



The Chronicles of Golah (Son of Tray)

Peter the Celt

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The Wisdom Game

Chapter 1

The sky rumbled its indignation and lightning illuminated the darkness like a spark just about to combust. The Gods are angry tonight and no mistake. Not a good omen to start a quest but when destiny calls who am I to argue? The rain hit hard and often and seemed to ricochet off my already sodden cape. It was no good I was going to have to take shelter and the nearest place I knew was fraught with danger. Troglodytes, the men of the caves, they were still around as the purge was not yet complete and though generally cowardly they were known to turn on the odd occasion. No match for me but I did not really need the hassle as where I was going would be hassle in itself.

“Ah well,” I said aloud and ducked into Adam's brow. A cold damp place the meaning of its name lost long ago when the great flood took away our history and robbed us of the wisdom of the old ones.

The noises inside told me to beware as the cave was already occupied and with caution I made my approach. Hopefully it was fellow travellers with the same idea as most of the caves had already been cleared but I was ready if need be. Much to my dismay I found that it was not so I took my place and kept a wary eye on them, mutants, the product of interbreeding and rogue genes, as diseased in mind as much as in body. Thieves and beggars to a man though some did have a certain grasp on reason.

Originally they were like us I had heard though I must admit that I did not believe it for to look at them was much akin to looking at a diseased ape. Very apt description as their teeth were pretty similar and their jaws were just as big. The theorists say that this proof of their origins for after the cleansing some men took to eating grass and leaves and nature took its course but theory's only speculation and at the end of the day anyone can speculate. Boredom made me sociable. “Any of you rejects got a tongue?” I said not expecting an answer but much to my surprise the older one of the two said, “I can speak, what do you want from me?”

“Know your place,” I barked angrily, “Or your tongue will lose its.”

“When once there was knowledge all that's left is the sword,” the old man said and shook his head sadly.

His understanding surprised me and the old man intrigued me so I said, “How know you so much old man, you are not like the rest of them?”

“My body might be degenerated but my mind is sharp and cutting, I have walked in your world and know of its ways.”

“Then you know our power,” I said for one thing life has taught me is never get too friendly in lowly company.

“I know your power; I know it to my cost. Look and see for this is now my family. Once we were many but now we are the last.”

“Survival of the fittest, what else am I to say?”

“I accept my fate as each and everyone has to but I see your fate as I see my own so I have no qualms about my destiny.”

“My fate?” I said wondering about his power. I had heard stories of wise men who had the old power of prophecy and even met people who had met them, but a troglodyte?

“Do unto others as you would be done by, I believe that is an unbending law.”

“That only works with humans,” I said for that was what I had been told.

“Are we not humans too?” the old man said much to my surprise.

“What, of course not.”

“We come from the same parents; does that not make us brothers?”

“No,” I snapped for the point did not bare thinking about, “How dare you put yourself on the same

evolutionary level as me.”

“Not me, it was the Great Mother.”

“I ought to cut your tongue out for your blasphemy,” I said, my temper rising, “For your very words are poison to my ears.”

“Your actions will never mask the truth. Your kind will reap the reward that is long overdue to you. Our time is nearly finished but mark these words well, by Adam's brow your time shall shortly follow.”

“By Adam's brow,” I repeated wondering what he meant as that was the cave we settled in, “Do you dare to threaten me?”

“Me, a humble man of no consequence.”

“Then state your meaning and pick your words well otherwise you will be a humble man with dire consequences.”

“Tis merely a figure of speech, its meaning has long since been lost.”

“Then you are just a waste of time,” I said as my boredom had returned, “And I see no point in conversing for I doubt if you have anything interesting to say.”

“Ah news is it you are after. The cold walls move even closer, the Earth Mother is angry with you and so she's giving you the cold shoulder. You have turned your back on her and lost your purpose and so now you must pay.”

“What,” I said in surprise, “How know you this? Who are you?”

“As I have said I have walked in your world and as to my genealogy I am Truro son of Elipath who was the son of Falah, son of Gwenth, son of Diamund.”

“Diamund, are you talking about Diamund of the forge?”

“That's right, I am of his kind.”

I looked at the mutant in incredulity for I could not believe his words, “Diamund of the forge. I know his legend and his works; he was a man of great wisdom and no mistake. Are you trying to tell me that his essence runs through your blood? Do you take me for a fool?”

“I thought I articulated it pretty well, as for your level of understanding I have not made a judgement.” His answer, though insolent astounded me. Could he be real? I had to find out for if it was true the outcome of such a discovery could fill me full of wisdom, “So if you are who you say you are then you will have his wisdom.”

“That is correct, his genes lie within me and with it his knowledge.”

“Then you will know of our creation,” I said wanting to test him.

“I know how we came to be, and I know how we will finish so the circle is complete but who are you to test me?”

“I am Golah, son of Tray, my pedigree is well known to those who have the yearning.”

“I know of you. I have heard of your wrath. Your fame travels before you; they say you have the power. Was it not you that killed the giant Degar and from him got the power of knowing?”

“That is me, I still wear his ring.”

“You have the ring” Truro said and looked at me in a funny manner, “Are you a gambling man?”

“I have thrown the dice, why?”

“A wager, a test of strength.”

“I know of your pedigree but what else have you got?”

“Do you know the full story of Diamund of the forge?” Truro said but carried on before I could answer, “He was one of the higher Gods; he had the highest power for he was there before the cleansing. He too saw his impending doom and fled to avoid it.”

“What,” I said for that was not the story I had heard, “That's a lie. He died in the first battle of the man Gods.”

“No, that was the lie. He saw the battle of power coming so scarpered for he knew its outcome.”

“No,” I said for if what this man was saying was true he would have destroyed a hero of mine, “You speak a lie and for it you'll pay dearly,” I moved forward and reached for my sword.

“But I can prove it,” Truro said slightly worried for he saw I was in no mood, “You see I still have his dagger.”

“What?” I said for I had heard of Diamund of the forge's dagger. It said whoever possessed it had the power to read minds, “Then you will know what I'm thinking.”

“You're angry because I have insulted a hero of yours. That is the cause and the effect is you want to kill me. That is your primary thought but it is being challenged by avarice on one side saying I might be telling the truth and envy on the other saying it is false for no one that looks like me should have that power.”

The man indeed must have the power for as he said it I knew that he was right. I looked at him hard and said, “So tell me the story of Diamund of the forge.”

“The story of Diamund of the forge goes back to the beginning of things. Not the first beginning of things for that is like the wind and water, it cannot be seen nor it cannot be grasped, but the second beginning of things, the remnants of the first, the new beginning of things. The higher Gods were the new beginning as they were the old end for they had bridged the rainbow that had spanned the ages. Novak, king of the higher Gods and his sons Siehen the bright, Diamund of the forge and Swel the great deceiver were amongst the survivors who still kept onto the knowledge and would not share it for they knew it was their power. That was the cause of the first battle of the man-Gods. That was what caused the man-God to turn against his father; he wanted the power so he could develop further as he was not content with just immortality.”

“So,” I said confused for that was not the story I had been brought up upon, “It had nothing to do with the slaying of Siehen the bright by Myriad the strong for the Necklace of Nine Whispers?”

“Yes,” Truro said much to my confusion for the story I knew said that the necklace was the property of Nyriad's wife Cullotte and he slew Siehen for stealing it.

“I don't understand,” I said, “What do you mean yes? What has his death to do with it?”

“Oh that was just a re-working. The necklace belonged to Siehen the bright; he never stole it as it was always his. It was just an excuse to start the war, don't forget that it is the victors that tell the history.”

“So what actually was the Necklace of Nine Whispers then? Not that it matters I suppose as it was never recovered.”

“It was the nine mantras of motion. It was what gave the higher Gods the power. The mantras are still around though as they were well hidden by Diamund though I do not know them for that is what you are thinking.”

“Oh,” I said getting slightly disappointed, “So he ran away then, I never knew.”

“Call it a structured retreat, the higher Gods saw their demise and made provision. They would never give the chants away for they knew what damage it could do in the wrongs hands. They did not want the chants to get lost though for they were a gift from the Earth Mother so that left them in a dilemma. They knew of their fate collectively but reasoned that one could escape and that privilege fell to Diamund. He disguised himself and went to live in the land of the sons of men and an elaborate plot was made to cover his tracks. He was no coward though for it takes a brave man to go against his destiny.”

“True,” I said as I began to see the situation in a new light, “You must truly be who you say you are. And the dagger is that your wager against my ring?”

“I would say it was an equal sum, you care to take the test?”

“I do,” I said though I must admit I was a little wary for the man did have the power.

“Then I will begin. The seven strands of being, what are they and what do they serve?”

“Are we starting with an easy one?” I said in surprise, “The seven strands of being are what go to make

God, God. They are love, life, wisdom, understanding, knowing, insight and purpose, they serve the Great Mother.”

“Good, the aim of my purpose, what direction does it take?”

I thought awhile before I said, “The aim of my purpose's direction is love for that is the essence of my being.”

“Last one then, the five pillars of creation, what are they in essence and in being?”

“The five pillars in essence are the five states of man's destiny. They are Gods, sons of God, giant, man and sub-man.”

“Your turn then,” Truro said and waited patiently.

I thought awhile and said, “The triad of motive, what is it in essence and being?”

Truro answered straight away, “It is the cause of your spiritual perceptions, love, anger and pride is its being. Their connection to each other is that pride is self love and anger is spiritual envy.”

“Right, the four attributes of being, what is it in essence and what is their make up?”

“Easy, there is Air or that what cannot be seen, Water or that what cannot be grasped, Fire or that what can only be pacified by that what cannot be grasped and Earth or that what can be seen and grasped.”

“Last one then, what did Novak whisper into Siehen the Bright's ear before they burned him on the pyre?”

“What, no one knows that only Novak himself and he took that secret with him.”

“You forgot that I have the ring, have you no answer?”

The man remained silent and looked at the floor. He knew I had beaten him and as I took out my sword I said, “life.”

Chapter 2

I held the dagger of Diamund of the forge in my hand and surveyed the carnage before me. It had been no contest for the two of them had fell quickly to my sword. Blood and brain was quite a combination but as my mind had seen enough of it in its time it soon lost interest. “So this is the dagger of Diamund of the forge,” I said aloud to redirect my thoughts, “An unexpected boon and no mistake.”

A snake slithered out and said to me, “And yet you could have had so much more.”

“What,” I said in surprise and drew my sword as if to kill it.

“Now is that wise. You'll need to think a little more about your actions.”

