious. When you become I am.”

“That's amazing,” Davy said and then changing his tone, “So how's the flower coming on?”

“You'll soon have the bloom and don't forget that this flower is eternal.”

“Just like these lessons in life.”

Callan took a serious look at Davy and said, "If you don't think about it then its not a problem, think about it."

"But you told me not to."

"No think about the concept not the problem," and disappeared.

Chapter 8

Davy found himself back on the settee with the television still on. "I wish he wouldn't keep doing that," he said to himself. He looked at his watch and saw that it was 10. He knew that Megan would be coming back soon so he went into the kitchen to put the kettle on. His thoughts drifted back to what Callan had said his next step should be. "I am, does that mean I am therefore I am but what could that mean?" Another thought came in, "Time is to us as reason needs to be." he laughed as he thought maybe it should be 1a.m. therefore I am. His thoughts went back to the Spirit and what it had said, "I need to be because I am." "Ah well," he said aloud as he got the tea ready, "That's half the puzzle."

He heard the front door open and knew that it was Megan coming back

"I'm just making a cup of tea Megan, would you like one?"

"Please Davy it's still a bit nippy outside."

"How was your mother?" he said as he brought her drink into the living room.

"Fine, she wishes you well in your new job by the way."

"That's kind of her, what's the catch?"

"No catch Davy. So what have you been up to then?"

"Not a lot really I fell into a sleep."

"You seem to be either just working or sleeping nowadays."

Davy told her what had happened and asked her if she knew anything about the puzzle that was on his mind.

"Are you asking me what time is? Surely it's just a state of mind."

"A state of mind, how do you work that out?"

"A watched pot never boils. 10 minutes at work seems longer than at home."

"True, but what is time to us?"

"According to Callan it's to get to know yourself."

"I think, I know, I am. Yes that makes sense I suppose but I think that there is something more."

"Maybe Davy, only time will tell."

"Well I hope that I don't have to wait to the end of time to find out."

"You can't know everything, be patient though and maybe it will come later."

"True, mind you I think that Bible wants re-looking at."

"Starlan said that all you have to do was look deeper."

"Have we still got a copy lying around I remember that I had one when I was confirmed."

"That's a long time ago. Haven't you read it since then?"

"Well no I left that to the priest when I used to go."

"Oh, well I suppose it saves thinking about it."

"Well it didn't seem relevant to me. I suppose that was why I left."

Megan thought awhile before saying, "I know where one is, mind you its getting a bit late now shall we leave it until tomorrow?"

Davy looked at his watch and saw that it was 10.30, "We could give it an hour, besides I'm getting really interested in it now."

"You're like a dog with a bone," Megan said laughing, "You shouldn't have your head in the clouds all the time you should come down sometimes."

"I still work at that kettle factory Megan that keeps my feet on the ground."

Megan found the bible and brought it over. Davy read through the first pages of Genesis but gave up after Chapter 2, "I can't make head nor tale of it. I wonder where Callan is when you need him?"

“In your dreams where your imagination becomes your reality.”
 “You want to come and meet him?” Davy said with a smile on his face.
 “Can I?” Megan said with an air of excitement that made Davy slightly jealous.
 “You seem keen.”
 “Well I've never met an alien before.”
 “Oh” Davy said with realisation, “I've never thought of him like that.”
 “I wonder what he looks like in reality, not that it matters that is.”
 “Do you remember how to get to the Library?”
 “You don't mean meditate at this time of night. I'm getting tired.”
 “Well is your imagination up to it, to become reality I mean.”
 “How do I do that?”
 “All you have to do is think about it so it will be in your subconscious when you sleep.”
 “I'll give it a try,” Megan said half heartedly as she did not really believe him.
 “No,” Davy said picking up on her doubts, “You must really believe it. Try and rationalise it to yourself first.”
 Megan thought about what he had said. Maybe he was right. After all she reasoned your dream is your imagination so all you have to do was imagine it to be what ever reality you want it to be. The knowledge was still in her head as she drifted off to sleep. She found herself in the Library with Davy standing next to her, “What kept you?” he said and smiled.
 Not to be outdone she answered, “Your snoring.”
 “Oh,” Davy said and nodded his head in mock understanding.
 “So where is he?”
 “I think we'll probably have to answer a puzzle first,” Davy said looking at the book on the table. He looked at the cover but there was no title to read so he opened it up to see what was inside.
 I travel the world with slight of hand
 Catch me once and I'm yours to command
 Experience counts but to me that's fine
 For with my knowledge you will always dine.
 “I've read about singing for your supper but this is a bit over the top,” Megan said studying the words in front of her.
 “I travel the world with slight of hand,” Davy said aloud and thought a moment before he said,
 “Would that be light?”
 “I don't think so. Besides it would not fit in with the next line.”
 “Catch me once and I'm yours to command,” Davy said deep in thought, “You can't command light but you can command a thought.”
 “But the next line won't fit,” Megan said, “Experience counts but to me that's fine.”
 “That sounds more like memory, maybe it's both?”
 “Thought and memory.”
 “Odin's ravens,” Davy said suddenly, “Thought and memory.”
 “For with my knowledge you will always dine,” Megan said trying to put a dampener on it.
 “A wealth of knowledge to digest,” Davy said in a triumphant manner, “You will never hunger.”
 “I don't understand.”
 “Knowledge is food for the mind, to help it grow.”
 “So it must be thought and memory,” Megan said waiting for Callan to appear, “So where's Callan?”
 Davy looked around and said, “There's must be something missing, and thought for a while, “Well the instinctive mind is memory and the intellect is thought,” he said aloud but nothing happened.
 “Maybe it's something to do with Odin that would be more in the spiritual.”
 Davy looked around but there was still no sign of life. “Was Odin an alien?”
 Megan went quiet, looked at Davy and then said, “Some people have said that they have been here

before.”

“I was only joking. I haven't the faintest idea.”

“So what was Odin anyway?”

“He was sort of a knowledge gatherer. He liked to know what was going on so he used to send his ravens out to gather it.”

“Would he be the mind?”

“Maybe the spiritual mind I suppose. He gave up an eye for a drink from the fountain of Mimir it's knowledge was of all things past and all things yet to come.”

“The Magic Eye,” Megan said, a flash brought her and Davy back to their senses.

Chapter 9.

“That's not bad Davy,” Callan said on arrival.

“Are you sure.... so er. What was it?”

“Thought and memory,” Callan answered with a smile.

“What, we worked that out ages ago.”

“Yes I know but I wanted to know how far you would take it.”

“You've got a weird sense of humour Callan. Megan this is Callan by the way.”

“Pleased to meet you,” Megan said, “I didn't think that you would be like this.”

“I can change shape or do you mean the humour?”

“I didn't really know what to expect. Pleased to meet you anyway.”

“So tell me Davy,” Callan said turning to Davy, “What's the lesson in life?”

“Sorry? I didn't realise that there was one.”

“Everything has a point and that includes the humour.”

“Was it patience?” Davy said clutching at straws.

“Close but not quite there.

“Well we got the answer and waited for you to appear.”

“But you didn't know the answer and so you over rationalised.”

“What else could I do, I didn't know when to stop so maybe that is why I said patience.”

“What about that voice inside you that inner knowing?”

“I didn't know that I had one.”

“Remember that shiver?”

“So that's my inner knowing.”

“It will never lead you astray so why haven't you used it?”

“I don't know how. I didn't think that I could.”

“It comes naturally, just keep your heart pure and talk spiritually.”

“That sounds easy so why isn't everyone doing it?”

“Perhaps they are,” Callan said in a mysterious way before laughing.

“Alright, but it does sound easy.”

“It's alright in a spiritual sense but you are in a material world.”

“Yes but I don't lead a bad life.”

“Do you put others before yourself?”

“Well yes, sometimes, in fact only the other day..”

“No Davy I mean every day, every hour of the day.”

“Well,” Davy said sheepishly, “I do my share.”

“To be pure in heart is not easy, could you rationalise that?”

“To put others before yourself?”

“You can make it sound better than that how about to have that much love inside you that you have to give some away.”

“You old romantic, watch him Megan.”

Megan laughed and said, “Why a shiver though?”

“The Kundalini, the spirit on Earth.”
 “Energy up and down your spine, yes why not.”
 “So when it activates its your Spirit telling you that you are on the right track.”
 “Where were we anyway?” Davy said and started to think.
 “Well when you over rationalise you do get off the path.”
 “Oh,” Davy said, “So rely on your inner knowing.”
 “Your lessons will be coming to an end soon, well for the time being anyway.”
 “No more Bible lessons then?” Davy said slightly disappointed.
 “Not for now. Just be pure and let your Spirit into your life and you shall live long and prosper.”
 “What about this world, will it ever change?”
 “Your world will change Davy and one thing leads to another. You still have one or two lessons before I go.”
 “What from the Bible?” Davy said getting interested.
 “No you've got all of eternity to do that. Just keep reading and it will come in time.”
 Davy thought awhile, smiled and said, “Yes, you're right Callan, so what's the next lesson?”
 “Life is like a battery so be positive but make sure that you are well earthed.”
 “That's not bad. Have you heard this one?”
 “That's no joke you have to deal with the reality of your existence by bringing down the knowledge. You have to bring someone into the light.”
 “How am I do to that? I mean I was lucky to meet Jez and Starlan. How could you explain all that knowledge it transcends everything.”
 “It transcends life Davy, an altered state of conscious. Have you the knowledge to blow someones mind. Have you learned enough to be that crusader that you so despise?”
 Davy thought for a while before he said, “I don't have to be one Callan not in the world as a whole and besides I can't interfere with free will.”
 “Clever, well answered. Don't forget that you are the messenger and not the message.”
 “Was that a trap then, another lesson in life maybe?”
 Callan smiled and said, “Watch out for mind games they can be very difficult. If people can't attack your views they'll attack you personally to confuse you from the point of the argument.”
 “If you can't convince them then confuse them.”
 “And if you can't confuse them then abuse them.”
 “What about the light then, I won't really have to be a crusader then will I?”
 “No,” Callan said with a laugh, “The light will shine from you and it will attract people. When they see the change in you they will approach you but at all times remember that if they don't approach you then they are not ready.”
 “It's their life,” Davy said shrugging his shoulders, “Such that it is.”
 “There is a very good reason for this. If they are not evolved enough then you are wasting your time. You will end up resenting them, hardly the basis for inner peace.”
 “I never thought about it like that. So how do I go about bringing this knowledge to Earth?”
 “By helping others not just spiritually but mentally and physically.”
 “Starlan mentioned that.”
 “He's a wise man and so are you now Davy. You can see all the injustices in the world.”
 “Sexism and all that?”
 “Rich and poor inequality in equity, that transcends everything, when the average wage is well above the normal rate that is gross equality. No, inequality leads to lack of respect and poverty. The effect turns out as lack of education through despair. This leads to ignorance of our purpose in life and that is the biggest crime.”
 “Ignorance, surely that is not a crime.”
 “Now that sounds like an ignorant man. What would David Molloy have said?”
 Davy thought a while and said, “Do you mean that if he had, had the knowledge then I would not be

here?"

"If he had, had the knowledge you would not have needed to be here for you would have still been him."

"How many millions of entities have died like that then? But the knowledge had always been here. Isn't that something to do with free will?"

"True but when you are in the dark you have to be shown some light. Hope if you like."

"Pandora's Box springs to mind. Maybe the people with the power never had the light?"

"They did at one time, until they found conditioned reasoning. Stagnation led to self delusion and inequality came into play."

"Surely though the crime is self inflicted," Davy said going deep into thought.

"To a very large extent for self doubt is only a state of mind but to be conditioned to be like that is a crime to your Soul."

"And it saps your Spirit, yes I can see that."

"That is why you must bring the light back to Earth, for the good of the Spirit and for all those fledgling Souls."

"That's a big job."

"As I said before I'm not asking you to change the world only your own."

"Mind you even that will take time."

"And that is the prize Davy, to defeat time."

"So what is time?" Davy said wanting a clear definition.

"Time is a state of mind."

"Megan told me that," Davy said slightly disappointed.

"You seem down Davy," Callan said picking it up.

"I wanted something more tangible, I don't really know what I want."

"Look deeper and then you will find the answer."

"If it's a state of mind then why do I age? I mean we talk about immortality but I still grow old and die."

"If you want me to answer that you are going to have to answer a question first."

"Okay then."

"I'll have to think of one. You and Megan have a look around the Library if you like I won't be too long," and with that Callan disappeared.

Chapter 10.

Davy and Megan looked around the Library and found some books about David Molloy. They read through them and Megan said "I can see a lot of him in you Davy."

Davy thought for a while before he said, "Maybe he had to die so that I might live on?"

"Well that's a statement that doesn't need saying."

"No I mean death and re-birth sort of thing, survival of the fittest. His knowledge went to help me so that it wasn't wasted. He died so that I could live at one with my Soul."

"Well they do say it could take many lifetimes and one life is just a stage of development."

"So it wasn't really a crime not intentional anyway."

"I wouldn't really know but time marches on. What is past is passed, you are now."

Davy thought a moment and said, "And that is time."

"What?"

"What has past is passed," Davy said strangely and looking at Megan said, "Don't you understand?"

"No."

"To defeat time you must not need it anymore. Not time to find your balance because when you are in balance then you are immortal."

"Yes I can see that but time marches on."

"I don't think that it does Megan. Sure it still takes a year to go around the Sun. Life around you still

takes its natural course but not to you.”

“No sorry Davy, I don't understand.”

“You don't age. You don't need to age because you are immortal so the only time to your body clock is now. You trip the aging process, you never get old.”

“That sounds sense, I must be drunk.”

“It's not a big deal you can still get run over. You can still get cancer it's just that you don't grow old.”

“But how will you know when you are pure enough. You could wake up with grey hair, what about then?”

“I think that I am and that is all that matters.”

“Well what makes you think that you are pure enough? I mean how can you judge yourself?”

“Nirvana. The Spirit has judged me so all that is left it to judge myself.”

“Why do you say that? Nirvana is not for that.”

“It is, well what I went through was anyway. What would you call Nirvana?”