I stopped at that and said, “Who are you?”

“You can read my mind so perhaps it's you who should tell me.”

I looked at the snake carefully and said, “Why should that be?”

“You have the dagger of Diamund of the forge. Do you not think that we have minds to read as well?”

“Well not up till now,” I admitted, my education was taking somewhat of a hammering of late.

“So why the carnage, what purpose did it serve?”

“I don't know, did it need to?”

“All your actions need to serve a purpose for that is what you were created for. The purpose you served was anger. You will never get the Necklace of Nine Whispers whilst you serve that purpose. You destroyed your chances by killing Truro and only added to your debt.”

“The necklace, he was just as in the dark as I am and anyway what debt. It only works...” I stopped at that for a thought crossed my mind.

“We are all part of the same,” The snake said.

“You can read my mind,” I said in surprise.

“So there is no need to talk. The necklace still might be on if you care to take the quest.”

“I wouldn't even know where to begin and besides I already have a quest.”

“To fight for a local war lord and to add to your debt.”

"It is a just cause; it will not affect my balance."

"A just cause? I'm afraid that you are being lied to. There is no such cause; it is to settle an old debt no more."

"Well it pays," I said trying to justify myself, "And besides I don't chase shadows."

"Then you'll always be ignorant, but I will leave you with a bit of advice to help you on your way. All that glistens is not gold." With that the snake slithered into the darkness and I quickly dismissed the scene. I had the dagger now and was content so I left the cave with a brisk step and carried on my way. The rain had stopped and the sun was out as I strode with purpose to my destination. Mile after mile I covered and by the first night I was nearly there. I rested awhile, sleeping under a large oak tree and next morning carried on with my trek. It was late morning when I arrived at Salan's camp and strode with purpose into the main hall.

"Golah son of Tray," Salan said when he saw me approach, "You are most welcome and in much need of. Bad times are all around."

"What," I said looking around and taking in the scene of feasting.

"Life must go on," Salan said, "Come join us, our business will keep."

I took my place and took a drink whilst I bided my time. He did not look like a man in sorrow and neither did his court. After a while he bid me take a walk with him. As he left the hall he took me to a large off room and said, "Times are changing and no mistake Golah. I fear that our world will soon be at an end. Our southern colony has fallen to man and giants threaten our western border. Alliances are falling all around us and it looks like we are to go the same way as the higher Gods."

"Surely it's not that bad," I said but as I knew his thoughts to be true I knew that it was.

"Worse, the northern territory is set on destroying the east and the barbarians wait with baited breath for they know that by the time it's finished it will just be a mop up."

"Times look bad and no mistake but how does that all fit in with me?"

"It's a little delicate," Salan said and looked nervously around, "The league of the man-God is falling apart and they turn on each other like dogs at their feed. Accusations fly round like wasps around the nest."

"Er yes."

"Well power has polarised around two camps," Salan said unperturbed, "And new alliances are being sought with the lesser tribes. Darium judge of the north has been held on a charge of treason."

"Darium?" I said for I had always found him loyal.

"Yes, he was about to give the Goblet of Elam to the mortals to mark an alliance and take the east."

"Give our power to the mortals. That's a very serious charge and if proven true he deserves all he gets."

"His fate is assured. His followers have other ideas though and have made alliances with the giants to our west and the sons of man to the south. It looks like they mean to try for full control and get Darium back to head a new world order. All they need is the Seal of Salhedron and that's where you come in."

"Me, how?"

"They say that the giant Aswar has it."

"Degar's brother, I can't see him wanting to deal with me."

"Oh but he does, he craves Degar's ring and to avenge his death. He wants to play the Wisdom Game."

"Oh, why do they need this seal anyway?"

"Fate dictates it. The Seal of Salhedron is Mother's approval and if he gets it he will be the true overlord."

"How does Aswar come to possess it," I said thinking it strange.

"It was stolen from its place of safety for as no man-God was considered worthy it was hidden away until the day someone was. Our guides tell us that this is why the Earth Mother is giving us the cold shoulder for letting the seal get stolen."

I knew he was lying because I could read his mind. He had made an alliance with Aswar and my death was to be its seal. He had weaved a good story though for it held a kernel of truth. The ice caps were pushing the northern territory closer and their land shrunk with every year that passed. It was a battle for territory and as the land was getting smaller one judge could oversee it. The Seal of Salhedron was just a legend so I had nothing to gain from it. I had no choice though as I was honour bound to accept the quest. "Set up a meeting then I have a yearning to pick at his brain."

To the uninitiated and to people with a fairly strong stomach I had better explain the Wisdom Game. If you have a weak stomach put the kettle on while I carry on (mine's two sugars). The Wisdom Game was played earlier although I did not elaborate on its ending. The challenger poses three questions of an esoteric nature and the challenged has to answer them. If he fails then he's out. If he passes however he gets to ask a triad of questions until someone fails to answer. The winner gets to eat the loser's brains and so absorb his knowledge for that is the brain's protein.

"He's but an hour away," Salan said, "I shall have him called. Rest now and compose yourself for there is a lot that depends on it."

He left me to my thoughts and I despised him for his treachery. What was the world coming to? What happened to the honour that we once had? "So why do you put up with it?" A familiar voice said and I looked up expecting to see the snake but much to my surprise it was a mouse.

"Honour, although they have lost theirs I still have mine."

"Pride, more likely. That's a very shallow honour, so what about the necklace?"

"It is you, what are you, a shape shifter?" for that was the closest I could come up with as to why it was a snake one moment and the next a mouse.

"I am within everything but I am no thing. I am the collective subconscious, Mother Nature, The Goddess of the Earth. I go by many names so tell me about your honour."

"My honour lies in your service."

"And what service would it be to slay Aswar," The mouse said and came closer.

"Er. None."

"You would have been serving pride, your honour would not be there and anything without honour is debt. So what of the necklace?"

"I wouldn't even know where to look," I admitted.

"Diamund of the forge still has it."

"What, I thought that he was long dead."

"No, he's still around. Fate has disfigured him somewhat and he lives a hermetic life but he's still here."

"Where? How can I find him?"

"Aswar holds the answer; let that be one of your questions."

"You want me to carry on with the Wisdom Game, what about adding to my debt?"

"You will know what to do when the time is right," The mouse said and scampered off.

It was not long before Salan came back excitedly, "He's here and he awaits your pleasure."

"That was quick," I said as I followed him.

"It seems he heard that you were coming, he was not far from the gate."

"Right," I said seeing through the lies.

We stopped in the main hall and to a quiet audience I took in Aswar in all his glory. He was slightly taller than me and of greater stature but that did not concern me unduly. I was more worried about Salan and what plans he had made. I suppose now would be a good time to explain the five pillars of creation as its relevance will soon become clear. Higher God, God, man are the three pillars on a mental level and giant, man and sub man are the three pillars on a physical level. The two triads meet at man giving the impression of a triangle in reflection. Theologians say that the second triad is just one as the giants are just a race of tall men and sub man is just a man degenerated and theorists say the first

triad is higher God, a God with the original power who was around before the cleansing. Gods the later offspring that were educated to immortality and man, those without the knowledge and who were thus condemned to grow old and die. One's a state of mind and the other a state of matter. Now Gods and giants are generally the same size, the only difference being that giants grow old. I have heard stories of them reaching heights of eleven and twelve feet but generally it is more like seven.

"Golah, slayer of my brother Degar," he said by way of greeting, "I have a challenge for you if you dare to take it up."

"On your head be it."

"Then you accept?"

"Not until I know the terms," I said for that was the procedure.

"You have a ring that once belonged to a dear brother of mine," He said but I stopped him there saying,

"I know what I have, I want to know what you have."

"The Seal of Salhedron a more than equal stake."

"The Seal of Salhedron, I thought that was a legend, bring it to the table."

"I have not got it with me; it would be foolish to travel with it."

"Well I see no stake, and without a stake there is no game."

"Come now Golah," Salan said, "What would the poets say off this?"

"No stake, no game," I said, "Only a fool would think otherwise."

"Are you questioning my integrity," Aswar snapped, "Is not my word good enough?"

"You know the rules," I said, "Now if you have not brought the seal the game is called, unless you have something else to stake in its place."

"Alright," Aswar said reasoning that I would not be around to collect it, "I have the Whetstone of Sieman the beggar. With this hone you'll have fresh understanding."

"I have heard of it. They say it gives you insight but like the seal I fear it is just a legend. I don't suppose you brought it with you."

"I have it,"

"Then bring it to the table." I said and Aswar left the room accompanied by one of Salan's men.

After he had left Salan said, "What is this Golah, is there something amiss?"

"A treacherous man Aswar," I said, "I would not trust him as far as I could throw him."

"What of honour? Are you not honour bound to show respect to your host's fellow guests?"

I knew his mind so I changed tact, "I am honour bound to make sure my host is not deceived by a fellow guest."

"Deceived?"

"He has not the seal," I said playing the friend, "He is deceiving you. I don't quite know the outcome of his desire but watch him well."

"I'll bare that in mind," Salan said though he did not mean it.

Chapter 3

Aswar duly returned and the whetstone was placed next to my ring. The waves of notion started and Aswar was in control. "Golah, killer of Degar, who is it that turns the earth around the sun?"

"Tis Nebu, king of the spiders because his invisible web stretches from the Sun to the Earth and spins with every turning."

"Good, Golah, slayer of my kin, who is it that makes the mountains burn and throws fire up at father sky?"

"It is Siehen the bright for the Earth cannot hold him."

"Right, Golah butcher of my brother who is it that holds the key to the rainbow?"

"Novak for he is all healing."

“Your turn now.”

“Right, Aswar giant of mouth and ego, who is it that makes the moon pull the tides?”

“Easy,” Aswar said with relief, “It is the Goddess Fromosia with invisible threads that she bought from Nebu.”

“Good, Aswar, giant feet and bad breath, why does the Goddess Fromosia pull the tide?”

“Ah that's even easier; she pulls the tide to mop her sister's brow.”

“Right,” I said and went in for the kill, “Aswar, giant of boredom and inferiority complex, where does Diamund of the forge reside?”

“What?” Salan said.

“Answer the question or you know the consequences.”

“Is this a joke,” Salan continued, “Diamund of the forge died in the first battle of the man-Gods?”

“Answer the question,” I persisted ignoring Salan and looking directly at Aswar, “You know what will happen if you go against the game. You will be condemned to the realms of instinct.”

Aswar spluttered but he knew that he had to answer, “He lives in the high hill of Zarg.”

“What?” Salan said, “Is this some trick?”

“Only on your head, the man is a deceiver.”

“Then I shall have his,” Salan said and with that started the final war of the west. “You have done me good service Golah and you shall have your reward.”

“The whetstone seems a just reward.”

“Then you shall have it. So what of Diamund of the forge still being alive?”

“Life's full of surprises, but what happens now?”

“Now?”

“You have slain Aswar; I fear you have an impending war.”

“Rather a war than a traitor,” Salan said not seeing the irony. “But fate dictates and we must follow so what of your fate?”

“Return home and batten down the hatches for war seems to be in fashion at the moment.”

“In truth you speak,” Salan said as I left him to his demise and started my long journey to the mountains of Zarg. I thought about the game and laughed at Aswar's childish mind. It was so easy. His brother Degar was just the same. It wasn't really a contest as such; in fact Truro had proved a lot better adversary for his understanding was a lot deeper than Aswar's. So what is understanding?

Well now I've got the whetstone I'll have a fresh crack at it. The legend of Nebu the spider, my first question to Aswar. An invisible spider's web or gravitational pull it just depends on your understanding. The truth is there but it takes many forms. Held in place by an unseen force that is a lot stronger than you think, why not a spider's web. So what's the difference between my truth and Aswar's? He has wisdom while I have infinite wisdom, the truth behind the truth. Truro had it too so my questions had to be on his level. Basically I guess you say that Aswar knew the story but I wrote it, well my kind did anyway. We venerated our dead heroes by dedicating super natural powers to them. Siehen the bright as volcanic eruption, Novak keeper of the key of the rainbow though I guess he was a healer so it did have an element of truth in there. Sure it kept the ignorant in their place for we had the power and wanted to keep it. The stories themselves held onto the truth for they did go some way in explaining the workings of nature, the Universe and their life but there real meanings were lost to us with the death of the higher Gods. They did not call him Swel the great deceiver for nothing. By the time it had turned darkness I was not far from Adam's brow so I decided to take some shelter there. The smell of Truro and his friend reached out and grabbed my nostrils but I was pretty desensitised by then so I just relit the fire and rested with my eyes on the opening. My thoughts drifted back to truth but before I got too far into it as I had a visitor.

“So it's truth you are after,” the snake said, “If I told you that I was a mouse would I be telling the

truth?"

"I don't know, for you were a mouse last time."

"In my present form, what am I?"

"A snake," I said not knowing where he was going.

"Now what if somebody said I was a mouse?"

"He'd be a liar."

"Then someone else, then another, another, soon everyone around you says I'm a mouse. Who is the one with the truth?"

"I am for you are a snake."

"No, I'm a mouse."

"What," I said in confusion.

"So what is truth, it could be anything, it could be no thing."

"Power, that's what truth is power."

"If you think that truth is power then you are in no fit state to meet Diamund of the forge."

"So this is what it's all about," I said upon realisation, "But what about the snake and mouse thing?"

"Truth as a perception, when everyone's perception is the same that becomes their truth."

"No, you are a snake."

"But I told you what I am, are you trying to say that I don't know what I am?"

"No,"

"Then perhaps I'm lying?"

"Er..."

"Or perhaps the man who named me first was lying, or only guessing."

"Right," I yielded, "You are a mouse."

"So that's reality, we are all agreed that I am a mouse."

"Er yes."

"Truth," The snake continued "I am not a mouse I am a snake. You perceived me to be a mouse because I told you that I was."

"Then you are a snake?" I said looking at it strangely.

"No, I am the Earth Mother. That is my essence, the snake is my form and the mouse is my ego. Three levels of understanding. The mouse who I say I am, the snake what reality has chose to call me and the Earth Mother what I really am. Now what has that to do with truth?" I remained silent as I had no answer so it carried on, "You are the snake."

"What?"

"Aswar is the mouse, you are the snake and Diamund of the forge is the Earth Mother, wisdom, spiritual wisdom and loving spiritual wisdom."

"Spiritual wisdom?"

"Infinite wisdom as you would understand it and Aswar wouldn't understand it at all. So what it truth?"

"I wouldn't know where to start."

"Wisdom knowing loving spiritual wisdom. Three levels of understanding merged into one. When you truly understand that you will be ready."

"Ready?"

"To play the Wisdom Game with Diamund of the forge."

"What, do you really expect me to go up against a higher God?"

"How else to you expect to get the Necklace of the Nine Whispers?"

"I've got no chance. He'll beat me with the first question. He knows things well beyond my grasp. He knows the first time what experience have I got of that?"

"Don't put yourself down; besides the Wisdom Game of the higher Gods is not the same as yours."

“It's not?”

“No, it's played in the old way. You'd better sleep now as an early start and a good day should see you at the foothills of Zarg.”

“It's a big area he could be anywhere I guess that's when the search really starts.”

“A good night's sleep might find him,” the snake said and slithered away. I slept well and rose early leaving the cave with a brisk step. I pondered more on what the snake said about truth and tried to understand it. Mile after mile I travelled with truth on my mind and time flew in the process. Three levels of understanding merged into one. It had mentioned loving spiritual wisdom which I took to be the true meaning of the stories, spiritual wisdom which I knew and wisdom what Aswar knew. The only thing in common was knowing so maybe truth was knowing. If that was the case then I was the truth for I had the spirit of knowing. That was the state of play by mid day when I stopped for a rest. I sat down awhile by a clear pool and just took in the scenery. The day was cold but that was not unusual so I was quite used to it. I had seen few people on my travel for the route I was on was little used. Since the feuds travelling had got pretty hazardous so few people ventured further than their homelands. It was not long before I had company for a fly came over and joined me.

“So have you found the truth?” the fly said as it made itself comfortable on my left leg.

“I think my logic has drifted for when I left it, it was me.”

“You still have a road to travel then though I think you might have taken a wrong turning at the spirit of knowing.”

“I have the truth not I am the truth.”

“Right you are the wisdom and you have the spirit of knowing, truth is loving spiritual wisdom that you know.”

“But I do not know any,” I said in confusion.

“Then you are not truth and neither do you know any.”

“Then I have no chance for Diamund of the forge does.”

“Then I guess I had better give you some, after all I guess you have won the Seal of Salhedron.”

“I have, how?”

“That's what you were playing for. That was the truth. When Salan told you the story he perceived it as a lie when really it was true. You won my approval when you did not slay Aswar.”

“Oh I thought that was part of the sacrifice.”

“No, the actual sacrifice was to sacrifice your life to me and my upkeep; it is a life of service no more. Eating their brains will not give you their power either for it does not work on that level. The brain is not the essence it is the vehicle. Things aren't quite how they are perceived sometimes.”

“True, so this loving spiritual wisdom what actually is it and what's the difference between it and normal spiritual wisdom?”

“Loving spiritual wisdom, that's wisdom through experience while spiritual wisdom is wisdom through understanding. The Eleven Steps of Bigard are you wise to the story?”

“Yes, Siehen the bright made them to cross the void of Camen the giant's Gateway.”

“Right, well that's the wisdom. Now what is the void of Camen the giant's Gateway?”

“Ignorance.”

“Good. That was the understanding but you will have to elaborate so I can find out your level.”

“Ah,” I said as it came to me, “The eleven steps are the levels of understanding for Camen the giant was the keeper of all things and the knower of the unknown.”

“Good and how does Siehen the bright fit in with the equation?”

“I don't know,” I admitted for up until then I had assumed it was heroic attribution.

“Siehen the bright is symbolic of enlightenment. Now that is the spiritual wisdom. Loving spiritual wisdom takes it a little deeper. Its wisdom is buried in the names Camen stands for will of God's life

through light so he's actually a state of mind you evolve to. Siehen stands for understanding blessed through spirit through light is the Soul and light is what it feeds upon. Now with each step you climb you grow in understanding and evolve closer to your purpose, that is wisdom through understanding.”

“Right, and experience?”

“When you have evolved into Camen, you have a will of God’s life through light.”

“Sorry?”

“While you just have understanding you have a will of light. God’s life is the experience. It is you with a purpose.”

“You know I think I understand that. So you evolve through light to your purpose and then you become it.”

“Good, which would fit in with Bigard which stands for self blessing will of God’s knowing transformation.”

“Yes I can see it, amazing. So anyway, I don't suppose you could tell me where Diamund of the forge actually lives?”

“No good asking me, what do I know, I am just a mouse.” and flew off.

Chapter 4

I got up and carried on my way with quite a light step to my pace. I felt strangely lifted after my conversation with the fly and this carried me for the rest of my journey. Night time saw me at the foot hills of Zarg and in need of some shelter. The rain had returned again and with a vengeance. I knew that the complex of Zerox laid close by so I hurried of in its direction. It was an old mountain temple dedicated to the Sky Father and had not seen service in years. It was dry and it was empty so it filled both my requirements as I needed to try and compose myself for the forth coming war. I did not hold out much hope of winning and as I did not know what the game actually involved I was just like the temple, well in the dark.

My thought turned to sleep eventually and I headed off in its direction. Morning saw me up before first light and being studied by a spider. I did not see it at first and almost crushed it getting up.

“Careful,” the spider said, “You don't want to add to your debt.”

“What,” I said still half asleep and wondering where the voice had come from.

“By your feet,” the spider said and quickly backed off to a safer spot. When it had resettled and made sure that I knew where it was it said, “So Golah, word has it that you are looking for Diamund of the forge.”

“Yes that's right, I don't suppose that you would know where he was?”

“I might, he is well known around these parts.”

“So you know where he is?”

“Yes I know where he is. In fact he's not very far at all. You could probably reach him by the middle of the day. But tell me Golah, why should I tell you of his whereabouts?”

“What? You are not the Earth Mother, who are you?”

“Nebu, is it not my web that holds the Earth to the Sun.”

“That was just a fable written by Swel the great deceiver. It was to explain gravitational pull.”

“And what creates it?”

“Centripetal force.”

“No, not what caused it, what created it.”

“The Earth spinning in orbit,” I said still confused, “Then you are the Earth Mother, no,” I said thinking better of it, “All father.”

“And Nebu the spider, it stands for light through self of love. I am the self of love. You see Golah I am the truth. When you have found me that is loving spiritual wisdom. When you see me everywhere and

recognise me for what I am then you will know the truth. You are evolving well Golah and will soon be up to your purpose,” the spider said and made to make a move.

“Wait, what about Diamund of the forge? Aren't you at least going to tell me where I can find him?”

“It's no good asking me.”

“Don't tell me. You're a mouse.”