Megan thought for a moment and said, “Oneness with the Universe I suppose. When you are in balance then you are at one with the Universe.”

“When you are pure enough to leave your body well my Soul left the body and I was on it.”

“So how are you going to judge yourself, how could you?”

“On my life up to now. I'm talking about a lot of Soul searching. I want to be pure when I meet my Maker.”

“But the only way you can judge yourself is with a pure heart so you will never know for sure.”

“I believe that I am and so does my Spirit.”

“Where's Callan anyway?” Megan said changing the subject, “Or is this another one of his tricks.”

“Maybe he left a puzzle in the book,” Davy said looking at the book on the table. The book was a different colour to the one he had seen earlier. He went over and picked it up. There was no title to it so he opened it. There was a brief note inside, “A state of mind but it took time to sink in. Good luck. Callan.”

“Well that says it all,” Davy said, “Nice bloke that.”

“Yes definitely a man you don't meet every day.”

“So what do you want to do before we wake up?”

They woke up.

“Have you ever had deja vu?” Megan said, “Or is it just me going mad?”

“Blowing your mind it's called your turn for breakfast by the way.”

“Deja Vu,” Megan said laughing.

“I thought that you would get on well with Callan he's got your sense of humour.”

“And he nearly had my heart,” Megan said teasing him, “For my Soul is my spiritual heart.”

“Hmmm, maybe you are going mad.”

“I'll put the kettle on Davy,” Megan said getting up.

“I thought that you might,” Davy said laughing.

Davy breakfasted and was soon clocking on at work. About two hours into the shift a voice awoke Davy from his self induced day dream, “Er.. Davy?”

Davy turned around and saw Paul Davies standing behind him, “Yes Paul, what is it?”

“About that job, I couldn't make it earlier.”

“Yes, John didn't like that. He likes reliability John does.”

“Well er..is it still on?” Paul said shuffling his feet. Davy was tempted to tell him no but something inside him disagreed. “Yes,” he said coolly and fetched him an application form. All this was being quietly noted by the manager.

“So tell me Paul,” Davy said in a friendly manner, “What happened, didn't you believe me?”

Paul went serious and said, “It was I suppose more like I didn't believe in me.”

“Sorry?” Davy said confused as he was not used to Paul speaking openly to him.

“Loads of people promise you good jobs. No offence but you just stop believing.”

“Oh,” Davy said not really knowing what else to say, “Well what can you do?”

“Well I did a bit of loading at Goodbys, you got any left?”

“Yes I’m sure that we could fit you in.” Davy knew that he was a good worker and was pleased to have him along.

“Thanks Davy,” Paul said going back to his workplace. The rest of the morning was uneventful and Davy met Megan at home for dinner.

“Great morning Meg,” he said with a broad smile on his face. Megan went quiet and Davy asked her what was troubling her.

“Nothing Davy a bad day at work maybe.”

“Now you like your work too much for that. What’s really the matter?”

“Sometimes I think that I am losing you. You seem to be leaving me behind.”

“What do you mean?”

“You’ve got a good job,” Megan said but Davy stopped her there, “No what do you really mean?”

“Spiritually Davy. You seem to be evolving a lot faster and leaving me behind.”

“No Meg we evolve together forever.”

“But why haven’t I had Nirvana?”

“In time Megan, maybe you don’t need to.”

“Look I can’t lie,” Megan said looking at the floor, “Davy,” she said and looked him in the eyes, “I think that you are losing your sanity.”

Davy went quiet for a moment. “You think that I am going mad?”

“You have not been yourself recently.”

Davy looked at her, smiled and said, “But you have to lose your sanity, it’s all part of the game.”

“What game?”

“The game of life. You have to blow your mind, conditioned reasoning and all that.”

“But you have to grow old Davy. You have only an allotted time span.”

“Oh time marches on. I just stepped out of it that’s all.”

“Look Davy it doesn’t add up to me. I think that you have left your sanity in the clouds. You live in a land of time.”

“Be patient and believe in me,” he said holding her shoulders, “It will be worthwhile in the end.”

“I wish I could but if I do then I am afraid that I will end up as mad as you.”

“Just believe in love Megan and everything will follow.”

Megan smiled and said, “What do you fancy to eat?”

“No time. I’ll have a cup of tea though.”

They both sat in the living room and drank their tea.

“I’m sorry about earlier,” Megan said, “I don’t know where I am. I seem to be questioning my sanity all the time.”

“We all need grounding sometimes if only to leave our feet there.”

“I can see that but you are talking about changing a process of nature.”

“We can all change our nature it’s not that hard.”

“I mean Mother Nature, the law of time.”

“It’s alright Megan the law of time was put there for a reason. We know the reason, we have used our time we can lose it now.”

“Maybe I’m not ready, give me time.”

“Don’t worry for now I have the time to watch a flower grow.”

“You’re a bit of a smooth talker,” Megan said cheering up, “I bet you could teach Callan a thing or two.”

“Nobody could do that,” Davy said smiling. He looked at his watch, “I’m going to have to say goodbye,” and kissed her.

Chapter 11.

As Davy worked through the afternoon he was unaware that John Coxen had a visitor.

“Good afternoon,” John said as the manager of Davy's factory walked in.

“I have come to give you a bit of a warning,” the manager said, “As one business man to another.”

“Yes,” John said getting slightly intrigued, “Sit down. My name is John Coxen by the way.”

“Carl Freeman, it's about a fellow you are about to employ. He's a real trouble maker.”

John thought about his applications but he was relying on Davy's intuition as he had not met two of them “What's his name?”

“David Kelly. He used to work at our place. Gave him the push though, can't have that sort of thing.”

“Oh,” John said pretending to look down his application form, “It says here that he left work to start here.”

“Well he would wouldn't he, they all do.”

“Oh, does this happen a lot then?”

“Well some people can't hack the job, you know how it is?”

“I see,” John said and then changed his tone, “I've always found Davy a good worker and I don't think that he would appreciate being called a trouble maker he's got too much self respect for that.”

“He's got no respect, that's why he's working at our place.”

“Now that says more about your place than it does about him. And Davy's got enough respect not to go behind someone's back.”

“I'm sorry?” the manager said shuffling uncomfortably in his chair.

“You came here wanting me to sack him. You're a sad man.”

“What?” the manager said raising his voice slightly.

“And you know what's even sadder,” John said getting into his flow, “You don't even know that you are.”

“I don't have to take this,” his voice rising to nearly fever pitch.

“You'll take what I'm giving and be happy,” John said getting angry, “I ought to punch your face in you vindictive bastard.”

The manager was visibly shaken and went quiet for a moment.

“Your time is running out,” John said composing himself, “You're becoming a dinosaur.”

“What are you talking about?”

“You'll be a manager with nothing to manage. People aren't going to put up with your crap. At a low rate to boot.”

“I don't set the wages, that's not my job.”

“What is your job then, to make work a bad word? What is your kick, is it a power thing?”

“I don't know what you mean.”

“But you do. You are not that sad.”

“I'm not sad.”

“You get your strength from sapping others weaknesses and you don't think that is sad?”

“But I get it in the neck from the managing director. People are leaving I've had three hand in their notice this week alone.”

“Four, I've got an application form from another who works at your place. Paul Davies.”

The manager's face went visibly pale, “Now how am I going to explain that?” he said quietly.

“Look if your bosses treat you like crap then that's between you and them. Don't take it out on the workforce it is not their problem.”

“That's life.”

“That's your life maybe but there are four forms here that say different.”

“Yes but you are a one off. Most of the places pay the same rate.”

“Back to money again. I was talking about the self esteem to go out and get a better job instead of putting up with the hassle.”

The manager thought for a while before he said, "You put him up to it didn't you?"

"Put him up to what?" John said as it came out of the blue.

"Poaching my staff. Don't play the innocent."

"I've nothing to hide. Survival of the fittest sort of thing."

"What do you mean?"

"A happy worker a healthy worker. Free from stress, no time off work, no lost production targets, that is why you are a dinosaur."

"I think that you think that we are living in an Utopia," the manager said laughing.

"I don't know about that but my production figures mean heaven to me."

"No compensation for such a huge pay rise. You couldn't maintain it, you'll go under after a year."

"I could have paid higher. You haven't seen the turnover of this place."

With that the manager started to take an interest in what John was saying, "So tell me seriously. How can you afford to pay such a high basic wage?"

"That's a set rate not a basic wage."

"People took a cut in their wages, I can't believe that."

"Oh no, we don't live in an Utopia they were advertised at that rate."

"But why that much you could have gone a lot lower."

"It seemed to balance. Unemployment's falling, the job market is getting smaller every month. People take better paid jobs and leave the lower paid ones."

"What about the ones on a higher rate. I could see it working on the ground floor but how would you attract them?"

"That's where the quality of the job comes in you have more of a stake here."

"What," the manager said reeling back, "You give shares as well?"

"Not a bad idea," John said smiling at the manager's reaction, "But I was talking about job satisfaction. You feel part of a family. You actually like working here."

"I can't see it," the manager said sitting back.

"But though you can't see it I can. I have that imagination."

"No," the manager said shaking his head, "That's ridiculous."

"I've got the drive to make it work. Could you sell that to your employers?"

"Oh them, they are on the way out. I was looking at setting up on my own."

"What, as a manager?"

"No, opening up for myself, similar work. I was going to poach some of the lads," and smiled.

"Would they work for you?" John said in surprise.

"Yeah you're right it was just a pipe dream."

"Well it worked for me. Got to be worth thinking about though."

"You must be mad though. Nobody does business like that it doesn't make sense."

"Neither do these figures," John said showing him the production charts.

"Maybe I'm the one that's going mad," the manager said studying then, "You can't argue with them."

"Careful you could blow your mind."

"Too late, it was nice talking to you."

"So what are you going to do now then?" John said as the manager got up.

"Carry on regardless, I don't know. Your methods don't add up but they seem to work. You get that output."

"Maybe I do live in Utopia and I keep healthy keeping it that way."

"Yes right," the manager said with a sneer.

"You make your own choices. Don't sneer at what works just be happy that it does."

The manager thought for a while. Why not be doing his own thing. He would not have to pay them too much. Imagine the profit there he would be loaded very quickly. Yes, he decided, he would set up on his own. I mean he reasoned to himself he made it work and he is only a divvy.

“Yes,” the manager said, “I’ll give it some thought. I’ll see you around.” He shook John’s hand and walked out.

“Sad man,” John said shaking his head quietly to himself.

Chapter 12.

As all this was happening Davy was still on the kettle line with time dragging heavily on him. The day went by slowly but he did get there in the end. As he walked out onto the street he saw Brendan waiting for him.

“Alright dad, nothing the matter is there?”

“No I finished early, thought that you might like a pint.”

“What, do you mean now?”

“Yes why not. Megan won’t be back for an hour. She’s on lates isn’t she?”

“Oh it’s not that. To tell you the truth I don’t really fancy one.”

“Are you alright, it’s not like you.”

“I’m off drink as the moment. It doesn’t seem to do anything for me anymore.”

“Well to tell you the truth it’s more the company than the beer.”

“A cup of tea at mine is a lot cheaper. I might even let you have one for 15p.”

“And let no man say that you are unfair,” Brendan said laughing, “Not whilst I have a breath in my body.”

“Not much later the way you smoke,” Davy said laughing.

“Actually its about that, that I want to see you about.”

“Smoking. You’d better come back to ours then.”

“I want to know why I can’t give up. I’ve tried loads of ways but nothing works.” They arrived back at Davy’s and Davy let them both in.

“Sit down,” Davy said, “I’ll go and make the tea.”

Davy made the teas and brought them back into the living room.

“So tell me,” Davy said, “Why do you think that I could help you?”

“Actually,” Brendan said bashfully, “I was hoping that you might get in touch with Starlan for me.”

“Oh right,” Davy said smiling and cursing his previous expression of importance, “He’s disappeared. I haven’t seen him since that vision.”

“Mind you,” Brendan said as an after thought, “You might be able to help me I mean you have got your head screwed on.”

“Very tightly at the moment,” Davy said quietly to himself before saying, “I’ll see what I can do but I’ve never smoked so I guess I won’t be much help.”

“But it’s more of a will thing, or has Jez been around?”

“Not recently, so you haven’t the will?”

“I thought this might have been a bad idea.”

“Why do you smoke?” Davy said in a serious tone, “I mean you know its going to kill you.”

“I know all that but when I try to give up I last a couple of hours. It’s almost a habit.”

“It is a habit, one that is addictive as well.”

“I thought they were both the same.”

“A habit is a sub conscious thing, a reflex sort of thing. An addiction loses a lot of its appeal when the substance is out of your system.”

“Aren’t we splitting hairs here?”

“How long does it stay in your system?” Davy said getting back on track.

“I don’t know,” Brendan said and thought for a moment, “About 3 days I suppose.”

“Well after those 3 days it will be more like pangs of hunger.”

“I have went longer before so I do know that but it’s those 3 days.”

“So the weed is stronger than you?”

“That won’t work, I’ve done all that.”

Davy thought a while before he said, "Maybe it's a sub conscious thing?"

"Sorry? You have already said that."

"Then let's look deeper. Starlan and Jez might have gone but we still have the Library."

"That sounds better," Brendan said picking up a little.

Brendan relaxed and Davy guided him up the stairs and into the Library. Brendan had a look around and saw a book lying on the table. He walked over and picked it up. He opened it and read a verse,

On your way to your demise take time out to rationalise.

Brendan came back down the stairs and said, "That was a waste of time."

"You've got plenty of it so sit and think."

Brendan sat there for a while before he said, "It's no good Davy it doesn't mean anything to me."

Davy thought for a while before he said, "Do you want another drink?"

"Your turn with the urn again," Brendan said with a smile.

"I need a break but I haven't forgotten the verse."

"Waste of time," Brendan said under his breath.

Davy brought the tea back and said, "On the way to your demise take time out to rationalise, it's catchy isn't it?"

"That's about all."

"It seems to be saying stop and think. Maybe by rationalising it out it might strengthen your will."

"Don't think that I haven't. I don't want to die."