“No, a spider,” and scampered off to be lost in the darkness. I did not know even where to begin to look so I just went outside and took in the sun's rays. It was quite warm for a change so I just sat down and thought for a while. I tried to work out where Diamund of the forge was but I guess I was just chasing shadows. If he had took a hermetic life he could be anywhere. The hills themselves were vast and it would have taken me four days just to cross them. The spider said it was not that far away. I reasoned about six hours hard walking so maybe there was hope but it was still a huge area to cover.

“And it won't get sorted whilst you just sit there,” a voice said and I had company again. I looked over and saw a scorpion perched by a rock.

“So where do I look then, can you at least give me a clue?”

“Diamund of the forge, what do you know about him? What do legends tell?”

“Diamund of the forge, he created the Necklace of Nine Whispers but lost it in a bet to Nyriad the strong. His brother Siehen the bright stole it back thus starting the first war of the man-Gods. Mind you that was a lie so I'm not sure.”

“A metal crafter, at least that bit was true.”

“So?”

“So maybe there might be a place where he could continue his task.”

“Well there was an old foundry to the north,” I said and then, “Right, yes. Thanks”

“My pleasure” the scorpion said, “What have you done to the weather?”

“What?” I said confused.

“Man, why have you upset the Great Mother?”

“Me,” I said taking it personally, “Nothing.”

“You must have done. It gets colder by the day. I can't survive here, and the constant hail. I tell you it is dangerous. What about my family, what chance have they got? I'll be lucky to last the season out. All my joints are getting sluggish because of the cold; I tell you it's an ordeal.”

“I haven't done anything.”

“It's your purpose to serve the Earth, for her to do this you must have upset the balance.”

“I haven't got a clue as to what you're on about.”

“That says it all,” the scorpion said and left after leaving its sting in the tale. I thought it strange that he should blame me for the glacial expansion but who knows what goes on in a scorpions mind especially one with chilblains. I was just happy that I had found Diamund of the forge so I briskly got up and headed his direction. The foundry was ancient and nobody knew who had first opened it. Legend said that it was there in the first time but I doubt that to be the case as nothing survived the cleansing. They say that at one time the hills were alive to the sound of sub men as they beat about their business. It was a thriving place. Yes I would say one thing for those little fellows, they were industrious. Time and close knit family life sealed their fate as they grew uglier and started to lose their sense of reason. In the end they could not serve their purpose any more and so died out. Their skills lived on so did not go to waste. Now though the hills were virtually empty and starting to fall to the oncoming ice slab.

Diamund of the forge must still be in good shape to live in conditions like that I thought as I headed closer to my destination. The higher I climbed the thinner the air got but the foundry was not that far up so I was only slightly out of breath by the time I reached it. It was a huge place and to actually search through it would have taken hours so instead I shouted his name and hoped that he would answer.

“Diamund of the forge,” I shouted for the third time and was just about to give up when I heard a voice

though I could not locate it," What do you want from me?"

I could not believe it was really him," I would like to talk."

"Go on."

"Well I'd rather talk face to face."

"First tell me something. What manner of man are you and what is your name?"

"I am a man-God; I am Golah, son of Tray"

"Time has changed me Golah son of Tray, I am giving you due warning," and with that a large figure appeared from out of one of the caves and headed my direction. I noticed a marked limp but at that range that was all that I noticed. As he got closer I just stood and stared, not believing what I was seeing. He walked with a marked stoop and to watch him make his way towards me was amusing, he was like an ape in his manner. "Golah," he said, "I have heard you mentioned on the circuit."

"And that is an honour greater than any poet. To think that you Diamund of the forge, son of Novak should have heard of me."

"And what brings you here, how did you manage to find me?"

"Aswar told me you were here," I said not wanting to get into too much detail, "When I heard you were still alive I couldn't believe it."

"And the necklace?"

"Oh the chants, yes. Sorry I'm still trying to come to terms with this."

"You mean to play the Wisdom Game?"

"Well if I have to," I said for to tell you the truth I would have rather sat and talked to him about the first time. I was in front of a man who was actually there.

"You don't sound too sure. Have you come all this way with uncertainty?"

"I don't think that I could beat you," I admitted, "And even if I did and killed you I would not know about the first time. It's not a profitable game to me."

"You could always eat my brains," he said testing me.

"Waste of time that would be, there's no knowledge in it."

"So you have some understanding. Well let me put your mind at rest. The real Wisdom Game is played differently. There is no killing for life is sacred. You sort of got half the story and evolved it over time."

"So how do you actually play it?"

"Pretty similar but instead of cutting your head off and eating your brains we were content with just slapping it."

"Sorry, what?"

"It was an old drinking game "Diamund said with a laugh ""You took a swig from the horn, answered the question and if you were wrong the impact of the blow mixed with the drink nine times out of ten made you fall over."

"You mean it was just an old drinking game," I said letting it sink in, "I was brought up to venerate it."

"Yes, surprising what you believe in really."

"So how did it come to get that way?"

"Theorists, oh and Swel had a part to play."

"Your brother, why the great deceiver anyway, was it the stories he left?"

"The stories he told more like, "Diamund said with another laugh, "He was called that well before he made those stories up. As a child he used to tell a tale I can tell you. He changed it from slap to beheading. It was just revenge really. He was hoping you would wipe yourselves out in the pursuit of wisdom on one hand and made for a better story on the other. Theorists came up with the brains because in one of the stories I got splashed in the mouth by some. They reasoned that I had eaten it and so it had some significance."

"And that was it, so why Siehen the bright?"

“Just a kid's name, he was none too clever as a child which leads us to the first question.”

“Our first question,” I said warming to the man, “Does that mean I get a drink?”

“Sure, follow me,” and I followed him back to the cave he had left from earlier. He went to the back and brought forward two horns and a goatskin bag and bid me stand in the middle of the cave. He gave me one of the horns and filled it to the brim saying, “I will ask the question, drink the contents of the horn as I speak and then answer.”

“Alright,” I said and got myself ready.

“Golah, son of Tray, what did Novak whisper to Siehen the bright before they lit the funeral pyre?”

“Life,” I said after I had my drink.

“You surprised me. Though you are supposed to say it in a philosophical manner and a shrugging of the shoulder to add effect,” and showed me.

“Really,” I said quite shocked as I always thought it had an Esoterical meaning.

“So that's the first question down. We'll talk awhile whilst I think up another one. It's been a long time since I've had a real conversation I can tell you. So what news of the great outside?”

“Falling apart, the south's overrun and the rest are at war with each other.”

“Time's not changed then,” Diamund said with a wry smile, “The cycle will soon be complete.”

“The cycle, have you seen it before?”

“Yes, the first beginning if you want to know what it was like then you just have to look around you now. Why do you think we were reluctant to give you the power, we've seen what it can do. It sends men crazy for it.”

“The Necklace of Nine Whispers, it makes you go mad?”

“Well no, the pursuit of it caused the first war of the new world though,” he poured another drink and I took a good gulp from the horn, “No, times are grim once more.”

“So why Diamund of the forge,” I said wanting to change the subject as it does not do to watch your hero get maudlin.

“What do legends say?”

“For your skill in artistry and metal artefacts, they say it was you that taught the sub men their craft and you who made the Necklace of Nine Whispers.”

“Well there is truth in all that but it was more to do with the fact I helped Svel formulate the stories.”

“Oh,” I said learning something new.

“Which brings us to our next question.”

Chapter 5

Diamund filled the horn once more and said, “Golah son of Tray the Necklace of Nine Whispers, what does it symbolise and what purpose does it serve?”

I had to think about that one so I went quiet for a while before saying, “The Necklace of Nine Whispers is symbolic of the nine mantras of motion and it serves the Earth Mother.”

“Good, your kind had come on well, so you know what the necklace actually is.”

“I know it was the power that was sought after.”

“This power, if you had it what would you do with it?”

“That I can't answer. You see I don't actually know what it is so I can't comment on it till I do.”

“You've come a long way blind,” Diamund said and went deep into thought, “Maybe it is time, I had better make the last question difficult then.”

“Are we playing for it? I thought this was just a drinking game.”

“Oh, fair enough then.”

“One thing I would like to know, the legend of your death what was that all about?”

“Ah,” Diamund said with a laugh, “It was reasoned that someone had to survive and look after the

chants and the duty fell on to me. I moved to the west and disappeared amongst the people of the Aspic. There was no first battle in the war of the man-Gods; in fact to call it a war was a bit strong as it was more of a massacre really. I heard that most of the higher Gods were butchered as they slept so it wasn't too heroic. They kept to the stories just altered them to change history slightly but the knowledge still filtered through."

"So Nyriad the strong and his Axe that Spirited Life that was added later?"

"Yes, the only thing strong about him was his smell. He was a bit of a lady's man though so when you think of axe think of chopper."

"Right," I said laughing.

"Ah here's a question that should get you thinking," Diamund said and filled my drinking vessel,

"Golah son of Tray, what was Nyriad the Strong's wife named?"

I emptied my vessel in one go, "Cullotte," I said straight afterwards.

"Good. You have done well Golah. Now it's your turn, I trust you have some good ones."

"Well I like them, well I did anyway till you told me all that. Seems a bit pointless now."

"Oh don't dishearten, why not use them to gain knowledge instead?"

"Alright, Diamund of the forge, what is the difference between a higher God and a God?"

Diamund emptied his drink and said, "Good question Golah, a God is an enlightened Soul and a higher God is an enlightened Soul with a purpose to serve."

"Right, but I was hoping for a little elaboration."

"Oh. Right, an enlightened Soul is someone on the eleventh step of Bigard and a higher God would be Camen."

"A will of God's life seeing light."

Diamund looked at me and said, "it seems to me that you might have a purpose, who told you that?"

"It was a fly I think, or was it a mouse."

"Sorry?"

"It was the Earth Mother, she takes on many forms."

"You have that channel, I lost it years ago, so what did she say?"

"Nothing really," I said thinking it a strange question, "She gave me the Seal of Salhedron."

"You have Mother's approval, however did you manage that?"

"I don't know really she gave it me for not slaying, well that's what the fly said anyway."

"So she spoke to you through a fly, however did you manage to hear it anyway?"

"Oh that ones easy, I had your dagger."

"My dagger, that was when I lost my channel. Where did you get it?"

"I got it through Truro; I won it in the Wisdom Game."

"Truro, so he is no longer with us. A strange man though I never took him for a thief. So you have killed one of my kin and you possess my dagger. I did not know this, you have challenged my honour and yet you say you come in peace."