"Well why don't you tell yourself that it might change your mind about smoking."

"I do Davy but with all the stress I keep forgetting."

Davy thought a while and said, "Well write it down and look at it every time you want a smoke."

"You know that might help," Brendan said and wrote down 'I don't want to die' and showed it to Davy.

"That will do," Davy said, "Now what about the habit?"

"What about mantras?" Megan said from the door.

"I didn't hear you come in," Davy said in surprise.

"Oh hello Megan," Brendan said shyly, remembering all the times that he had said that he could take it or leave it.

"Do they work then," Davy said, "For smoking I mean?"

"They should work for anything. Lets your memory know what's going on, makes it feel part of the family."

"So when should he give up?" Davy said, "I mean doesn't t take time for them to sink in?"

"Say I don't smoke 10 times at night and then again in the morning. You can stop now if you like."

"I thought that it took time to sink in," Davy repeated.

"Yes but that paper that Brendan has should keep it at bay. If you don't want to stop now though just pick a day that you do."

"Monday sounds good," Brendan said, "The start of a new job and smoke free future."

"That's a good idea," Megan said looking at Brendan, "I've never really thought of you as an optimist."

"It's just a state of mind," Brendan said laughing.

"So Monday it is," Davy said, "And if I catch you smoking I'll sack you."

"He's a heart of gold that man," Brendan said laughing, "It's just that he has a job to bring it out."

"Yes he's a man you don't meet every day," Megan said joining him in laughter.

"Well I guess I'd better start saying my prayer," Brendan said, "I do not smoke, I do not smoke."

"So tell me Megan," Davy said playfully, "Are you into a bit of over rationalising?"

"I'll leave that to you."

"It's a thought and memory thing isn't it. What do you think?"

"I think you had better carry on."

“The mantras are to wipe your memory out.”
“Yes, you could say that.”
“And when the memory is wiped out the thought has nothing to feed upon and eventually dies and that is how you break a habit.”
“Sounds good as long as it works.”
“And the addiction is a different fish.”
“I thought they were both the same.”
“I did as well,” Brendan piped up, “Until Davy put me right.”
“Well the addiction is at its strongest whilst the substance is still in your body. When it’s out it loses a lot of its power.”
“Yes, I can see that.”
“So the first few days are the hardest, now the pieces or paper should get him over that. It is a two pronged attack to a two part problem.”
“Yes,” Brendan said, “I know all that but I suppose that is it obvious when you think about it.”
“It’s just taking the time out to think about it,” Davy said laughing.
“The first step is always the problem,” Brendan said, “Thanks a lot Davy, cheers Megan you know I think that it might work.”
“You’ve got to know that it will work.”
“True. I suppose that I had better get back.”
“You’re welcome to stay,” Davy said but at that moment there was a knock on the door.

Chapter 13.

Davy got up and opened the front door. Outside was John Coxen. “Come in John, Brendan’s here.” John walked through and greeted Megan and Brendan.

“I don’t know how to tell you this,” he said afterwards, “But I had your manager around earlier this afternoon.”

“Don’t tell me he wants a job,” Davy said in surprise.

“Yes, he wants yours.”

“Sorry?”

“Well you tell me. He came around and said that you were a trouble maker.”

“The vindictive bastard,” Davy said slowly though clenched teeth.

“Davy,” Megan said, “You surprise me.”

“Well works work but this is personal.”

“Sounds to me that he doesn’t know one from the other,” Brendan said, “A good slapping would make sense.”

“Well,” John said laughing, “He’s definitely got a hitable face.”

Davy laughed and said, “That’s something that he has to live with I suppose.”

“You know,” Brendan said, “I wish that I had your control.”

“That’s why he’s the manager,” John said, “So what are you going to do?”

“Well he’ll have guessed that you have told me so now I’ll leave it to his imagination.”

“I didn’t think that he had one,” John said laughing.

“Yes,” Davy said smiling, “But he puts it to negative use.”

“He did seem to spend a lot of time beating himself up,” John said, “He wants to set up on his own. Well one day anyway.”

“I think we all do just as some want to give up smoking.”

“Monday,” Brendan said.

John stopped for a moment, “You do know that I operate a no smoking policy at the company?”

“I do now,” Brendan said, “But that won’t concern me because I won’t be smoking.”

“It’s nothing personal it’s more for the fire risk.”

“Won’t be my problem,” Brendan said and there was something in his voice that told everyone that

it would not.

“So,” Davy said to John, “Tell me more about this business that he wants to set up.”

“Well it's similar to what he's doing already. I don't know why he was criticising you for poaching though he was after doing the same.”

“That probably means that I've had the best pick. I wonder what the bosses would say.”

“You wouldn't tell them though would you?” Megan said, “That would make you as bad as him.”

“No,” Davy said, “I wouldn't tell him but he doesn't know that.”

“Clever,” John said, “I can see why you're getting so much an hour. Mind you that was another one of his gripes.”

“What, did he think that you were paying me too much?”

“Well I was explaining my work ethic to him I got him quite interested as well. He wanted to know why you were getting more than anyone else.”

Davy went deep into thought, “So you must be running some sort of collective?” he said eventually.

“Yes, didn't you know?”

“I thought that it was just the shop floor. I didn't realise that it was across the board.”

“Well we don't have many office staff. In fact you are looking at them.”

“How do you manage to run it on your own, don't you even have a secretary?”

“I might have to start looking for one. The company wasn't that big before the expansion so I didn't really need anyone. We keep the same contacts because of our efficiency and I only had a small workforce.”

“Sounds like I'll be getting a lot of paperwork,” Davy said and then, “Look I know this might sound daft but I think that I should be getting the same as everyone else.”

“What, are you asking me to cut your pay?”

“Will you excuse me for a moment,” Davy said and then to Megan, “Can I have a quiet word,” and they both left the room.

In the kitchen they shut the door and Megan said, “You really surprise me sometimes Davy.”

“Surprise or shock?”

“Surprise, a pleasant surprise.”

“There is method in my madness,” Davy said with a smile on his face.

“A catch, where?”

“He'll be looking for a secretary soon, are you feeling up to it?”

“I suppose that I could go back to office work.”

“We'll see a lot more of each other. I mean I hardly get to see you at all nowadays, what with all the hours we work.”

“Oh,” Megan said teasing him, “So you want to keep an eye on me, that's what it is isn't it?”

“Yes I suppose that I'd better do. I'm starting to forget what you look like. So if I can clear it with John do you fancy it?”

“Yes a new start. I guess we could do with it.”

Davy and Megan walked back in, “Sorry about that. Yes it's decided.”

“So what's the catch?” John said.

“You'll be looking for a secretary soon. I was wondering about Megan.”

“Well it's your decision as you'll be running the show. Personally I think that having Megan as secretary would be quite a catch.”

“She'll have to get used to taking orders from you soon,” Brendan said with a laugh.

“Where's the change in that?” Megan said joining in the fun.

“I'll make the tea,” Davy said getting up quickly, “How many sugars John?”

“Two please. I wasn't actually planning on staying that long.”

“No hurry is there? You don't have to get off anywhere I mean?”

“No, I don't really want to impose on your hospitality.”

“You're very welcome,” Megan said, “Besides I want to know how you worked out the meaning of

life.”

“Now there's a question of a lifetime. I wouldn't even know where to begin.”

“In the beginning,” Davy said, “With the word.”

“And would that word be patience,” Megan said looking knowingly at Davy.

“Sorry John,” Davy said, “Carry on.”

“I suppose it was when I was unemployed, well one of the occasions anyway. I was sitting there just vegetating in front of the T.V. I was a bit low to tell you the truth and getting lower with each day that passed.”

“Now I've been there,” Davy said and looking at Megan, “Before I met Megan that was.”

“Well saved Davy,” Brendan said laughing.

“Well I needed to get out and found myself in a Public Library. I saw a book and liked the cover so I borrowed it. I can't even remember what it was called.”

“But you read it anyway,” Davy said, “Mind you I like a bit of reading myself.”

“I was reading four books a week at one stage. I read anything and everything. It just seemed to pass the time nicely away.”

“So what book gave you the start?” Megan said.

“A mixture really I found that some messages were in different books only put across in another way.”

“Do you mean like the myths of old?” Davy said picking up interest.

“Them but there were others I even got into the Kabbalah. I believe in Mother Nature and the survival of the fittest and I keep that in mind. I know that Greek mythology is about balancing the mind and the Kabbalah is the same.”

“Yes,” Davy said, “Mind you I never looked into the Kabbalah.”

“Well it's about the journey of the mind for the purity of the Soul.”

“Oh,” Davy said, his ears picking up.

“You go from ignorance into intellect and then spiritual, they are all states of mind.”

“And purity of the Soul. I never thought that they were linked in that way.”

“Maybe they are not but it seemed to get me motivated. I actually started to believe in myself.”

“So how far up the ladder did you do?”

“I haven't got to Y.H.V.H. yet.”

“Y.H.V.H., you mean Jehovah?”

“That's the name except that it is a state of mind.”

“A state of mind, how can that be?”

“Symbolic Davy the Hand of God that makes the Spirit is symbolically nailed to the Soul.”

“What, do you mean in balance?”

“Yes, H is symbolic of a window as the Spirit and Soul are reflections of God.”

“That's a bit too deep for me,” Davy said.

“Time will tell,” Megan said.

Chapter 14.

“Well it is a bit of a conversation stopper,” John said, “I guess that is why a lot of people think that I am mad.”

“No, not really, Nirvana is the same,” Davy said, “It's just that I have never looked at it from the Kabbalah and that's why it has gone over my head.”

“Give it a go, you'll be surprised.”

“I'm going to have to get back,” Brendan said, “It's getting on.”

“I've got to get off myself,” John said, “Can I give you a lift?”

“Yes cheers if it's not out your way.” Brendan and John left after saying their goodbyes.

“Well David Molloy,” Megan said afterwards, “John talks a lot of sense.”

“Yes he's changed a lot since the last time that I saw him.”

“Well all change, it's part of growing.”

“We going to bed? I'm looking forward to going into work tomorrow.”

“You're not planning anything stupid are you?” Megan said in a serious tone.

“What and ruin my new life. Let the dead bury the dead.” Davy thought for a while and said, “Mind you I might help him to bury himself.”

“Davy,” Megan said sharply.

“Alright, it's not his knee caps I'm after.”

“Bed.”

“You can be so dominant at times. I mean women nowadays they're not like their mothers.”

“Don't push it. Remember that we have the vote now.”

Davy went upstairs, got undressed and lay down to sleep. As he started to drift off he felt something strange happen. He felt like he was being worked on. It was quite a scary phenomenon at first. He felt energies move up and down his body and a feint throbbing in his head. Megan was asleep so he did not want to disturb her. The energies seemed to gather around his kneecap which was unusual because he had, had an accident there and it still played up occasionally.

Davy just lay back and enjoyed the feeling. He fell to sleep not long after the energies had left him.

Davy woke up bright and early the next day. In fact he even managed to beat the alarm clock. He asked Megan if she wanted any breakfast.

“You're in a good mood. I'll have a boiled egg then.”

Davy went downstairs and started to make breakfast. Megan joined him just as he was finishing.

“You timed that right,” he said as he saw her coming through the door.

“Don't I always.”

Davy had his breakfast, went to work and then clocked on.

“You've got a lucky day,” the foreman said on seeing him, “The manager's not in.”

“Oh well, a days grace eh.”

“Only for us.”

The morning went quickly, Paul came around about half way through it for a chat but that was about it. Davy went home for dinner but Megan was not in so he made himself a cup of tea and settled down with something to eat.

A knock on the door interrupted his meal.

“I wonder who that could be,” he said getting up and making his way to the door, on the other side of the door stood a young couple.

“Hello,” the woman said with a bright smile, “Do you believe in life after death?”

Davy smiled and said, “Lady sometimes I don't even believe in life before death.”

This shook her slightly so the man said, “Do you believe in Heaven and Hell?”

“I believe that you make your own heaven and hell, well other people do anyway.”

“No seriously,” the man said getting slightly flustered, “What do you believe in?”

“I believe in my Self,” Davy said still smiling, “Do you?”

“Sorry?”

“Do you believe in love?” Davy said changing tact, “I mean pure spiritual love.”

The man thought a while and said, “I believe in God and He is love.”

“What about your spiritual love, what He gave you to share?”

“That's what we are doing,” the woman jumped in, “To spread His word.”

“And what is His word, is it not to love one another?”

“Yes,” the man said, “That was one of them.”

“I thought that, that would transcend everything else. Surely it doesn't matter what religion you are as long as you love one another.”

“But,” the woman said though got no further as the man stopped her and bid Davy farewell.

Davy shut the door with a broad grin on his face and went back to his meal. He finished his meal and took the plates into the kitchen. As he was washing up he heard another knock on the door.

“Not again,” he said to himself going back.

“Er hello,” the man said, he was alone this time and looking rather sheepish.

“Hello,” Davy said looking at him.

“Er. What do you actually believe in?”

Davy thought a while before he said, “The evolving Soul on the path of life.”

“You're mad,” the man said shaking his head and turning to leave.

“Isn't that what you believe in, fundamentally I mean.”

“I believe in God and He is our guide through life.”

“God is love and that is power to your Soul surely. Don't you need to be pure to get to Heaven?”

“Do you believe in Hell?” the man said as if by sudden inspiration.

“Oh yes, it's called the minimum wage.”

“I think I am wasting my time,” the man said muttering as he went off.

“Do you believe in immortality?” Davy shouted after he had left.

Davy went back inside and finished the dishes off. About two minutes later there was another knock on the door. “He's persistent,” Davy said going to answer it, “I'll give him that.” Davy opened the door to find the man standing there.

“Do you believe in the trinity?” the man said by way of testing him.

“Light, love and power, yes I do.”

“No I meant God the father, God the son and God the Holy Ghost,” the man said in a triumphant manner.

“Like I said, light, love and power.”

The man stood there looking confused so Davy thought he had better elaborate, “Jesus Christ was the light, the Spirit is love and the power is the Father.”

“Yes,” the man said, “God is love and now you say He is the power.”

“Have you never heard of the power of love, the creative force? His Spirit is love so tell me why isn't yours?”

“It is,” the man said in a self righteous tone, “That's why I'm walking the streets, to spread His word.”

“Yes but you believe that you have the only message, that's hardly a basis for spiritual love.”

“I don't create intolerance. I just want to spread the word.”

“Whose word, yours or God's?”

“Look,” the man said getting flustered again, “It says in the Bible.”

“Love one another. You can make the Bible say whatever you want it to say because like God it is all things to all men. There is only one message to come through and that is to love one another.”

The man stood speechless for a while before he said, “I'm going to have to get back to you.”

“God help me from these mortals,” Davy said after he had shut the door. He looked at his watch, “Time seems to go quickly when you don't want it to,” and set off to work.

The first part of the afternoon went quite quickly and this surprised him. Around 4 o'clock he was interrupted by Martin. “Kev was asking if there were any jobs left,” he said awakening Davy from his semi trance.

“Why is he asking you? Do you know something that I don't?”

“No, he wanted me to ask you.”

Davy looked at him and said, “Well what do you think?”

“Sorry?”

“You've been working with him. Is he a good worker or will you have to carry him?”

Martin thought awhile and said, “It's not really up to me to say.”

“Normally but I'm asking you because you know him better than me.”

“He's quite a good worker I suppose.”

“Would you employ him?” Davy said cutting through his indecision.

Martin thought a while before he said, “Yes,” and then more decisively, “Yes I would.”

“Is that as a friend or as a co worker or even a bit of both?”
“Bit of both. He carries his weight and he's a good bloke to work with.”
“Well I'll nip and see him later.”
“I'll fetch him a form if you like. I'm going past him later on.”
“No you're alright it will give me an excuse to leave the line for a while.”
“You're the boss.”
“I'm only an evolving Soul on the path of life,” Davy said after he had gone.

Chapter 15.

Davy's work day had finished and he was back at home. Megan was already there when he arrived.
“Last day tomorrow,” Megan said as Davy entered the room, “No trouble at work?”
“You mean the manager, he wasn't in today.”
“Any luck on the job front?” Megan said pouring him a cup of tea.
“Got another fellow. Martin vouched for him.”
“There was a strange man hanging around when I got back.”
“Did he look religious,” Davy said indifferently.
Megan thought for a while and said, “Yes I suppose so.”
A knock on the door brought him around, “I hope that's not him,” Davy said going to the door.
Davy opened the door to see a strange man standing in front of him.
“Yes,” Davy said, “Can I help you?”
“I'm looking for a Mr. D. Kelly. He is registered as living at this address.”
“I'm him. Is there something the matter?”
Megan came to the door and said, “That was the man who was around earlier.”
At this Davy's tone changed, “Right, what's the problem?”
Davy's aggressive manner made the man back away slightly.
“I need help,” he said, “I don't know what to do.”
Davy's tone changed slightly at that, “How do you know me? How could I possibly help you?”
“The voices told me,” the man said and Megan backed off slightly.
“The voices?”
The man looked at the floor and said, “I think I must be mad. I keep hearing voices.”
Davy was intrigued although he was reluctant to let the man in he was curious. He looked at Megan and she nodded.
“You'd better come in,” he said.
The man entered and walked through to the living room.
“Do you want a cup of tea?” Megan said to try and calm his nerves because he seemed very over wrought.
“What do the voices say,” Davy asked after the man had received his tea.
“All sorts,” the man said starting to shake badly, “Mostly they try and get me to kill myself.”
“Have you asked them why?”
“No they just seem to take over. I can't stop them.”
“You do know that it is all in the mind?”
“No they're too real for that. I feel that I have been possessed.”
“So you think that somebody has taken your identity but how did you come to know me?”
“It was a dream that I had. Can you see how desperate I am, I'm starting to act on my dreams.”
“Dreams are there to help you find your path.”
“My path?”
“One step at a time, the voices, are they always with you?”
“No sometimes I'm a very rational man.”
“It's just your imagination that needs rationalising.”
“Sorry, how can you do that?”

“Well do you think you are possessed or is it your imagination?”

“How could I know that?”

“Are they your voices or someone else's?”

The man thought for a while before saying, “They are mine”

“Then if they are yours you can deal with them.”

“How? I drift into them. I don't even know that I do.”

“Strength through understanding you've got to find out what causes the voices.”

The man went quiet for a while. He looked uneasily at the floor and said, “I killed a man.”

Davy went quiet. He was tempted to throw the man out but something inside him disagreed.

“Do you want to talk about it,” Davy said after a while.

“It was many years ago, I was no more than a lad. It was just a gang fight that was all. I kicked a man to death.”

“What happened after?”

“I got 10 years for manslaughter. I've done the time but I just can't seem to forget the crime.”

“I'm afraid that, that will always be with you but you are sorry for your actions?”

“Every minute of the day. You know I went around to see his mother after I got out.”

“That's good. How did she react?”

“Not too well but what else can you expect he was her only son.”

“You did what you could do. You did your best.”

“But to no avail I can't bring her son back.”

“What's done is done. You are not the same person that killed her son.”

“I am, it was me.”

“Would you do it again?”

“No, of course I wouldn't.”

“So mentally speaking you are a different person to what you were.”

The man thought for a while before he said, “Yes I can see that but that won't stop the voices.”

“One step at a time you've got a long road ahead.”

“Sorry, carry on.”

“So you hate yourself for something that happened a long time ago when you were a different person.”

“Yes,” the man said starting to lose patience.

“Well the state has forgiven you otherwise you would still be inside.”

“What about the mother, she will never forgive me.”

“But you tried your best. You went around to try and make amends in some way.”

“I did what I could.”

“And that's all that you can do, that's all that anyone can.”

“So why do I still get the voices telling me to kill myself?”

“You've got to learn to let love back into your life. You've got to learn to love yourself. The only thing stopping you from enjoying life is you.”

“It's easily said but it's so hard to do.”

Davy thought awhile before he said, “Why don't you tell yourself every morning that you love yourself.”

“I'd feel daft. Besides it wouldn't work.”

“It will help you to believe in yourself and you will get stronger every day. Soon you'll be able to control the voices and they'll lose their power.”

“That's the theory I'm not sure about the practice.”

“Time to sink in, that's all that it needs.”

The man thought for a while before he said, “Thanks anyway.”

Davy detected that the despair was still with him so he said, “Have you ever thought about holding your breath?”

“Sorry?”

“It might help you to get back to your senses.”

“I’m sorry that I wasted your time,” the man said getting up.

“No seriously, think about. How long do the voices last?”

“A few minutes, although they seem a lot longer.”

“And when you have them what happens. Have you ever tried to commit suicide?”

“I’ve come close but never fully.”

“When faced with the reality of your own death do the voices disappear?”

The man thought awhile and nodded his head.

“Well if you hold your breath you deprive yourself of oxygen and to all intents and purposes it thinks that you are going to die. That should bring you back to your senses.”

“I can see the logic in that mind you I’m in a rational frame of mind. What about when I’m not?”

“Write down ‘Hold your breath’ and keep it with you at all times.”

“That might work,” the man said cheering up slightly.

“It will work there’s no might about it. Always remember that you are in control.”

“Thank you,” the man said getting up, “I felt a bit unsure about coming around but I’m glad that I did.”

“It might be a good idea to read as well,” Davy said getting up with him, “Try the Bible or Greek mythology.”

“Will that help I’ve never really been religious.”

“It will keep your mind occupied and give you the spirit to learn to love yourself but don’t forget every morning when you get up.”

“Okay,” the man said half heartedly.

“No seriously it does work. It just takes time to sink in.”

The man left and Davy said to Megan, “It’s been a strange day.”

“Does that holding your breath work?”

“If he believes it it will. I mean it’s no good coming to your senses after you jump of a Tower block, it’s too late and besides I might be walking underneath.”

“Method in your madness again,” Megan said with a smile.

“Self preservation at all times Megan. It keeps your mind sharp.”

“You seem to be taking in a lot of what John said, survival of the fittest and all that.”

“It gets me through at the moment. Maybe I’ll change later but I’m happy to be like this now.”

“Do you think that he will be alright?” Megan said looking out the window and watching the man walk down the street.

“Yes I think he’s strong enough.”

Chapter 16.

The evening went quietly by and night soon came around. Davy and Megan slept soundly as night turned to day. The morning saw them awake bright and early and Megan made the breakfast as Davy got ready for work.

“Last day then,” Megan said as Davy came down for breakfast.

“I’m quite looking forward to it, the end of an era.”

“You’ve still got that manager on your mind?” Megan said looking at him in a suspicious manner.

“No it’s just that I feel so good you would not believe it.”

“Good,” Megan said with a loving smile, “Don’t work too hard then.”

“I’ll try not to but I can’t promise. You know how boring it gets.”

Davy finished his breakfast and went to work with a sprightly step. He clocked on just in time and went to his spot.

“Manager wants to see you,” the foreman said by way of greeting.

“Cheers, it’s probably about my cards.”

Davy went to the office and knocked on the door.

“Come in,” a voice said from behind it.

Davy walked in and saw the manager sitting looking quite nervous. “Ah Davy,” he said in a friendly manner which stunned Davy slightly, “Last day then.”

“Yes,” Davy said with a smile because he had decided that he would not let him spoil the day.

“I hear you're on a good wage, nearly as much as me in fact.”

“I took a cut.”

The manager stopped in his tracks and said, “You took a cut, what for?”

“For the greater good but I don't think that you would understand.”

“Well not for your good then,” the manager said trying to mentally put Davy in his place.

“No the greater good doesn't have mine or yours it has ours.”

The manager said nothing as he did not quite know what to say, “You can pick up your pay at 3 o'clock.”

“That's nice it will save me a journey. It's not usual though is it?”

“What, does it matter?”

“No well not to me anyway,” and left the office. Davy smiled to himself as he got back to work. The rest of the morning went by and Davy went home for some dinner. Megan was not there so he just made himself a sandwich and a cup of tea. He sat down and started to eat but had hardly got halfway when the door knocked. “Getting busy these dinner hours,” he said as he got up to go and answered the door. He found the man who had knocked the dinner time before waiting outside.

“You're persistent,” Davy said, “What are you selling?”

“No it's my day off. I was wondering if I could have a word.”

“Sure,” Davy said shrugging his shoulders, “You'd better come in.”

The man followed Davy and took a chair in the living room.

“Do you fancy a cup of tea?” Davy said in a casual manner.

“No, er thanks,” the man said nervously, “It was what you were talking about yesterday.”

“Sorry about that I must have had a bad morning.”

“No,” the man protested, “I was interested in what you said.”

“So you are a bit of a theologian, you sometimes listen.”

“I can pick the wheat from the chaff if that's what you mean.”

“So which bit did you actually mean?” Davy said expecting some sort of debate.

“You said something about immortality, what did you mean or were you just being funny?”

“Well that was what you were asking wasn't it.”

“Sorry, when?”

“What is life after death only immortality and even Heaven and Hell, you've got to go somewhere.”

“Oh I thought that you were being specific.”

“So you came back here on your day off?” Davy said and then to him, “Strange,” before saying to the man, “Do you think of it as a job then?”

“I call it more of a crusade.”

“And you feel like you are King Richard?”

The man laughed and said, “You've got a good sense of humour.”

This surprised Davy and he started to see the person.

“Gets me through life so tell me what do you actually believe in?”

“I could never pin point it, never put a name to it.”

“Well they say that He is all things to all men so no one else can.”

“You have a very strange outlook it's neither east nor west.”

“I have,” Davy said sitting up in his chair, “But how do you know that?”

“Light, love and power and your reaction to death.”

“You must have looked into this with some depth, a true believer nevertheless.”

“Is that another crack?” the man said getting defensive.

“You don't believe that when your body dies that you are with it, fundamentally I mean.”
 “No I've been down too many roads to believe otherwise.”
 “So you believe in immortality then, a oneness with God.”
 “That's close to blasphemy.”
 “I said with I didn't say as.”
 “True,” the man said laughing, “Don't some people get really hot under the collar?”
 “Well you would not be called a stereotype.”
 “It's my day off,” the man said laughing, “A sort of part time vocation eh.”
 “Seriously speaking I could not do what you do, you must have guts.”
 “Belief helps as well. Surprising though, you can't really give Him to most people.”
 “Oh I believe in something, though you wouldn't call me a crusader.”
 “I feel good doing it. I'm comfortably off and I do believe that I'm doing good.”
 “Oh no, there was no offence meant I was just saying that I'm not like that.”
 “Sorry. I guess with all that flak it sometimes gets to you.”
 “So what are you actually looking for, in life I mean?”
 “That's close I'm looking for the meaning of life.”
 “A journey of a lifetime for some people I've seen the film.”
 “No,” the man said seriously, “I need to put some meaning into my life so I thought that I had better find the meaning first.”
 “So what have you turned up, can you shed any light on it?”
 “Evolution of the soul but to what purpose?”
 “Have you tried the Kabbalah, was that one of the roads that you went down?”
 “Been there, pure to be judged really but to what purpose? To cross the great abyss but to what?”
 “To be at one with the Universe I suppose but what do you think?”
 “Immortality for eternity just doing nothing I think that there is more to life than that.”
 “But that's a spiritual thing,” Davy said as he felt his body energies change slightly. He thought to himself 'That's what they mean when they say that when two or three are gathered in my name then I am there,' then said “Shouldn't you be bringing it down to Earth?”
 “I do but that doesn't help me with my search.”
 “It sounds like you do have a full time job then because it should.”
 “What do you mean?”
 “What you are really looking for is inner peace, happiness. You are happy when you preach, do you know why?”
 “I've never really thought about it properly before, because I like doing it, that's why I do it.”
 “Maybe it's because you are with God when you talk about His word or does that sound mad?”
 “Maybe, but you are not telling me to talk for 24 hours a day.”
 “No,” Davy said laughing, “I think that He will let you sleep occasionally.”
 “You don't take life too seriously, I'll give you that.”
 “Gets me through the day, a mild sort of heaven I suppose.”
 The man's face changed, “Do you think that is my meaning to life?”
 “To bring heaven to Earth, I thought that, that was everyones.”
 “To prepare for the second coming and immortality, but people don't believe.”
 “But you do so why don't you live life accordingly. Lead by example it's the only way.”
 “I try.”
 “You only have to change your little world you know and then you'll get that inner peace. You don't have to be a stereotype.”
 “What about immortality, I haven't found the answer.”
 “Inner peace, just be happy to be with God and He'll help.”
 Davy got up and said, “I'm sorry but I'd better get back to work.”
 The man and Davy walked out together and said goodbye at the top of the street.