"I do," I protested wondering about the change of mood, "If it is the dagger that you want you are welcome to have it back. It will just be like returning it back to the rightful owner."

"No keep the dagger you must have won it fair and square. Truro had a good mind and anyway he should never have stolen it. I lost my channel when I lost that, have you another question?"

"Yes," I said refilling his horn, "Diamund of the forge, son of Novak, what is the connection between the All Father, the Earth Mother and Father Sky?"

"That's an easy question Golah, the All Father is the spiritual force, the Earth Mother if the feminine force and Father Sky is the masculine force."

"And the truth behind the truth behind the truth," I said much to Diamund's surprise.

"The All Father is the collective conscious; its personification is the Sun because the make-up of

plasma is similar to the make-up of the divine. The Earth Mother is the collective subconscious and Father Sky is the physical will.”

“Right.”

“So how do you know about the truth behind the truth behind the truth?”

“Oh that would be the whetstone of Sieman the beggar it gives me fresh understanding.”

“I know, I made it for Aswar, however did you manage to get hold of it?”

“I won it.”

“The Wisdom Game?”

“That's right, though I did not know it belonged to Aswar. I thought it belonged to Salan.”

“No it belonged to Aswar. Salan I wouldn't give him the time of day. I hear say that all he does is feast, what would he be doing with it?”

“Aswar must have given it to him,” I ventured an opinion, “To seal the pact that they were intent on making.”

“How do you know this?”

“Salan told me that they were making a pact, I sort of guessed the rest.”

“Well alliances are made nowadays, so you killed Aswar.”

“Not me personally it was Salan.”

“Aswar was a good friend of mine, well times are bad. I thought him a little below you though.”

“Well true but it was he who offered the challenge, I was honour bound to accept.”

“Yes I can see that, so why would he have challenged you though?”

“Revenge I guess, he wanted the Ring of Degar and to get his own back.”

“You killed Degar this is all new to me. So you have the Ring of Degar, I have never heard of it. Tell me of its power.”

“It gives you the spirit of knowing.”

“Would you allow me to have a look at it,” Diamund said so I took it off my finger and showed it him.

“That is the Ring of Novak. That is my father's ring. Degar must have stolen it. It all fits in now, how did he manage to fool me so easily.”

“Sorry?” I said not knowing really what else to say.

“I thought that I had lost it, Degar must have taken it. I wouldn't mind but he helped me to look for it. I made Aswar the whetstone by way of a thank you for helping me get over the loss. It has a lot of sentimental value.”

“Yes, I guess it must have.”

“Yet even so they were like brothers to me. You've left me mixed up with all this news. You know sometimes I think that ignorance is bliss.”

“Well you are welcome to have the ring back; it must have a lot of sentimental value as you say. Degar, I did not know that you knew him, in fact I did not even know that you were still alive.”

“No, you won it fair and square for you won it in good faith. Just as you won the whetstone I suppose.”

“Well sort of, I'm honour bound to tell you that the nominated stake was actually the Seal of Salhedron.”

“The Seal of Salhedron, it doesn't exist in form.”

“I know that now but at the time I thought that it did. It wasn't for me either, it was for Salan.”

“A mercenary that is not an honourable vocation. What has happened to Salan's mind that he has to ask someone else. Just a minute, I thought you said that Salan and Aswar made a pact.”

“I don't think they expected me to win.”

“Aswar's he must have got a lot wiser then. So the whetstone, how does that fit in?”

“When Aswar said that he did not have the seal with him I wanted something in its place. You never take these things on blind.”

“True I suppose, and that was the whetstone, same rule applies as you still won it under honour.”

“You are welcome to have it back for although it was done under honour it was got through false pretences.”

“No, I lost it to my dishonour because it was tricked out of me.”

“Very well but the offer was made and still holds if you change your mind.”

“I'll bare that in mind but I can't accept it as it would be against my honour .Since I lost my father's blessing that is the only thing left I have to cling to.”

“You lost your blessing, I did not know that. That wasn't in the stories.”

“No, that was when I lost the ring. It was given to me by Novak before I set off on my journey. It was to have been Siehen the Bright's but as I was the last of the higher Gods, well soon to be, he gave it to me.”

“I can see your problem because to accept it back would be dishonour because you have to win it.”

“Well those days are long gone; I have no need of them now. Fate must have taken them as punishment.”

“For turning your back on destiny,” I said remembering my earlier conversation with Truro.

“Yes, she can be a hard task master, so anyway out of the two of them who was the cleverest?”

“Aswar, he got all of the questions right.”

“So how did he manage to lose then?” Diamund said in confusion.

“Well the last question was to reveal your whereabouts. Salan did not know that you were alive either. If Aswar was to hold something like that in reserve what other surprise did he have under his cloak?”

“Yes I see the logic, and the irony, you must have a poetic mind.”

“So must fate because your first question was Truro's last.”

“Really,” Diamund said and went deep into thought, “Well I suppose it's your last question. Are you a gambling man?”

“Well I have been known, is it the ring that you have in mind?”

“Well I was thinking that the Necklace of the Nine Whispers excels the ring in value.”

“I would say that that was a fair comment, what else did you have in mind?”

“Well I sort of miss my dagger; it used to match well with my sword.”

“Well yes if you like, it is not good to split a set.”

“And I would need to keep it sharp,” Diamund said going in for the kill.

“The whetstone, so that's the Ring of Novak, the dagger and the whetstone. Would you say that it was a fair wager for the Necklace of Nine Whispers?”

“Yes I would say that they were more than a match. Now s to the game itself, would you like to play it my way or yours?”

“Your way, my way was wrong.”

“Fair enough, I'll bring the necklace to the table.” He was gone for quite a while and this gave me time to ponder on his actions. I knew he was after revenge for I could read his mind and this surprised me for legends said that revenge was not in a higher Gods nature. I reasoned that he must no longer be a higher God for he had lost his channel. In fact he might have deteriorated as much mentally as he had physically.

“Have you a question?” he said coming back and knocking me off my thought chariot.

“Yes,” I said putting the items next to the necklace, “Diamund of the forge, son of Novak, what are the mantras of motion and what does each one do?”

A Sting in the Tale

Chapter 1

“What,” Diamund said reeling back in horror.

“Would you like me to repeat the question?”

“I can't answer you.”

“What do you mean? You cannot refuse to answer me if you know the answer; you are on your honour.”

“That's just it, I don't know the answer. Yes sure I used to but when I lost the channel the mantras were useless so they lost their relevance.”

“But you are a higher God,” I said in confusion, “I have heard stories of your long and meticulous memories.”

“I'm not a higher God, I used to be but fate took the power from me. What is given is easily taken back if you go against your purpose.”

“What a waste of time,” I said as the temper got the better of me, “I've travelled long for nothing.”

Before I really knew what was happening he was lying dead in front of me and I was wiping the blood of my sword.

I picked up the necklace along with the other treasures and put them in my bag. I picked up the goatskin bag and filled my horn. I toasted Diamund of the forge's demise, “To all virgins' thanks for nothing,” and drank heartily from the vessel. I guess I was pretty drunk by then so I sat awhile to try and come to terms with the mess I found myself in. My world had come apart. Everything I had once held dear lay before me, its death as solid as the body in front of me. Everything that I had venerated, everything that I had directed my purpose at had just been a joke made up to keep me off the right path. We had ritualised a drinking game, what stupidity, what madness and I had fallen for it. I filled the vessel once more and shook my head in slow disgust before emptying it in one go.

“You look like a man that craves a hangover,” a voice said but I was in no mood to listen.

“Go away,” I snapped not even looking to where the voice was coming from, “Leave me alone.”

“Now you don't have to be like that,” the voice said and in temper I looked up to see a spider.

“Oh look” I said through my haze, “It's the spider or is it the mouse.”

“Would you like me to come back when you're sober,” the spider said and made to leave.

“Wait, look what is this about?”

“The truth.”

“Don't start all that again, I'm warning you.”

“You wanted the truth and now you've found it you don't want it.”

“It's just a perception put on you by other people,” I said having found out to my cost.

“Yes but you had to experience it to truly understand.”

“And where does that leave me. I based my life on that perception of truth and as it was a lie that makes my life one.”

“I wouldn't say that, sure the ego might have taken a hammering but you'll get over it.”

“So what now?”

“Do you still want the mantras?”

“Waste of time looking, Diamund of the forge could not remember them and he was the only one that knew them.”

“Not strictly true, they say that the guide Alrebus knows them.”

“Alrebus, I thought she was just a character in a story.”

“No she lives but I give you due warning time has made her rather cantankerous.”

“And how will I find her?” I said though I must admit that my heart wasn't in it.

“Darium judge of the north knows of her whereabouts, let him be your guide.”

“His life lies forfeit to treason, what good is he to me or does it?” my mind going into turmoil, “I don't even know if that's the truth.”

“It's true; he's at the camp of Nubert the wise two days to the east of here.”

“Yes but I'm hardly likely to just go to him they'll have me for guilt by association.”

“You'll know what to do when the time is right, a good night's sleep should clear your mind,” and it left me.

I drank some more just bemoaning my fate really for I had to get it out of my system until tiredness took me to her bed. Next morning found me alive and well and truly hungover. I was reluctant to start my trek so I waited in the vain hope that my head would clear. I must admit, hangover aside I was in a better mood. Sure up till then my life had been a lie, well from an ego point of view for the spiritual wisdom I had was still sound, but that could be rectified. I debated on a little hair of the dog but once bitten twice shy so that idea quickly fell from grace.

“Wise move,” a voice said and I looked up to see the spider had returned, “You want to keep a clear head.”

“Clear head, I would say that it's still fuzzy.”

“A brisk walk will soon clear that; you can give me a lift if you like.”

“What?” I said for it was an unusual request.

“I've got someone to see, it's alright, it's on your way.”

“Right er hop on and we'll make tracks.”

The spider obeyed and spent all morning explaining the alphabet to me and testing me on the words. By noon when I stopped for a rest I was well versed in it.

“So,” the spider said “The triad of motive, how does that equate with what you have learned?”

“I'm not sure, does it?”

“Yes of course. I would not have mentioned it otherwise.”

“I don't know then,” I admitted and then took a guess, “Would loving spiritual wisdom be love?”

“Right, so what about spiritual wisdom?”

I thought awhile and said, “Anger?”

“Good and how did you get there?”

“Er, I just guessed,” I admitted sheepishly.

“Then guess some more, what is anger?”

“Spiritual envy,” I said though in truth I was none the wiser, “Though I can't see the connection.”