Chapter 17.

Davy clocked on for his last afternoon and carefully went to his place on the line.

“Not long now,” Martin said by way of encouragement. “I bet you don't intend to do much this afternoon?”

Davy laughed and said, “I wish you could tell the machine that.”

Martin smiled and said, “Controlled by machines I thought that it was supposed to be the other way around.”

“Funny how things change, are you on the town tonight?”

“I might shoot a couple of games of pool down the local, nothing special what about you?”

“Not tonight, quiet night in front of the T.V. I suppose.”

“I don't bother with it much now, never seems much on.”

“How do you while away those long hours then, or are you never in?”

“I only go out once a week, to the pub I mean. Mind you that's more financial than anything else. I like to get out and walk in the countryside, take pictures of the wildlife sometimes.”

“That sounds good I used to go rabbiting when I was younger.”

“I only shoot them with a camera so hopefully they'll be around when I come back.”

The afternoon went quickly and 3 o'clock soon came around. Davy went to the manager's office and knocked on the door.

“Come in,” the manager said from behind the door.

Davy walked in and saw the manager sitting down with a smug grin on his face. “I've got all your stuff but I'll have to send the P.45 on later.”

“Thanks,” Davy said in a civilised manner.

“So you didn't fill the quota then?”

“No, I thought I would leave a few for you.”

“Very kind of you,” the man said in a sarcastic tone, “I'm sure the M.D. will be pleased.”

“He might even give the lads a pay rise,” Davy said smiling to himself.

“I shouldn't think so besides they must be happy or you would have filled the quota.”

“Clever answer but I guess that's why you are the manager.”

“It's for the greater good,” the manager said referring back to their earlier conversation, “The good of me,” and laughed loudly.

“You're a sad man,” Davy said shaking his head and this ignited the manager's temper.

“What do you mean?” he said raising his voice, “I get more money than you do. I wouldn't dream of taking a pay cut, you must be the sad one, greater good huh.”

“If you value your happiness by how much you get then you must have a shallow life, oh and you wouldn't dream of taking a pay cut because you wouldn't have the imagination.”

“So,” the manager said laughing, “Are you going to imagine that there's food on the table then?”

“What I get is more than enough besides as I said before it's for the greater good.”

“Another Utopia,” the manager scorned, “I'm beginning to think that I'm surrounded by madmen.”

“Well I guess that I had better explain it to you.”

“No don't bother I've heard it all before.”

“Not this, John must have only explained the work side. I took a cut on the proviso that my wife got a job as secretary. I get more time with her and our wages are the same. Now as we get the same wages our marriage is on an equal footing and there'll be no arguments over who the bread winner is. As I said it's for the greater good but this time I'm talking about my marriage.”

“Oh,” the manager said slightly taken aback, “I never realised.”

“And that's where your imagination comes in have you the imagination to help others and help yourself in the process.”

The manager sat quietly for a while before saying, “I don't believe in helping others, they wouldn't help me. No to me it's survival of the fittest.”

“You'll be surprised at how many people are helpful especially if they think it's for the greater

good.”

“I think that you look through the world with rose tinted glasses, I'm lucky not to have that sort of imagination.”

“Lucky or only think you are. What did you imagine would happen when you went round to see John?” The manager went quiet and looked sheepishly at the floor. “Open and honest,” Davy carried on, “It's all water under the bridge and it might prove a point.”

“Well I imagined that you would get the sack I suppose.”

“That's putting imagination to a bad use. Now imagine this for a moment. You are unhappy here because of the way you are treated. I know that you are thinking of setting up on your own but that's in the distant future.”

“Is this any of your business?” the manager said abruptly.

“No and that is why I wouldn't interfere in it.”

“Oh,” the manager said getting off his high horse, “Carry on.”

“I would imagine that you would be looking for another job, until you set up on your own anyway. Maybe that next job would be better and you might enjoy it that much that you wouldn't want to set up on your own.”

“Reality says different.”

“With imagination and drive you can make your own reality,” Davy said and on seeing the smile on the manager's face said, “I'm not talking about the world only your world.”

“Go on.”

“Your imagination works on a shallow vibration. Deep down you want to be happy and think that money will do it. That's lack of imagination. There is more to life than money there is life itself.”

“Oh it all sounds good but there is nothing tangible to it.”

“And there is where your drive comes in, to make it tangible. You're nobodies fool only your own. Play it by the book and feel your life change.”

“I'll believe that when I see it because I live in the real world.”

“Oh it's not easy but let's be honest life would be boring if it was.”

Davy left the manager to think about what he had said. The rest of the day ticked by as Davy went around to say his goodbyes. He clocked off for the last time and went home. Megan was already there when he got back so they sat and talked awhile. Their conversation soon turned to the future.

“Well,” Davy said, “You could almost call us middle class.”

“Oh, does that mean that I will have to start to learn etiquette?”

“Class or crass,” Davy said laughing, “Another state of mind.”

“So you couldn't see me as a lady then?” Megan said playfully.

“Megan if you were a lady and I was a carpenter I'd never be paid for my work. Mind you, you still owe me for that back door.”

“I thought that you said that Jez did it. Now he was a gentleman.”

“Well maybe, but he was never a carpenter.”

“So you wouldn't say that you were a gentleman?”

“I suppose you could call me a gentle man, mind you nowadays its original term has lost its meaning. I think it's more of a question of interbreeding than breeding. I mean does it really matter which way you pass the port?”

“Well,” Megan said getting back to the future, “I think our plans might have a spanner in the works.”

“Sorry?” Davy said, it was still in his mind what the Spirit had said, “Is there anything the matter?”

“We're going to have a child,” Megan said unsure of Davy's reaction.

“Megan, you mean that you are going to make me a father?”

“Well I think that, that was you.”

“I don't know what to say, you don't know how happy this has made me.”

“I wasn't sure how you would react, after getting me the job and all that.”

“Now a child transcends all that,” Davy said holding her in his arms, “A new life for our new life, it's like the icing on the cake. But what do you think? How do you feel about bringing a child into this world?”

“I'm overjoyed I've always wanted a child.”

“Me too, deep down but I've never felt secure enough, financially anyway.”

“Days gone by, things are getting better.”

“I feel that luck is on our side now. Drive, imagination and luck together, what a combination. Do you want a cup of tea?”

“Yes go on. I'd make it myself but in my condition.”

“Megan,” Davy said in mock surprise, “I didn't think that you would be coming the old soldier.”

“You got to do what you can.”

Davy went into the kitchen and made the tea. He brought it back and they sat and talked into the small hours of the morning. They went to bed tired but it was Megan who dropped off first leaving Davy alone with his thoughts. He started to get a funny feeling. It was almost as if he was being massaged. Certain points when touched seemed to activate energies all over his body. He just lay there and enjoyed the feeling. The energies left after about 5 minutes and he slowly drifted off into a peaceful slumber.

He found himself drifting through darkness but up ahead was a dot of light. He headed towards it and watched it grow. The dot turned into a blue square that got bigger the nearer he got. It was a funny shade of blue that he could not place. It seemed as if it was not from this world but more of a cartoon effect. As he got closer he could see other colours that made the shapes of clouds. He was about to enter into this new world when he woke up.

Chapter 18

Davy sat up and saw the Megan was still asleep. 'What made me wake up' he thought to himself, 'I wanted to go in.' he eventually fell to sleep in the hope of returning to that scene so divine.

Unfortunately he did not end up there but found himself back in the Library. Disappointment came to his face on that recognition. He cheered up slightly when he saw that the book on the table was a different colour so he walked over. He opened the book and read the verse inside it,

Open me up with a heart of gold

Let me shine and your love unfold,

Watch me grow let me be your friend

And together we will know our end.

He studied the verse for quite a while and said to himself, “Is this something to do with the Soul? Didn't Megan say something about the Soul being the spiritual heart? What does it open when it's pure?” and thought awhile longer, “Maybe it's a channel to the Spirit, maybe that helps the evolution of the Soul as well as the mind? The third line, maybe that would be balance and together we will know our end.” Another thought came into his head, “As above so below, I am therefore I am.” This stopped Davy in his tracks because he did not see the relevance at first, “What could that mean and more to the point why did I think it?”

“Spiritual gold,” the thought said, “The elixir of life.” Davy went cold on hearing this. He knew he had not said it although it was his voice. “Who are you?” he thought to himself remembering the man who had been round the evening before.

“I am love, or is it just your imagination.”

Davy smiled to himself and said, “So you are not after trying to kill me?”

“Only with kindness but that doesn't solve the riddle now does it?”

“But you already know the answer so what's the point?”

“I am a stage of your development, when you have journeyed and found the answer then you will be me.”

“Well as above then so below means Spirit and Soul. I can see that but I can't get the point.”

“What is your Soul when it's pure?”

Davy thought a while before he said, “An impure Soul is the breath of God so would a pure one be the Spirit of God?”

“I am therefore I am, Spirit and Soul in balance up above and heart and head so below. It's a state of balance that opens the channel to the Spirit, and what is that channel called?”

Davy thought awhile before he said, “Therefore?”

The thought laughed and said, “Not bad Davy, that being so, not bad at all. So you think that I'm that being, so what am I called?”

“Imagination for now am I is I am” a voice behind him broke him out of his thoughts “Very clever Davy.” Davy turned and saw Callan standing there.

“About time,” Davy said.

“And what do you want to know about time. I thought that you didn't need it anymore.”

“Maybe it's just my imagination,” Davy said with a laugh, “I thought that you had gone for good.”

“Well I thought that you were going to visit me for a change.”

“Was that the other dimension, the one that you said you were from? It seemed nice, well what I saw of it anyway.”

“You were close but your imagination was not quite strong enough.”

“Imagination, is that what this is all about?”

“I'm a gene, imagine,” Callan said and disappeared.

Davy was still in the Library getting perplexed at Callan's play on words. “I'm a gene, has that got something to do with imagination but what exactly is a gene?” he smiled to himself and said, “I wonder if there is a dictionary in this Library?” He scanned the shelves and saw a row of books with his name on them. He remembered that he had done science at school and so he looked through the relevant years. He found two definitions. One was that they were blue prints that determined everything about the organism and the other said that they determined inherited characteristics.

“I suppose you could say that if they were inherited then it could be imagined but that's clutching at straws.” He thought for a while longer but was interrupted by a voice behind him, “Don't you ever stop Davy?”

He turned around and saw Megan, “Megan, I don't think that I should have showed you the Library.”

“Davy, did you want to be alone with your thoughts?”

“Well actually I think I could do with a hand,” and told her as much as he remembered of what had happened.

“I'm a gene and imagine, was Callan talking about himself?” Megan asked.

“No I think he was talking about imagination but it might just have been a play on words.”

“I don't know about that. Didn't he say earlier that everything had a point?”

“Yes so it looks like we are thinking again.”

“Would a gene be conditioned reasoning, one definition said that.”

“I suppose you could say that. You can change conditioned reasoning does that mean that you can change a gene?”

“Logic would say that but I wouldn't know for sure, any particular gene that you would like to change?”

“I'm beginning to think that you can read me like a book,” Davy said laughing.

“Well”, Megan said with a smile, “we're in the Library.”

“Do you think that he's saying it's just imagination?”

“Well we are all part of this collective thought that is called life,” Callan said as he appeared in front of them.

“I think we are going to have to get you a bell or something,” Davy said after he had got over the initial shock.

“So what is it all about Callan?” Megan said, “Life I mean. What did the thought mean when it said spiritual gold, the elixir of life?”

“That's a good question,” Davy said, “So what's it all about Callan?”

“Love is the elixir of life for it is healing.”

“Purity of the Soul for immortality, but that's already been covered.”

“Yes but it was you who asked me for in your life there is still that if.”

“I still only think that I am you mean, but I thought that I was.”

“You know that you are but Megan's not sure so you are picking up her doubts.”

“But why would I do that, especially if I was that certain?”

“Your Spirit s willing but it had already been judged, you have that knowing.”

“And that is why I must judge myself, to take that final if away?”

“It's a big step do you think that you would be up to it?”

“It's been on my mind recently Callan but I don't know how.”

Callan smiled and said, “If you are strong and pure you will make it. You do realise that it might drive you mad if you don't?”

“Well to tell you the truth I didn't because as I said before I wouldn't know how to.”

“It is difficult but remember that you have the Law of Karma as a balance and the Spirit on your side.”

Callan disappeared leaving Megan and Davy alone in the Library.

“I thought that you could only judge yourself when you die?” Megan said surprised.

“Conditioned reasoning but you have heard it from Callan.”

“So it must be true but according to him it sounds dangerous. Are you sure that you are up to it?”

“That's just the point I'm not. If I was I would know how to do it.”

“He said that you have the Law of Karma as a balance. Maybe he means balancing your good deeds against your bad.”

“Yes maybe, and it would only mean God's law, I mean he wouldn't hold it against me for not having a T.V. license would he.”

“But what happens if you don't make it, it might drive you mad.”

“I know Megan but if I don't do it I will never know.”

“Maybe ignorance is bliss, think of the child.”

Davy thought a while before he said, “It must be done. My Spirit has been judged and now I must follow.”

“Davy you might not make it.”

“Megan the doubt is in your head. The Spirit is on my side and that makes the difference. I just want to know how to do it and what will follow.”

“What happens next, you see that's another worry.”

“No it won't be too bad, well not according to the verse anyway.”

“It must be that Nirvana thing you won't be the same Davy.”

Davy smiled and said, “I'll be a better person for doing it Megan otherwise it would be pointless doing it in the first place. Patience, me and you together forever.”