“Power, anger envy's love its power.”

“Why should that be?”

“Love's power is creation, anger's power is destruction. Which would you rather have?”

“Creation, I suppose.” I said, not really committed.

“Why?” the spider said much to my surprise.

“What do you mean why? Why not?”

“Look, to experience you have to first understand but before all of that you have to know. So why should you prefer creation over destruction?”

“Well one destroys and the other creates, I would rather create then destroy.”

“Why should that be?” the spider said pushing the point.

“Because it's better.”

“Looks like it's going to be a long afternoon think it through.”

I thought awhile before I said, “Do unto others as you would be done by.”

“Well there is that, but that denotes fear of the same thing happening to you. That fosters anger so it is

not really the answer.”

“Foster anger, why should that be?”

“It can lead to you thinking that God is anger meeting out just retribution.”

“Oh” I said seeing the logic.

“So why is it better to create than destroy?”

I thought some more before I said, “It is my purpose to create, it is in my nature so if I destroy I go against my nature and harm myself, look at Diamund of the forge.”

“Well that's slightly better. Try this one out for size then. When you create you do works of love and through this God lives within you. That is the power that you should want because it is good for the Soul.”

“I can see that. So how does anger equate with spiritual wisdom then?”

“Well that's really your job to tell me.”

“Well you said that it creates anger, I can't really see it.”

“Alright, when you think of anger think of it more as spiritual anger which is more like righteous indignation. Spiritual wisdom creates this because on the one hand it gives you the means to see past the vanity of reality and on the other it sets you on a false purpose because you only have half the story.”

“You know I can see the first part,” I said remembering my earlier conversation with Diamund of the forge. “I wasn't too happy when he told me the truth and as for the second part I only have to remember the Wisdom Game.”

“Now put yourself in Aswar's place, then you'll truly get the picture. Imagine what his anger would be.”

“Hypothetical really but I see your point. So wisdom on its own would that work on another level.”

“Yes, it gives your ego a God complex without the understanding so it enhances your pride.”

“I can understand that, I've seen it myself on many occasions.”

“Good, experience is the best teacher. Now when you slayed Diamund of the forge what was going through your mind?”

“I don't know,” I admitted, “I just saw the mist and he lay dead before me.”

“You were not in control of your actions?” the spider said more as a question than a statement.

“No, I don't suppose that I was. My anger got the better of me; mind you it could be hurt pride.”

“It was both. Hurt pride became spiritual envy and the rest was history. Hopefully the new knowledge that you have will give you the strength to get back the control. Remember that recognition is its downfall and that might help you to control your temper.”

“Right, I'll bare that in mind.”

“Do that and you will save yourself a lot of needless trouble? Anyway I've got things to do. Thanks for the lift and I will see you when I see you.”

With that the spider left me and I carried on with my journey. I thought a lot about what the spider said and it kept my mind busy for the rest of the day. I could see the logic in it as loving spiritual wisdom was wisdom with true purpose and that was what I ought to have been following. The spider had also made me think about my previous actions and to be honest they left a lot to be desired. I thought about the number of people who had fallen to my anger and in truth it left me in disgust with myself. I reasoned that killing them was much akin to killing my Self for if the God within lives through creation logic surely states that it dies with destruction. I had been brought up to believe in just cause and had taken my comfort from it but things I had once held dear had fallen apart. According to my new perceptions there was no such thing as just cause for death is destruction no matter what light you tried to put it in. To take the logic to the extreme it would actually be better to die yourself than to kill and the lies of my so called perceived betters could have condemned me to perdition. Yes spiritual anger had definitely had a strong hold on me and the previous reality I had found myself in. To make

matters worse I had been the instrument of others destruction and I was not really sure if it was out of ignorance or a private agenda. Salan had been an example if you had took it at face value. He wanted me to get the Seal of Salhedron to help him. Now I know he had a hidden agenda but over the years there had been a lot of others who did not. They actually believed that they were working with the truth and had a clear conscience when they sent me out to destroy. Well that was the logic I had but that was with the still limited knowledge so I was still quite in the dark. I knew I had to build or rebuild rather some form of purpose for without it I felt empty inside.

It was around nightfall when I got that far so I decided to take shelter and get some rest. Shelter was no problem as the hills were littered with disused caves so I quickly found one and fell to slumber.

Chapter 2

Morning saw me up with the lark, well robin actually if you want to be pedantic. Spring and rebirth the symbolism was not lost on me as I did feel somewhat reborn.

“Golah son of Tray,” the robin said, “So you are looking for love.”

“What?” I said in surprise.

“The essence of your being, the direction of your purpose.”

“Am I? I thought I was looking for the mantras.”

“That's only a side issue, so what is love?”

I thought a while before saying, “God’s purpose seeing loving through.”

“That's what it stands for but what does it actually mean?”

I thought some more before I said, “God’s purpose is to love for from it He gets loving.”

“Good, do you feel up to taking it down a level?”

“Loving comes from the All Father through the Divine Spirit. That is how God feeds for that is His understanding.”

“Right, the Divine Spirit helps God’s growth for it adds to His being. Now do you know the Law of Love?”

“Er yes, you have to give to receive.”

“Good, and can you relate to it?”

“Relate to it, I’m not sure.”

“Come now Golah have you never been in love?”

“Well yes.”

“And by giving you love away did it not fill you with a sense of well being.”

“Yes,” I said remembering back and missing it more than slightly.

“Well that's only on one level. It can also come with acts of charity making you feel uplifted for the spirit moves within you. Now when you perform such service you fulfil your purpose and so find your balance.”

“I have been told that but to be honest it did not really do anything.”

“Perhaps you have been serving the wrong purpose then. Hopefully now you know the truth you might find your balance.”

“Well hopefully, if it's not too late that is.”

“Time and a change of direction might alter that, but anyway you have a long trek so I will leave you to it,” and flew off.

I set off on my way and by the time it got to late afternoon I had crossed the hills and was very close to Nubert the Wise's camp. It was a vast complex but as I had been there before I knew where I was going. For fear of recognition I kept myself well concealed and made my way with stealth to where I presumed Darium would be kept. I was lucky as the few people I did see did not recognise me so hopefully there would be no comebacks from my actions. Most of the structures were built out of

canvas as the nature of the man-God was nomadic but Darium's prison was made out of stone to make it fairly escape proof. I made sure that no one was around before I went over towards the small window that gave the room its light.

"Darium judge of the north," I said, "How find you in this situation?"

"Golah," Darium said, "Golah is that you?"

"Yes, don't speak too loud as you'll attract the guards."

"I'm not a traitor; this is just a set up. They say that I was going to give the Goblet of Elam to the mortals."

"So I heard."

"It's not true, believe me Golah I would never betray the league."

"What's behind it then?" I said thinking there was no smoke without fire.

"Ah politics is a dirty business. Nubert craves power. He has made alliances with Salan of the west and means to bring all the territories under his grasp. This is just an excuse to get me out of the way and a pretext for a raid."

"Well Salan might be a little busy; he's got a war with the clan of Aswar."

"Aswar, I must have been misinformed, I heard they were about to make a pact."

"They were, but circumstances changed."

"I've got to get out of here, help me Golah."

"There's not a lot I can do. It's dangerous even for me to be seen talking to you."

"Then I am doomed and with me the northern territory."

"Look, I'm not making any promises but I'll see what I can do." I left him in sorrow and went out of the camp to find a quiet place to be alone with my thoughts and tried to come up with some sort of plan. I thought long and hard but made no progress until a fly came to my aid.

"So you want to help Darium escape," it said, "Now a lot of people would regard your thoughts as treasonable."

"The ignorant maybe. It's hypothetical though as there is no way I can get him out and he's hardly likely to tell me where Alrebus is while he's languishing in a cell."

"He does not know her as Alrebus, she has adopted the name of Shema and that is how you should address her."

"Well yes, if ever I get to see her that is."

"Ah yes, tricky problem that. The only solution I could think of is the Wisdom Game."

"The Wisdom Game against Nubert the wise, wouldn't that make me Golah the foolish?"

"You'll be surprised at how far you have progressed; you should not have too much trouble."

"But it's pointless; it's only a drinking game."

"To you yes, but Nubert is not that wise."

"Anyway what good would come from taking Nubert's life, it will only add to my debt, it can't help Darium."

"You'll know what to do when the time is right; just think a life for a life."

"Well it has been known," I said remembering a little used rule that said if you spare the loser he owed you a debt and out of honour it had to be of similar value.

"Then you know what to do," the fly said and made to leave.

"Wait," I said, "I don't think he will play me."

"He knows of the whetstone for news travels fast. Revenge is on his mind so his emotions will restrict him."

"Was Darium telling the truth about the pact?"

"Sure, though he has not been strictly honest with you."

"You mean he was going to give the mortals the power," I said in disgust.

“No he would never do that, ironic really as by sharing it, it grows.”

“What,” I said in surprise, “That's news to me.”

“I'm talking about the real power not the ego centred external power but the power that comes from within.”

“Another lie, I tell you this I don't seem to know where I stand any more.”

“Things will get clear. No Darium's was that without him the north would be lost but as he believed it then to him it was the truth.”

“Well I can forgive him that, it's hard to know what's the truth nowadays.”

“True, so are you up to taking on Nubert the wise?”

“Guess it's the only way.”

“As soon as you get Darium get out quick for Nubert's honour will only last until you get out the camp.”

“Yes I have gathered that, I have heard of Nubert's honour before.”

“It might be advisable to find out about Alrebus first just in case as you might lose Darium in flight.” with that the fly flew off and I made my direction towards Darium. Making sure there was nobody about I approached Darium once more.

“I might be able to help you,” I said without greeting.

“You can? I will be eternally in your debt.”

“Well that's as maybe, I mean to play the Wisdom Game.”

“Against Nubert, is that wise?”

“It's the only option I can think of. First things first though I'm after some information.”

“If I can be of help.”

“I'm looking for the guide Shema and it has been told to me that you know of her whereabouts.”

“I know where she is but to get to her would be an ordeal greater than Nubert.”

“I'll have to deal with it when I come to it.”

“Well it's your life I guess. Have you ever heard of the Great Caverns of Nosephi?”

“Yes, it was an old legend.”

“Well they exist. It's well hidden in the high hill of Zarg. I would have to show you though for it is very difficult to get to it.”

“That might be a problem as our best chance of survival would be to split up.”

“I'm afraid it's too well hidden, and when you find it your troubles are only starting.”

“Really?”