“It will drive you mad,” Megan said slowly through tear stained eyes.

“It's just a state of mind, that's all it ever was.”

Megan and Davy both woke up together to a sunny Sunday morning.

Chapter 19.

“Morning Davy,” Megan said with a smile, “So what's on the agenda for today then?”

“Tell the world about our baby, well our parents anyway.”

“There's plenty of time for that. Did you sleep well?”

Davy thought a moment before he said, “You don't remember?”

“Davy,” Megan said and he could see it in her eyes that she did not.

“What did you dream about?” Davy said looking at her questioningly.

“Don't really remember mind you I don't always remember. Something to do with sheep I think.”

Davy thought for a while. Maybe it was his perception of her and not her? Maybe it was only in his mind? 'Mmmm,' he said quietly to himself and mentally shook his head. “What do you fancy for breakfast,” he said giving up.

“It's a nice day why don't we go out for a walk first?”

Davy thought about it and smiled. It had been a long time since they had been out walking and it was a nice day. “Yes, I think that's a great idea.”

Megan and Davy took a walk and this seemed to clear Davy's head somewhat. About an hour later they were sitting down to some toast.

“We'll have to do that more often,” Megan said, “It sort of sets you up for the day.”

“Yes it definitely clears your head.”

“Mind you I fancy a quiet weekend, do you fancy going somewhere? I mean in the country.”

“The quiet weekend sounds better,” Davy said with a smile.

“Better than a quiet weekend in the country,” Megan said teasing him, “Back to nature kind of thing.”

“Could do I suppose,” Davy said half heartedly. He would rather have been at home if the truth be known for he had it in his mind to judge himself.

“What's the matter Davy?” Megan said picking up on his tone, “You don't seem too keen.”

“I suppose I fancy a quiet weekend at home, a bit of relaxation before Monday. It's just first day nerves before the job.”

“If that's what you want. I can understand your concern but every thing's going to be alright.”

They sat and talked until dinner time when Brendan knocked on the door.

“Come in dad,” Davy said on seeing him, “I'll put the kettle on.”

“Cheers Davy,” Brendan said walking in, “Hello Megan,” he said when he had got to the living room.

“Hi Brendan. How's them mantras?”

“Sound Megan, I don't seem to be smoking half as much. That will make it easier on Monday.”

“You haven't come to try and entice me down the pub have you,” Davy said, “Because I've decided on a quiet weekend.”

“No, actually it's Megan I'm after.”

“Oh yes,” Davy said pretending to look at Brendan in a suspicious manner.

“Unless of course you are any good at sewing,” Brendan said laughing.

“I got a stitch once when I was running but that's about the extent of my sewing.”

“No. Your mam wants a hand with some curtains and I'm not any good at it.”

“Well I could spare a couple of hours,” Megan said, “If you don't mind that is Davy?”

“No you get off and I will have some dinner ready for your return.”

“We'll sort that end out,” Brendan said, “After all it's only fair.”

“You'll have a cup of tea first?”

“Yes sure, I've always time for that.”

They sat and talked for about half an hour and then Megan and Brendan left Davy alone with his thoughts. He soon got back to the subject of judging himself. He reasoned that if the scales did not balance he would have to do penance but what might that penance be? Maybe if he lived his life according to the Good Book that was all the penance that was needed. After all he continued it's just as easy to live a good life as it was to lead a bad one. It was just a state of mind. He decided that he would follow that lifestyle and use the maxim treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. He had made the conscious decision to follow that path no matter what the outcome.

A thought came into his head it was something Callan had said about driving him mad. Davy had thoughts of losing his identity and this unlocked a strange thought train. “Maybe my Imagination might take over as a separate identity and nobody would know.” This set the seed of panic in Davy's

mind, one that started to grow almost immediately. "What would happen to me, I don't want to leave this world things are starting to look up now." Another thought came in, Callan had said that if he did not think about it then it would not be a problem. Davy's confused mind soon turned that around. "I know therefore I am so as long as I know then I am, but what if I forget?" Tiredness started to creep over him. Davy was just a thought and so if he slept he might forget. Panic started to grow more. Maybe he would forget that he was immortal when he slept. Panic rose even more so he decided that he would write it down but another thought came in, "Maybe it was a conspiracy, maybe it was a big secret that could not be shared? Maybe if he wrote it down someone might find it, maybe he should never go to sleep for then he would not forget and die? Maybe he should not have told Megan?" Panic turned to frenzy as he thought that this had happened before. It was a trap, a mental trap that would send him to where ever it was that he came from. He was going to die as soon as he went to sleep. If he slept he would die, it was as simple as that. Callan was right he could not cope with all that knowledge. He had surrendered his will and now it was time to collect. It was a trap and he had been trapped into his own demise. His Imagination had taken over and it was going to kill him but maybe if he wrote it down he would be alright. Davy had completely lost his mind, he was fringing madness. He felt that his mind was going around in ever decreasing circles and he would soon be sucked down like water down a plug hole. He had to write it down but what should he write? I am immortal or I am immortal as long as I know it? How could he be sure for he had not judged himself? Thoughts of David Molloy hiding under a bush came into his mind. Maybe he would be judged on that? What about the killing? His thought patterns got more erratic. Had David killed anyone, it was war so there was a good chance. Davy could not remember. He reasoned with what little reason he had left inside him that he would remember if he had because he had seen David's life and you could not forget that. Panic was taking over again. He was going to have to get a pen but tiredness was growing on him. Maybe he was just going to sleep and die where he was. He should get up and find a pen and some paper but he felt that he could not move. He had been through all this before but not in this lifetime or any others. His time had come. He was going to meet his Maker but he was not ready. He was a coward who hid from danger. How would he explain that to his Maker?

He might be alright if he wrote down he was immortal. Davy took all his effort to try and combat his tiredness and looked for some paper. Panic rose as he looked for the paper, it blinded his senses. He could not find any. He rushed around the living room emptying drawers on the floor and then he found some. Panic subsided slightly but rose again when he could not find a pen. He looked down the side of the settee but to no avail.

He rushed into the kitchen still looking for the pen. More drawers opened as he pulled them out in blind panic. More thoughts came to his head. He was going to die and he had not judged himself. Thoughts of David Molloy came back. He imagined him sitting and shaking under that spartan bush. He was a coward. He was afraid to die. What a time to find out, just as he was about to meet his Maker. He knew that as long as he did not say 'meet my Maker' he would be alright.

More drawers opened and ended up on the floor. Where was the pen? He was going to forget what to write if he did not find it soon. What was he going to do, he was trapped again. He was going to die a coward and fail. Who would take his place? Suddenly, hidden behind the bread bin, he found a pen. He rushed back to the living room. 'What shall I write?' he thought once more. He wrote down "I am immortal" but ripped it off the pad as another thought came in. 'It's all in the mind you are just imagining it. Your Imagination has taken over.' Davy's frenzied panic made him write it out again, "I am immortal." another thought came in 'Surrender your will'. He found himself writing it down. Davy ripped it out and wrote "I am" and ripped it out. More thoughts but this time of a conspiracy, 'You only die because you think that you do, it's all in the mind.'

Panic rose once more, "I am immortal," he wrote and ripped out. "Surrender your will" he wrote and ripped. Paper was strewn all around the floor but he carried on. "I am immortal," he wrote and then added to the pile. Davy seemed to be in a haze as he carried on with his inner struggle. His

Imagination got control again. 'The more you know about God the more you become him' Davy saw that he was losing but carried on in vain. Another thought 'Give up', he found himself writing it down. Davy ripped it off and wrote, "I am immortal," "Give up," came again 'you're trapped'. "I am immortal," "Give up."

Davy carried on but saw that there was no way out. "Give up," "I am," "Give up," "I," It was then that Davy stopped. He just gave up. He sat on the chair and looked at the chair opposite. He had a feeling that, that was where he was going to meet his Maker. A mixture of fear and panic came over as he said, "I am a coward, meet my Maker."

Chapter 20.

Nothing happened. Total and overbearing relief came to him as he found that he was alone. "You are your Maker," a voice said inside him. It sounded like him but he thought that it could not be. Through the haze that had enveloped his mind he saw what looked like a block of mist come down. Every thought that came to his mind seemed to be echoed in the mist. He seemed to get strength from this. "You are in control," a thought said.

Davy's mind was still in turmoil as he said, "What do you want me to do?"

"It's up to you. What do you want to do? You can do anything that you want."

All Davy's turmoil went at that and in its place was relief and happiness. "Love is healing," the mist said as it lifted.

Davy calmed down and thought about the last statement and it seemed to sink in. "What you sow then so shall you reap," he said to himself laughing, "I didn't know that it was literal." he sat down and fully regained his composure.

After 10 minutes had past he thought that he had better clear up. He looked at the mess and was surprised at how big it was. "I must have completely lost it," he said as he started to pick up the paper that was copiously lying around the settee. It took him 20 minutes just to clear the living room and then he thought that he would stop and settle down with a cup of tea. He walked into the kitchen only to be confronted by another bomb site.

"Whatever would Megan say?" he said to himself as he spent another quarter of an hour cleaning that.

After that he went out for a walk to try and clear his head. The warming Sun and the aromas of the flowers soon worked their magic and Davy slowly came down to Earth. He must have walked 6 miles before he was fully grounded. When he came back Megan was already there and had been waiting for him.

"I thought that you weren't going down the pub," she said on seeing him.

"No I didn't. I just went for a quiet walk," Davy was about to tell her what had happened but something inside him told him not to. It said that it was the journey to the answer that mattered.

"I'm sorry," Megan said "But I told your parents about the baby."

"That's alright Megan. "You know that you can tell the world. So did you get a nice dinner then?"

"Yes, well worth all the effort."

Davy and Megan talked for a while about most of the subjects under the Sun. They talked of plans for the future. They talked of names for the baby and then they decided that they ought to go out and celebrate later that evening.

"I tell you what," Davy said, "Why don't we go down the The Swan tonight?"

"Bit posh isn't it?"

"Well I'm prepared to lower my standards. Anyway it is a special occasion."

"You mean that you are buying," Megan said in mock horror.

"It's not that special. You'll be on cola anyway. Ah the joys of motherhood."

"And the pain of father hood for he certainly can be one."

"Quick Megan, very quick. Do you want me to give John a bell and make it a foursome?"

"Yes why not."

Davy phoned John and they arranged to meet later at 8.30. The time soon came around and they met as arranged. John was with his wife, Sharon who got on with Megan straight away. They ordered the drinks and settled down in quiet conversation. Megan told John the good news about the pregnancy and said that the secretary's job was open again.

After a while John said to Davy, "There's a quiz machine over there, do you fancy a game?"

Davy looked at Megan and said, "Do you mind if we disappear for a few minutes?"

"No go ahead it will give me and Sharon something to talk about."

"So you're going to be a dad then," John said as they walked to the machine.

"Yes," Davy said smiling, "It's the best thing that ever happened to me."

Davy and John played for about ten minutes without winning anything. Out of the corner of his eye Davy saw two men in suits watching the play. He had noticed them playing earlier and they seemed to be losing heavily. They men got nearer to the machine and looked intently as they shared some private joke between them. He got the feeling it was about either him or John but could not be sure as they were barely whispering. The game started to turn their way and soon the money pot was rising.

"One more Davy," John said, "And it's in the bank."

The two men behind them watched quietly and eagerly waited the choice of the next question.

"Try Greek mythology," Davy said as he looked at the choice.

"No chance," he heard one of the men sneer to the other.

John pressed the button and the question came up, "Who was the king of the Centaurs?"

"I know that," Davy said as he pressed button 'B'. Chiron was 'B' and John picked up the money out of the pot.

"I hear that Aristotle was a bit of an intellect," Davy said to John as they walked past the men, "He only thought that he was."

On that profound note they returned to Megan and Sharon with their winnings.

"Looks like I won't be working Monday," Davy said laughing to Megan.

"You won then?" Megan said in surprise.

"Oh course. Didn't you know that I was clever?"

"Big headed you mean."

Last orders came and John and Sharon gave Davy and Megan a lift back but declined the offer of a coffee. Megan fell asleep almost immediately leaving Davy alone with the energies that seemed to visit him quite regular now. After 10 minutes Davy too fell asleep and had a refreshing dream.

Sunday morning came and Davy definitely decided that it was going to be a day of rest. He sat around for most of the morning doing nothing in particular. Later in the evening he thought that he might do some reading and so he said to Megan, "I think that I might take a look at that Bible again."

"I thought that you were going to take it easy?"

"Oh I only want to read it not analyse it."

Davy got up and fetched the Bible and carried on from where he had left off. As he got to Genesis Chapter 3 verse 22 a shiver went down his back. He went quiet for a moment and then looking at Megan said, "I think that everything is going to be alright."

Megan smiled and said, "Tomorrow is going to be the first day of the rest of our lives."

Tomorrow came around and like all good Fairy Tales they all lived happily ever after.

P.S Alms

Contents

1.The Leprechaun	223
2.You're Poisoning our World	224
3.Conservation	225
4.Fowl Weather-Nice Weather for Ducks	226
5.Heaven on Earth	227
6.Daze of Glory	228
7.Love Yourself	229
8.The Rainbow	230
9.Imagination	231
10.Faith	232
11.Patience	233
12.Stagnation	234
13.The Evolving Soul	235
14.God and Tonic	236
15.God Came Down on a Triumph Bonneville	237
16.The Fly and the Moth	238
17.The Demons of your Mind	239
18.The End of the World	241
19.Tribal Dream	243
20.Lucky Man	244
21.Colour Blind	245
22.Heaven	246
23.Odin's Ravens	247

1.The Leprechaun

There's a man dressed in Green, he's the size of a Child
With a Black Pot Pipe and a Beard that's grown wild,
He darts across Meadows, over Streams and through Glade
Unseen by adults whose imagination has decayed.

Where does he go to and what is his hurry
And why so fast I mean he hasn't a worry,
He lives in a Land where they never grow old
A Parallel Land where time had no hold.

Should you ever revert back to the Mind of a Child
You will easily see him when your imagination runs wild,
If you're quick you may catch him but only if you're bold
And if he doesn't fool you, you can have his Pot of Gold.

But be very careful as he is very cunning
And if you let him go he will never stop running.

2.You're Poisoning our World

Why are you poisoning our World with you selfish, foolish greed
What makes you so special that you can take more than you need,
You're tampering with our Food supply to improve your Bank Balance
You disgust me now you really do, with your petty arrogance.

You pollute the Rivers and the Streams with stagnant wasteful s###
And if you think my language strong then you haven't learned a bit,
You kill the Fish and poison me to keep your Shareholders happy
You put your greed before my health and think I'm being whappy.

Who do you think you are you scum, I don't need your petty greed
You take, you take, and you never give for Avarice needs to feed,
You chop down Trees and clear the Woods, profit is your reason
I hope that Mother Nature's tempted to have you up for treason.

You pump foul Air into the Sky and think that's what we need
But no we don't, we don't want you, we've had enough of greed,
You chase the Fox in fancy Clothes and think that you look good
I would never be like you not even if I could.

You poison Cattle then fly the Flag, you must think that we're naive
I begrudge you breath, you don't deserve it, you really make me seethe,
You put the Hens in little Boxes for the sake of saving Money
I'd love to do the same to you, now wouldn't that be funny.

You cull the Turkey Once a Year for the sake of your belief
Though the only thing you really worship if material relief,
To compensate your crappy life, you are, you're really vain
And the weirdest thing about it is you think you're being sane.

So what's the next thing on the List to improve your Financial Market
Design another Car maybe, if you can find a place to park it,
Think on now, go find yourself, we're in another Age
Do you really think you're strong enough to withstand the Spirit's rage?

3.Conservation

God save us from those pretentious Middle Class Crusaders
Smugly trying to save the World as they pose as eco raiders,
What right have they to impose their actions on us?
With misguided concepts that have long since missed the Bus.

Sure the World needs changing and that really is a fact
But not by harassment let's try it with tact,
Their very thoughtless actions turn conservation into a joke
And give the Newspapers a target, one they'll eagerly poke.

Conservation comes from within, don't take more than you need
Above all education for from that there is the seed,
Why have Two Motor Cars when you only drive the one
Then sit in Traffic Jams and wonder where the Land has gone.

Don't eat too much and not just for the sake of your health
And keep away from Junk Food as its bad for your wealth,
Live life like a Family, you don't need more than one T.V.
Take up a hobby even it might look good on that C.V..

Do anything you want as long as you don't interfere with others
For People don't like Preachers it reminds them of their Mothers,
Sure they believe in conservation of that there is no doubt
But they think they have the stage only when they shout.

They alienate themselves and along with that their views
For if people wanted preaching to they would end up in the Pews,
They won't listen to self righteous, arrogant failed hippies
So the message it gets lost in the Newspaper for the Chippies.

But I had better not preach as my Hair could end up long
So catch you later then if the message is still strong.

4.Fowl Weather-Nice Weather for Ducks

Look at that Rain coming down and soaking you to the Bone
It's wet and cold and miserable, you'd rather be at home,
It drenches your Hair and soaks your Clothes and makes you feel all damp
You stand there cold and sodden, just praying for a gamp.

But look at the Great Oak standing there absorbing all it flow
Do you think he feels the same as you that the Rain is a nasty foe,
Or does he see the Rain for what it is, Water for its thirst
And drink heartily from Nature's Blood until he's fit to burst

The other Flora, what do you think as you stand and watch them grow
Would they last without the Rain, an answer you already know,
For they need the Rain to live and grow just like you do my friend
For just like you without the Rain they would quickly meet their end.

Or the Animals that share this World how do you think they'd feel
A drink from nature's precious banks, an accompaniment to a Meal,
The Ducks that float upon the River, how do you think they think?
As they play upon Earth's arteries before stopping to have a drink.

Do you think that they hate the deluge, look at it as a pain?
Or look upon it with happiness, new blood for the vein,
They know that it's uncomfortable and life seems sometimes cruel
But remember it's for the greater good and keep that as their rule.

For life is what you make of it, it could go either way
So tell me then, what state of mind are you going to be in today?
You see it's your choice how to think, it's just a state of mind
And look to the bad in everything and that's just what you'll find.

Always look to the Greater Good and then you'll know for sure
That adversity is really opportunity that's knocking on your Door,
So I say it again look at the Rain and you can also have the Sun
And by looking at it in a different Light it might even seem quite fun.

5.Heaven on Earth

Heaven on Earth, what is it you're looking for?
You have the richness of life yet you'd rather be poor,
For the Spirit is willing yet the flesh it is weak
Giving dissatisfaction in everything that you seek.

Sure you're doing well, those possessions they are mounting
But look around and see, you're the only one that's counting,
You've got a nice big House with Servants to match
You've got heaven on Earth but there's just one little catch.

For your heaven on Earth makes other lives hell
It's only your blindness that says all is well,
You look at the World through pose minted Glasses
You put People on Levels and then call them Classes.

Your life it is shallow and yet you think you're deep
As you hoard all that Money for its custom to keep,
But what of your essence, your reason to be
First take of those Glasses in order to see.

Your heaven on Earth is such a singular thing
A sphere of existence in which you are the king,
What of the others that live on this Planet
They have reason for living but you'll try and ban it.

Your essence and theirs are made by the same
So with that Inner Beauty what makes you so vain?
You see heaven on Earth was made for us all
So all those pretentious, misconceptions really must fall.

6.Daze of Glory

Relax for a while and put your Mind at ease
Come out from the shadows and be who you please,
Maybe you've been drugged and going through life blind
For arrogance maybe sedative but it's dangerous to your Mind.

You lose your sense of sanity and get an insular picture
And it's often friends with Envy which makes a funny mixture,
You're living in a daze of glory, you're blinded by your light
You are going to have to have Cold Turkey to aid you with this fight.

But you're going to make it although it's harder in the dark
So first find out what you are as that's a winning start,
For when you know that, you'll know you're not alone
There are People all around you just come down from your throne.

You'll see things as they really are, a very enlightened thing
And then the daze of glory will go and life will start to sing,
For life is all around you when you get your vision pure
And then you'll get a clearer picture on what life on Earth is for.

It's to bring heaven back to Earth, to take it out of hell
But its going to take a joint effort, remember that lesson well,
Don't see the bad in others for you'll get that in return
No, see the good in others and you'll live better as you learn.

For life is just a test to help you find your place
And by realising that we are all the same you definitely hold the ace,
Remember it's not just yours though, it belongs to everyone
And with that peace of mind the battle's almost won.

So when you lift that daze of glory do you know what you will find?
A more contented lifestyle through Inner Peace of Mind.

7.Love Yourself

Now there's an expression that's somehow lost its sense
I'm not saying be in love with yourself for that is arrogance,
No what I'm saying is accept yourself and find out what you are
For only when you find that out you find out what's your par.

You don't need doubts, those nagging pangs that keep you from your Self
So go ahead, get rid of them and find true inner health,
For all the answers lie within you only have to bring them out
And the only thing that's blocking you is that nagging doubt.

So sit and think, contemplate, fight that demon in your mind
Once it's isolated confront it and you'll soon leave it behind,
Has that fellow got more Money, does it matter anyway?
It doesn't make him a better person no matter what he'll say.

Maybe he likes Money because he can't find the Gold within
And if he's happy let him be, that shouldn't be your sin,
So that's Avarice and Envy gone, that was easy wasn't it
But don't let Pride and Sloth take over and sanctimoniously sit.

For that's the next stage of the game learn to love each other
Because that man with all his Money might just be your Brother,
And only when you love yourself can you truly give him aid
For seeing how good you feel might help his Avarice fade.

Now it's only by life's struggles do you truly find your Self
And when you finally do that you'll shun that material wealth,
For material wealth is shallow, it only lasts for just one life
When you finally understand that you should cope with any strife.

So love your self I say again accept yourself for what you are
Realise that you are an evolving Soul and that will take you.

8.The Rainbow

Look at me in the Sky for I'm a symbol of hope
The Rain has gone, the Sun is out, it's easier to cope,
The bad has gone the good is here, a most uplifting feeling
So as you see to a lot of People I'm also a Symbol of Healing.

But look again, what do you see, I'm like a mass of colour
When you see I'm balanced right you'll get the picture fuller,
You need the Rain to help you grow although sometimes it's a struggle
You have to fight through this life of ours to get out of its muddle.

But look again as I said before and see I'm balanced right
Learn by my example and you'll win that inner fight,
Now that's the real reason that People think I'm hope
For when I'm here the Rain has gone, I'm throwing you a Rope.

Become like me and you will see the changes that I bring
Remember when the balance is right that becomes the thing,
So how do you balance me? Do you really want to know?
Do you want to get that balance and feel its warming glow?

Love your Self by loving others it's really not hard to see
And with patience, time and practice you'll soon end up just like me,
You have to get enlightened to help you with the fight
Then you'll have the Rainbow Morning, Noon and Night.

We could talk of the commandments and all the Rules of Law
But they make life complicated and that's their only flaw,
Think just for one moment you really only need one rule
So don't major on the minors it only makes you look a fool.

But enough said, no recriminations it's time for moving on
Now you've learned that lesson there's work still to be done,
So remembering that Rainbow blend together like before
And when the balance is right you can open Heaven's Door.

9.Imagination

What would you like to be today, you can be anything you want?
A Deep Sea Diver, an Astronaut, a Model for Mary Quant,
Travel the World, leave your Body behind wouldn't that be fun
You could even travel to Egypt and bask in the warming Sun.

Read People's minds, know what they think, it that a real good plan
Look in the Crystal and travel through time, they say that anyone can,
Think for a while, give it a go, tell me what's holding you back
Left your Ticket at home, Passport lost or is it imagination you lack.

Imagination you might think is a childish thing long left behind
But don't give up it's not that hard, seek and you shall find,
It's not easy to do, I won't lead you astray, I wouldn't be that cruel
But with patience, faith and purity, imagination becomes your tool.

So travel the World leave your Body behind, you do that in your Sleep
But to travel the World in a Conscious state for that you have to go deep,
Eat Wholesome Food, get rid of that fat so Mind and Body are pure
And only do it for the Greater Good for then you'll know for sure.

To read People's Minds you need Inner Peace and that is hard to get
But with purity and good intent you might have cracked it yet,
Travel the World with the Crystal's help, is that what you want to do?
Now if I said it was like the others wouldn't that be a clue.

Before you make those leaps though you have to take the first step
What state of mind would you need to give imagination some pep,
So let's start again, think for a while, be anything that you desire
Happy or sad what will it be to light imagination's fire?

10.Faith

Faith can move a Mountain, I'm sure someone said to me
That's an interesting Theory so I thought I'd go and see,
I stood there and I told myself that it would move away
But if I'd have waited for it to move I would still be there today.

So what is faith anyway is it just an inner knowing
Something will come eventually is it just to keep you going,
Some say it's a bit like God, all things to all men
And to rationalise would not be right so put away that Pen.

Surely to me that's not right from a Spirit that's all giving
After all He's all around, that's why we're still here living,
Maybe we need to rationalise it and that might help it grow
But remember that before you reap you are going to have to sow.

It's alright sitting talking God to pass the time of day
But real faith is a state of mind that can fall quickly to decay,
Follow His words, don't just read the book, make it a way of life
And as that faith grows within you'll conquer any strife.

You have to give in order to receive I'm afraid it's the only way
Had I not realised that I would be by that Mountain today,
I could have stood there pontificating but the Mountain would not hear
Or if it did it wouldn't move only contempt me with a sneer.

Maybe I got it wrong then, could it be a Spiritual thing
On that mountain there stands God for surely He's the king,
And that Mountain is that obstacle which I have to meet
And maybe when all doubt has gone I'll be up besides His feet.

For doubt diminishes when faith's about as anyone would know
And though helping others I help my Self and faith will surely grow,
So be kind and pure and loving, use the Spirit as your fountain
Then you'll know for sure that faith can re move a Mountain.

11.Patience

Would you like the patience to watch a Flower grow?
Would you like the patience to reap what you did sow?
To sit and watch you love grow, wouldn't that be nice?
Though if you help to nurture it you can have it in a thrice.

So what is this patience, can I get it straight away?
It is an inner knowing that everything will be okay,
Once you finally get it you wonder why it took so long
But that's the trouble with patience it takes time to get it strong.

It's hard to define patience so be patient whilst I try
Think of it like a Caterpillar that knows it has to die,
It has to have patience to get to the next stage
For when it becomes a Butterfly it's in another Age.

Sure he could try and end it all but it might be a bit too soon
He might never make the Chrysalis and miss out on that boon,
For it might not be developed enough to become that Butterfly
So if it is impatient then I'm afraid it's going to die.

Life might seem bad sometimes and wrench into your mind
But with patience inside you life is always kind,
I'm not saying you won't struggle for life is sometimes cruel
All I'm saying with patience you can make life your own tool.

So be like the patient caterpillar bide your time in every way
And patient understanding will quickly make your Day.

12.Stagnation

Now there's a peaceful sound it's the sound of stagnation
You know what it's like when your mind's on vacation,
You can sit there all day long with nothing to do
Though it won't be too long before you start to feel blue.

You see you think you're happy like that but your mind will not agree
For only when it's used does it really start to feel free,
Deep down inside you'll get bored with your life
Then your mind will give you problems and lead you into strife.

You'll worry about everything and problems start to fester
And then Self Doubt will come along to torture and to pester,
You think that there's no way out and life becomes a bind
You'll lose the realisation that it's only in your Mind.

I'm not saying problems don't exist for that would be quite foolish
But it's only your state of mind that makes these problems ghoulish,
Look deeper into things and you get a different picture
And realise that stagnation is not a permanent fixture.

And by looking deeper into things your mind will not stagnate
As with all the extra food for thought your doubts will soon vacate,
For it's not just idle hands that the devil he finds work for
He loves that idle mind of yours, prefers it even more.

For sloth is one of those demons that comes from within
And to let that demon control your life must be the ultimate in sin.

13.The Evolving Soul

People ask me what I am as if that should matter
Think of me as a breath of life if it will help you in this patter,
For a breath of life is what I am, a blessing for your living
And when I'm in my purest form you'll find me all forgiving.