“The caverns themselves are well below ground and there is only one way down. It is guarded at five places and to get through them you have to answer a question. Failure to do so means you forfeit your life.”

“Something to look forward to then. You'll be called for soon so be ready.” I left him and made my way to the great hall as it would be the most likely place that Nubert would be. The hall itself was virtually empty and Nubert saw me straight away.

“Golah, son of Tray,” he said by way of greeting, “Welcome to my humble abode.”

“Nubert the wise, I thank you and hope that you live long and prosper.”

“How is the world outside, any news?”

“News galore but all bad I'm afraid. War seems to rear its head everywhere I look.”

“Ain't that the truth? So what brings you to my camp? Not that you are not most welcome for in times like this you need to know your friends.”

“Wise words and well spoken, I am just passing through on my way south.”

“A dangerous place to be, the sons of man have drove out the league massacring any one that chose to stop.”

"I have a brother there," I lied.

"Then I am afraid you have lost him, for the survivors could be counted on the fingers of the right hand."

"What, was it really that bad?"

"I'm afraid that it is with truth I speak Pilau of the fiery hair can vouch for that."

With that a man stepped forward and said, "Nubert the wise speaks the truth. I was very lucky to get out. Carnage on the scale unknown before. They took no prisoners but wiped out anything in their tracks just like soldier ants on route march. They were more barbarous than any giant I can tell you." I thought they had had good reason to be but kept it to myself. The Gods had not only kept the power from them they had also enslaved them to build their giant temples. With time a lot of them had escaped and set up colonies of their own it was only natural they would want their revenge.

"I might have saved you a journey," Nubert said, "Though it cost you a brother."

"What is it coming to; I see no future for us."

"The strong will always survive, so anyway Golah, I have heard you have been busy yourself."

"You have?" I said pleading ignorance.

"You have the Whetstone of Sieman the beggar, news travels quickly. Aswar though, is that not unlike taking honey from a baby?"

"Well he made the challenge I was honour bound to accept it. Is not the way of the man-God?"

"Yes I suppose but I would hardly call it a challenge. I thought that you would have gone for a challenge more suitable to your level of understanding."

"I had no choice in the matter," I said knowing where he was going, "When the challenge appears I have to accept it otherwise I would be in disgrace."

"The whetstone, have you it with you?"

"Oh yes."

"You know I have always wanted that whetstone, it was stolen from my brother by Aswar."

"I never knew that, that puts it in a different light. I did not realise that it had once belonged to your brother. You are welcome to have it back for I did not know it was stolen."

"Ah, honour forbids it, are you up to being challenged?"

"Maybe, have you anything to match it?"

"I have the Chisel of Alon, would you say that that was a fair match?"

"Then let the game begin."

Chapter 3

"Golah, son of Tray," Nubert said to preserve formalities, "I have a challenge for you if you care to take it up."

"On you head be it."

"Then you accept?"

"Not until I know your terms."

"I have the Chisel of Alon; I want the Whetstone of Sieman the beggar."

"Then bring it to the table," I said and he duly obliged. I put the whetstone next to it. After I had done that it was Nubert's turn to ask a question."

"Golah, son of Tray, the triad of purpose, what are their elements and their relationship to each other?" I thought awhile and said, "The elements of the triad of purpose are reason, motive and intention. Their relationship is that reason is the motive behind the intention, motive is the intention behind the reason and intention is the reason behind the motive."

"Good," Nubert said in surprise "You have moved on well. This should sort you out though. Golah son of Tray, the Divine Spirit, what are its elements and what is their relationship to each other?"

I thought awhile and said, "The elements of the Divine Spirit are love, understanding and purpose. Their relationship is that understanding is love through purpose, purpose is love through understanding and love is understanding through purpose."

"Very good," Nubert said even more surprised, "This one will get you though, Golah son of Tray what are the elements of the triad of being and their relationship to each other?"

"The elements of the triad of being are instinct, intellect and spiritual. Their relationship is that instinct is spiritual intellect, intellect is spiritual instinct and spiritual is intellectual instinct."

"You've really surprised me; well it's your turn now. I hope that your questions are as good as your answers."

"We'll see, Nubert the wise. The Ring of Novak, what power does it give you?"

"Legend says that it gives you the power to know, that's an easy one to start with."

"I know," I said with a smile, "Next question, Nubert the wise, the Dagger of Diamund of the forge, what power does it give you?"

"That's even easier. The Dagger of Diamund of the forge gives you the power to read minds. What is it Golah, haven't you got any questions worth answering. You are not up against Aswar now."

"Alright I'll step it up then. Nubert the wise, what did Novak whisper in Siehen the bright's ear before they burned him on the funeral pyre?"

"Now you are being ridiculous, only Novak himself knows that."

"Have you no answer?"

"Have you no question," Nubert said passing it back.

"The question has been asked. If you do not know the answer then I'm afraid you lose."

"I can't answer that, nobody can."

"Now Nubert, would I be asking you a question that I did not know the answer to?"

"Go on then, what's your answer."

"Are you yielding?"

"Tell me what you think the answer is and I will quickly discredit it."

"Are you yielding?" I repeated the question.

"No, you don't know the answer; you can't do for no one does."

"I can't answer to you yield, you know the rules."

Then ask me another question, one that you know the answer to."

"I know the answer to this one," I said and showed him the ring I had won from Degar, "Look closely at the ring and tell me whose is it."

Nubert studied the ring and said, "No it can't be."

"Then you do know."

"It was just a legend, it can't be and yet it must be. Where did you get it?"

"It makes no difference; you should be more concerned with what it gets me."

"The spirit of knowing," Nubert said as if it was just dawning on him.

"Well I was thinking of the Chisel of Alon and of course your head."

"No, no spare me."

"I can't," I said pleading ignorance, "There is no other way."

"Wait, wait there is a way."

"There is?" I said keeping up the act.

"Yes, spare me and out of honour I owe you a life."

"You owe me a life, what good is that to me. Whose life and what value would it be to me?"

"Darium judge of the north, you'll get a good ransom for him."

"Darium, what's he got to do with this?"

"I have him as prisoner, he'll raise you good fortune."

“Alright, I'll take him.”

Darium was brought into the hall and Nubert said, “Take him and see what you get for him.”

As I was leaving I said “Nubert the wise, don't you want to know the answer?” I had reached the door by then so I shouted “Life.” And we walked briskly out of sight before making our run. We must have run about three miles before we took a rest in a well hidden cave.

“That was close,” I said and studied the Chisel of Alon, “So what does this give you then?”

“I wouldn't like to guess, knowing Nubert though it's a forgery.”

“True,” I said and put it away “So what now then?”

“Head for home and as quickly as possible for Nubert's preparing for war.”

“The way things are going there won't be any man-Gods left.”

“I know. Stupid isn't it. No matter who wins the war we'll all lose because we won't be strong enough to stop the barbarian horde.”

“Yes, I heard about the southern territory being overrun and massacred.”

“Times are indeed bad but what else can we do. Nubert's being unreasonable. We have to live somewhere for the ice has taken most of our land.”

“I can see the effects in the hills around us. If it's not the barbarians it's going to be the cold. Times are definitely not in our favour.”

“True,” Darium said and got up “We'd better make tracks as I'm willing to wager that Nubert won't be too far behind.”

I got up and followed him out into the cold night air. We must have walked all night before we came to the place of the entrance.

“I must leave now,” Darium said “See that rock over there,” and pointed to a large dolmen that stood upright and aloof from the rest of the vista, “When the sun hits the dolmen at mid day it will cast its shadow on the entrance. Follow the shadow and then the passageway until it forks into two, take the right hand path and stick to the right all the time until you come to the first point. Answer the question correctly and you may proceed.”

“And if I fail?”

“Then you'll be launched off the ledge and fall hundreds of feet to your death. As I said it is a very treacherous task that you have undertaken.”

“Well it has to be done.”

“If I were you I would get some sleep before you start, you're going to need it.”

“I should manage a few hours, so what now Darium?”

“War and death.”

“Well if that's what fate has decided who are we to argue? Good luck and good hunting.”

“Same to you Golah for you will certainly need it,” Darium said as he departed and prepared for the final battle of the man-Gods.

I was reluctant to sleep straight away so I took the chisel out and tried to work out if it had any relevance. As I studied it closely I thought that maybe Darium was right and it was a fake because I could not make any progress with it. I had worked out that Alon stood for God (God's purpose seeing light) but I could not see the significance of why it should be a chisel. I knew that one of the chisel's purposes was to shape things because I had seen the artisan's using them to make artefacts but that was as far as I got.

“Well what does it actually stand for?” a voice said making me jump because I had been that enrapt in my thoughts. I looked up to see the robin.

“A chisel,” I said, “That's as far as I've got.”

“I meant the meaning behind it.”

“That only goes with the names,” I said because that was what I'd been told, “Doesn't it?”

“Try it and see.”

I thought awhile and said, “Spiritual Will blesses understanding through God’s purpose.”

“Right, any better?”

“Is it the spirit of purpose?”

“Got it, that should be what shapes your purpose.”

“I never knew, I thought that it just went with the names.”

“You learn something every day. So are you up to some more education?”

“I don't know, maybe I ought to keep my mind uncluttered for when I see Alrebus.”

“Your choice but you never know it might come in handy.”

“Alright then,” I said though I must admit I did not really see the point.

“Love; have you ever heard the expression love thy neighbour as you love thy self?”

“Yes, wasn’t it found engraved on the gateway of Camen the giant?”

“That's right; do you understand what it's actually saying?”

“If you love yourself then you will love your neighbour,” I said because we had always been taught by our guides that you have to love yourself before you could love another.

“Not strictly true. What it is actually saying is that love, spiritual love that is, what you would call service activates the Divine Spirit so by serving others you serve your Self.”

“Oh right, yes I can see that, I’ll bare that in mind.”

“You do that for now you have a purpose to go with the spirit you've won.”

“So anything else?”

“We'll talk about luck if you like; you'll never know when you might need it.”

“Yes,” I said thinking about the journey ahead, “I think I could definitely use some.”

“Now luck is like love, to keep it alive you have to pass it on.”

“Sorry?” I said for I had never heard that before.

“It's all to do with fate, if it honours you with luck then you have to pass it on,” the robin saw that I was none the wiser so it carried on to try and elaborate, “Say if someone bequeaths you six silver bowls.”

I interrupted him there saying, “Wouldn't that be bad luck for he would have to die to do it?”

“Bad luck for him yes. Maybe that was a bad example but the point I'm making is that you got them for nothing.”