Just like any breath of life you'll find I live forever
A very enlightening thought to those who think they're clever,
The trouble with free will is it's a double edged sword
And you only find out you live on when you sever that silver chord.

Then you have to judge yourself to see how you got on
A humiliating thought if you life has been a con,
Then you must come down again for you certainly must evolve
And all the problems you created it's up to you to solve.

So why not do it this time round it will save a lot of trouble
For coming back down again you problems might just double,
Remember that and live your life to keep thought and action pure
And don't forget the rule of Karma can be a generous cure.

As you sow so shall you reap should be the motto of the day
But sowing bad seed never lasts for it will very soon decay,
So sow good seed all the time and learn to love each other
And all the bad that's in your life you'll quickly learn to smother.

For life is what you make of it of that you can be sure
And with the Law of Karma on your side you could not ask for more.

14. God and Tonic

I thought I saw God last night or it might have been the drink
But I do know that whatever it was it stopped and made me think,
It made me look at life afresh the start of a brand new day
Surprising really when you think that my walk was more a sway.

What a state to get in it can't be good for my health
And looking through my pockets it definitely marred my wealth,
My state of mind was altered too into a drunken haze
So I prayed for guidance to help me through this phase.

I thought afresh about my life and the problems I should solve
The first one was the alcohol and that I could resolve,
It wasn't easy I'll admit but it gave me inner strength
To see myself for what I was, a tonic at any length.

So in moderation I went forth for I had a yearning for its taste
I paid the bills with what I saved so it didn't go to waste,
My life improved dramatically upon that sudden realisation
The money saved was mounting up I could even go on vacation.

But the strangest thing about it was that I was happy where I was
So to travel all those far off lands I could not see the fuss,
For life is what you make of it I could see that, that was true
And when you have that in your heart it's surprising what you can do.

Where did you see God you might ask as if it was a miracle?
Or maybe I was in a drunken mess you might say being cynical,
I saw my reflection in the mirror now wasn't that ironic
He's the only Spirit that I need, now isn't that a tonic.

15. God Came Down on a Triumph Bonneville

Don't take that as literal as it was only to grab your attention
And to show you that the Great Spirit is in everything you mention,
Think of God as an alternator and you body as the bike
And the Soul could be the battery for that is what its like.

You need the Soul to give you life and keep the system going
Like the battery needs the alternator to keep the current flowing,
But the battery and the alternator run on a different current
A tricky problem you might think but one to circumvent.

So God created a little thing to rectify that matter
For of direct and alternating current The Great Spirit is the latter,
Your Spirit is the regulator as the battery is your Soul
And your Spirit also rectifies to help achieve your goal.

With everything running smooth the bike could run forever
And the way some people ride it it's definitely hell for leather,
If you think I've finished now it's only half the story
For you have to play your own part to share in all the glory.

For the crank is the thing that turns the alternator round
So you can call it your Will and make sure its running sound,
It also works the pistons and that will keep your body going
That only really works well when the electricity is flowing.

The petrol is the energy that you get from eating food
And the oil will be the blood if it will get you in the mood,
I could go on further but the message is nearly done
And if the message becomes boring then the subject isn't fun.

So keep mechanically sound and the electric system pure
Then you'll never break down and live forever more.

16. The Fly and the Moth

“So why,” Said the Fly, “Do you eat all that cloth?”

“That's just a lie, man's Myth,” said the Moth,

“But a Myth's based on truth, well so I believe”

“No a Myth is a Story that was made to deceive.”

“So who would do that?” The Fly stopped and asked

“And why should a Story have need to be masked?”

To keep People in ignorance was the Moth's curt reply

A very profound answer the Fly could not deny.

“Think it through,” The Moth said as he flew to the Light

“Look deeper into it and you'll know I am right”

The Fly thought for a moment and went into a fit

“What am I doing putting up with this s###.

For I'm as good as anyone and let no one deny

I'm just like you Moth except I am a Fly,”

The Moth looked from the Light and said, “Come up and join me

For from where I am standing there's nothing you can't be.

Why put up with crap you're better than that

You life doesn't evolve around the waste of some Cat,

You are as good as anyone so make your own plan

Don't be content with just the dregs of the Man.”

So the Fly flew to the Light and looked down from the Sky

He saw the Big Picture and then he knew why,

If you are waiting to hear what the Fly had to relate

Get up to the Light you know it's never too late.

17.The Demons of Your Mind

Hi my name is Lucifer but you can call me Pride
I come from inside yourself you can often hear me chide,
You're better than the others for you have Money by the Pot
And with Brains and Brawn to match I guess you've got the lot.

But hang on for a moment he's got more than you
Therefore he must be better so what are you going to do?
That's where I come in as they call me Leviathan
Or Envy to my friends as that's my occupation.

I'll tear your Mind apart with my irrational behaviour
And down and down you'll go as you haven't got a Saviour,
Why has he got more than you, it's not because he's better
I mean I've seen a cloudburst and he is even wetter?

Now I come to play because they call me mammon
Avarice's the game I'm in and Steak is better than Gammon,
I want and want and want, you'll never satisfy my need
For one thing is for sure you'll never satisfy greed.

I grow stronger and stronger with each step to me you take
Wealth is really good even for its selfish sake,
Hi my name is Satan and Anger is now the rage
And as I'm getting stronger you'll have to let me out the Cage.

I can tear things apart and erupt for no reason
And with these other Demons here it's definitely not your Season,
I want to harm your Mind and hurt others in the process
But if you are looking for a reason well that's anyone's guess.

Asmodeus is the name and Lechery is the game
You can call me lustful after all it's just the same,
I'll keep you in the gutter, that's where I like it best
And all those silly Virtues, with them I'll quick divest.

Believe me when I say that I can do nothing but good
For now you're in my power you won't know the forest from the wood,
Beelzebub's the name and I've come to do you harm
Gluttony's the game I'm in, would you like another Arm.

To pick up all the excess Food though you don't need it
But it tastes so good so have another bit,
For a well filled stomach tells me things are going alright
Though if you get a Coronary well I'm afraid that's not my fight.

Belphegar some call me but my real name is Sloth
Laziness and lethargy I'm loaded with them both,
Let those Demons rule your Mind there's nothing else to do
Because they've got you trapped like a Lion in a Zoo

So why not let them rule I mean do you really want the strife
And if they give you hell this time you'll have another life,
So now you've met the Demons do you want them in you Mind
You know through recognition you can make them lose their bind.

Remember that at all times and think before you speak
And with that inner strength of yours the Demons will get weak,
You'll find they'll disappear as you're too strong for them
And when they deign to leave you, your Soul becomes a gem.

18.The End of the World

They stand on Street Corners with their Banners held high
It's the end of the World boy you're all going to die,
But just think for a moment maybe it's true
We're all going to die boy what are you going to do?

They stand in their Pulpit and talk of Heaven and Hell
Telling of a Second Coming, looking around it's just as well,
But just think for a moment maybe it's true
We're all going to die boy what are you going to do?

Some talk of heaven on Earth, a paradise of life
Where everyone is equal and you'll never have strife,
But think for a moment maybe that's true
You're all going to live boy, what are you going to do?

Immortality for eternity what do you think of that?
Think about it truly and don't keep it under your hat,
Tell everyone the same for they're all afraid to die
That's what keeps them down and stops them asking why.

Why should we die, I mean it's only a Western thing
Over on the eastern side they follow the I' Ching,
Maybe you have to die so your Spirit might live on
Some People say you'll know for sure when you're dead and gone.

Some people think that when you die you just perish in the ground
So live life to the full I say, get pleasure where it's found,
But seriously what you're looking for is only Inner Peace
And when you understand that all fear of death will cease.

You want to find out what you are then you'll know for sure
Imagine with that certainty you could show all fear the door,
But first you're going to have to change and learn to love each other
I'm not just talking about your Wife, your Family, your Mother.

I'm talking about the Postman who drops letters in your box
I'm talking about the Animals the Dolphin, Whale and Fox,
Until you learn to do that you'll be a slave unto yourself
And bar yourself from receiving a mass of spiritual wealth.

Inner peace we're talking would you like to be at one
A life that belongs to you, now wouldn't that be fun,
I'm not going to stand and preach and say you'll get to Heaven
I'm only trying to help you to balance out your Seven.

For when in balance you're at one with all others of your kind
And that's the only way to get Inner Peace of Mind.
I could carry on talking but I guess the message's home
Except to say look to your Higher Self not Canterbury and Rome.

Now think for a moment what I'm saying maybe true
We are all going to live boy now what are you going to do?

19.Tribal Dream

The mists of time clear slowly from my face
It is only then that I become aware of my race,
A race set apart that transcends any colour
For when the mist goes away the picture becomes fuller.

I see myself in the fullness of creation
A sight set a part and such a revelation,
I'm at one with the Universe Nirvana is beckoning
True appeasement to my Mind on its Day of Reckoning.

My whole essence spreads and fills out the room
Total proof to me that death doesn't mean doom,
The lift to my conscious is totally enlightening
Complete inner peace, nothing is frightening.

I feel like the genie that's been let out the bottle
And from that moment on life goes at full throttle.

20.Lucky Man

“Step right to the front I've got something for you
It'll strengthen your character and help you get through,
For life can be funny if you're that way inclined
And I've just the thing for that state of mind.

Now what could it be you think to yourself
A pot of gold maybe to increase my wealth,
I could soon give you that but its only fool's gold
So you'll soon lose your way and be back in the cold.

No what I'm offering doesn't come by the ounce
It comes by the Spirit but don't get ready to pounce,
For its not Alcoholic though it will get you high
That life is worth living you'll not want to die.

You'll be happy with life and the problems you share
You'll see life a challenge, neigh even a dare,”
A voice from the back shouts “What are you selling
It best not be drugs for that's the rat I am smelling.”

“Sir I protest that is never my manner
So stay where you are or you'll feel the weight of this spanner,
No why I'm here is to try and show you the way
To achieve total bliss to get through the day.

To show you how to laugh at the stresses that you find
And we all know that stress is dangerous to your Mind,
All that you do is to tilt your head back
And shout Ha, Ha, Ha, for that's the spirit you lack.”

21.Colour Blind

Why do you hate me, can't you get past my hue
You know deep down inside I'm just the same as you,
What misconception has made your subconscious blind?
Fear or arrogance must be playing on your Mind.

You're living in a dying world, the remnants of an era
Look around and then you'll see the picture even clearer,
The world is changing now and it's leaving you behind
For you will never change whilst you're colour blind.

The People now are changing we're in a Spiritual Age
Our phase of evolution has turned another Page,
So it's time to move on now and leave that hate to die
For you only hate yourself now and that you can't deny.

So get to know me Brother and learn to love yourself
Then we'll work together and get that spiritual wealth,
I won't go on about racism for it only ends in blame
And if you are a bigot it might just fan a flame.

Let's talk of something else then, let's talk of mutual healing
Alright we'll talk of Inner Peace so come down from that Ceiling,
For what you have in a nut shell is fear through ignorance
And the only way to deal with it is to fight it with a Lance.

The Lance of your Mind is a potent tool you own
So use it to your aid as you face the fear you've sown,
For it comes from the Mind and that's where it should stay
And once you stop encouraging it, it will go after decay.

It all goes to help you in the search for peace of mind
But the only way to really get it is to start by being kind,
Life is just a test to correct the mistakes you made
And with the Spirit's sense of irony you might come back my shade.

22.Heaven

I wandered in my Mind to try and find an answer to my prayer
Will I get to Heaven and will I like it when I'm there,
I suppose the only answer would be to put a Gun against my Head
For then I'll know for sure, or would I just be dead?

Think about that last point, maybe there isn't a Heaven
Maybe it's just a state of mind with a balanced Seven?
So with that state of mind why would I ever want to die?
And to put a Gun against my Head would stop me asking why.

I decided that I would like it otherwise it would be Hell
So I looked around my life afresh and saw that it was well,
Maybe I was in heaven then for it felt that way inclined
Then I knew for sure that it was just a state of mind.

To me heaven became a source of inner peace
I felt just like Jason when he found that Golden Fleece,
Heaven's also happiness and joy and peace and fun
So I lived my life accordingly and the battle was soon won.

It wasn't easy at the start and some changes I did make
But if you want to get to heaven that's the chance you take,
So look at life afresh, is there anything you would change
Nothing too dramatic first you have to find your range.

If you don't like a situation and you know the reason why
Come to terms or change it and take Heaven out the Sky,
Take one step at a time and by being realistic
Heaven comes to you just by being mystic.

23.Odin's Ravens

Hi my name is Hugin and I can be the intellectual kind
I am just an aspect of a three part condensed Mind,
I can take you to the heavens or bring you down to hell
But once you can control me I can only do you well.

Just think of me as a Ladder to your Higher Self
A Super-Conscious Mind that is, along with all its wealth,
But have a word with Mumin he's a bird that you should meet
An instinctive sort of Raven he will keep you on you feet.

Together we are thought and memory as the Legend states
And it's only when we're pure can you see those Pearly Gates,
Don't look at us like Vultures, we're more like birds of pray
When you think of us in that light it sure improves your Day.

Hi my name is Mumin and you can find me where you look
I'm in the Flora and the Fauna, I'm a versatile sort of Rook,
You'll find me in the Flowers as they search to find the Sun
You'll find me in the Rabbit for it's me who makes it run.

I control your reflexes without your conscious knowing why
I'm the only one who knows for sure where you go to when you die,
For I have the memory of a lifetime, not just this one by the way
I even hold the knowledge that will make your conscious fey.

Once you can control me you can have my hidden wealth
And with that real security, a boon for spiritual health,
So now that you've met Mumin and evolved past that stage
I take over from him, the dawning of a new age.

You see me in the lower levels, in Cats and Dogs and Horses
And on my higher levels as Man with his destructive forces,
But as he evolves past that he finds out what he's here for
Then the next stage of development comes knocking on the door.

He becomes responsible for others and helps them on their way
For he sees himself in others and that really makes his day.

Look out for Folk Tales too