“Oh right,” I said understanding.

“And then someone asked you for one, what would you do?”

“See what he has to barter I suppose.”

“It cost you nothing, why should it cost him?”

“What, you mean just give it away?”

“Yes, what have you got to lose? In fact I would say that you had everything to gain for now when he is in a position to help you he will.”

“I'm not sure about that one. What if he doesn't?”

“Then the luck stops but that's not your problem, after all you have played your part in the circle.”

“The circle?”

“What goes around comes around. Most people see it in a negative light but it works positive too. Now this fellow, imagine he feels good about what you have done and somebody asks something of him and he's in a position to do it so he does. The same thing happens to the next and so forth until it eventually comes back to you.”

“Sounds like fantasy.”

“Depends on your perceptions of your fellow man. Now that does not just go for goods it also goes for service. Don't forget too that you might get lucky from someone else's circle for if the society around you becomes one of giving then you will benefit as a whole and individually.”

"No I can't see it; there are too many greedy people about."

"That's their problem but don't forget that you love your neighbour as you love your Self."

"Well there is that," I admitted.

"That should do you for the time being. I'll probably see you when you get back."

"If."

"Well if then," The robin said and flew off

Chapter 4

After the robin had left I thought about what he had said. I must admit that his logic was sound but the reality I found myself in was based on unsound logic. I could see the treachery all around me but I also saw that it generally rebounded back on the perpetrators so they rarely profited. I guess society as a whole had drifted into self consciousness and was content with just the little picture forsaking the greater good. Ironic really for the world was turning against them while they squabbled for scraps like hungry dogs around a table. They craved the external power to the point of nothing else whilst the society around them was falling to the ground. They were that corrupt and deluded by the power that it had blinded them to the world around them and the Earth Mother's wrath. They had forsaken divine laws in their pursuit of land and the enslavement of the population around them and now seemed their retribution. I stopped there for it seemed to ignite the anger inside me and just watched the sun rise up for my time had nearly come.

The shadow of the dolmen grew longer and touched the side of the sheer rock face to my left and so I went to the point of contact. Initially I saw no entrance for it was well hidden but my persistence found a small split in the rock which I could just squeeze through. I felt my way through it as it was too dark to see and came to the fork that Darium had mentioned. I took the right hand path and followed it until I saw daylight and this brought me out into a small clearing bereft of flora. I saw another entrance, much larger this time, so I went inside and carried on through a passageway going downhill at a sharp rate. I must have walked about a quarter of a mile until I came to a large chamber, artificially lit but I could not see what by. The chamber was that deep that I could not see the bottom and for all I knew it might have stretched right down to the palace of the Earth Mother herself. On both sides I saw ledges that went downwards so I took the right hand side as Darium had told me. I carried on my way and as the ledge was still well lit it was easy to see where I was going. I must have walked for about a quarter of an hour until something strange ahead made me stop. The ledge in front of me had been blocked by a large rock, so well blocked in fact that I couldn't get passed it. The rock had moved itself though for I had actually seen it. While I studied the rock for anyway of bypassing it much to my horror a rock behind me pushed out and blocked my retreat.

"Who are you and who do you serve?" a voice bellowed though I did not know from where it came.

"I am Golah son of Tray and I serve the Earth Mother."

"Golah son of Tray who serves the Earth Mother what brings you to the Great Caverns of Nosephi?"

"I seek the guide Shema."

"To what purpose?"

"My purpose is my business," I said and with that the rock to the right of me moved forward cutting down the width of the ledge.

"You are not in the position to refuse to answer my questions."

"You have a question for me?"

"Very well, as my question is beyond your level of understanding the nature of your business is irrelevant for you will not survive."

"That's the chance I have to take."

"Golah son of Tray, the seven mental character flaws that make man mortal, what are they and how did

they come to be?”

“The seven flaws are anger, pride, sloth, lechery, gluttony, envy and avarice. They came to be to fulfil the emptiness where once man's purpose had been.”

“Very well, you may proceed.”

With that the rock in front of me retreated to its original place and I carried on my way. The ledge stopped not far ahead and the rock face turned into a side chamber about ten feet high and twenty feet wide. It was artificially lit but still I was none the wiser as to what by. I saw two openings at the back and so following instruction took the right hand one after first stopping to admire the paintings on the wall. Buffalo, lions and general hunting scenes from a time gone by but to see them flicker in the light was truly awe inspiring. I studied them for around five minutes wanting to stay longer but was driven on in the pursuit of the mantras. The passageway to the right was only about 100 metres long and then I found myself in a chamber about half the size of the last one. There a strange looking man was waiting for me. He had an elongated pointed chin and pointed ears and to all intents looked like a demon. “Golah son of Tray,” he said greeting me, “You have done well to get to this stage but I fear you won't get passed me.”

“Who are you?”

“I am all that has been and all that will be,” the man said vaguely, “To know me is to become me.”

“What?” I said more than a little confused. “The question you have asked me is the question you must answer otherwise you will meet your doom.”

“Is that a wise question to ask me?”

“What?” the man said for now it was his turn to be confused.

“I thought that recognition was your downfall,” I said with a smile that told him I knew.

“Ah,” he said retreating back slightly.

“Pride,” I said and something strange happened. A smell of brimstone hit the air and the man changed before me. Gone were the pointed ears and chin and his hair had changed colour to blond.

“Well worked out Golah, you may proceed.”

“Er, may I ask you something before I go?”

“Sure, well as long as it is not the answer to the next question of course.”

“Of course, no what it is, is I've always been told that recognition was your death.”

“Well it was, but as I was spiritual pride I became reborn, I am now humility.”

“Oh I thought that your death would be final.”

“That's emotional pride; it works on a different level that's all.”

“Well thanks for telling me,” I said and with that the man disappeared. This stunned me I must admit for I had never seen anything like it before. One minute he was there and then just thin air. I looked around for a trap door or something but the floor was just solid rock. I had heard stories about spirits before but I had always taken it as a fable so it was quite a knock to my spectrum of reality. In fact I must say that reality to me had taken quite a battering so really I guess I should have been used to it. It was with more than just a little trepidation that I carried on along my way.

In the middle of the wall facing me was another entrance so I took it and walked down a passageway until I came to another chamber. This was about the size of the last one and was identical in the fact that it had an entrance at roughly the same place. The only difference was that this had a door and when I went to open it I found out that it was locked. I pulled hard but to no avail for it was held firm. I heard a noise of falling rock and quickly turned around to see that the way out was now a slab of rock. Another noise to the left of me and I saw the wall edging towards me as if to crush me. I stood there helpless, expecting the worse but as it got close to me it stopped.

“Who are you and who do you serve,” a different voice said.

“I am Golah son of Tray, I serve the Earth Mother, look what is this?”

“You will address me only when I speak to you,” the voice snapped, “You are in no position to make demands of me.”

I remained quiet, thinking it was wise and the voice continued, “Golah son of Tray, I have a question for you. Answer correctly and you may proceed, answer wrongly and.” with that the wall started coming in from the right of me and I was left in a chamber about six feet wide.

“What is your question,” I said hating to be left in the dark.

“The triad of motion, what are its elements and their relationship with each other?”

I thought awhile before I spoke, “The elements of the triad of motion are fate, being and necessity. Their relationship to each other is that fate is necessity through being, being is fate through necessity and necessity is fate through being.”

The door opened and I walked through the passageway that was behind it until I came to another chamber which was the same size as the last two. In the middle of the room was a man of similar stature and appearance to the demon who stood there glaring at me. “You got lucky,” he said and I recognised the voice as the one that had asked the last question.

“Thank you,” I said for now I was not restricted, “I appreciate your generosity in defeat.”

“Enough,” the man snapped, “Know your place.”

His tone and manner reminded me of how I had spoken to Truro and to hear it put back to me was quite enlightening. I could feel my temper rising but I kept it in check. I thought that I would ignite his instead, “Now, now, I'm not trapped any more. Would you mind keeping your arrogance to yourself as pride with anger has no place near me.”

“What,” he snapped as I had hit the right spot.

“Temper, temper,” I said in a supercilious tone, “Now have you got a question for me as I haven't got the time to stand around and pander to your ego.”

“Right,” he said almost spitting venom, “You want a question, what about this one?”

“Was that the question or just a question?” I said putting him off his flow.

He took deep breaths trying to calm down before saying, “The question I have comes in three parts and is guaranteed to wipe that smile of your face.”

“I'm waiting,” I said still smiling.

“Part one,” he went on unperturbed, “Novak's great white bull Apis does it equate with God?”

“He is God for he stands for God the word blessed with understanding.”

“How did you know that?” he said for I had surprised him.

“Is that the second part,” I said in a mocking innocent tone.

“No,” he said quickly, “Part two, the wise man Azoth, how does he transform your being?”

“He stands for God's mind seeing spiritual wisdom. He transforms your being by changing you to a will of light on one level and giving you the strength to purify your Soul on the other.”

“Right,” he said still surprised, “What is the connection between the two?”

“The word blessed with understanding is the essence of God and God's mind seeing spiritual wisdom is its transforming power.”

With that the ground seemed to open up and swallow the man. I checked the place where he had once been and to my amazement found out that it was solid. Confusion reigned for a while but I had to put it behind me for I still had Shema to see. I saw an entrance to my right and so took it. It was surprisingly well lit which was just as well as the floor descended quite sharply. I was not looking forward to going back for it meant that I had quite a climb and I was not sure how far I had yet to go.

I followed the passageway for what seemed like a mile and it came out to another great cavern. I estimated that it must have been about 150m high and as for its depth I could not really even have a guess for all I saw was darkness. In front of me was a great rope bridge that spanned across to a ledge about 140m away. I had no option but to take it as it was the only way across. The bridge swayed

dramatically as I walked across it and on more than one occasion I thought it would overturn. Some of the floor supports were missing and this only added to my trauma if that was possible for I had always had a strong aversion to heights. A strong cold wind hit me constantly though I did not know where it came from and this in itself had a very destabilizing effect on the bridge. The journey seemed to last ages and the adverse conditions around me made me rue the fact that I had took it. I looked behind me debating whether to go back but that journey was longer by that time so I had no choice but to go forward.

Eventually I got across and made my way along the ledge until I got to an opening to my right. I entered it and followed the passage for quite a length of time, twisting and turning all the time and always downwards. I came to another chamber which had two doorways at the back. I took the right one and followed it until I came to another chamber. This one was highly decorated with ornamental pillars of red gold and a great ceiling inlaid with silver. I waited for a while for it seemed the right thing to do.

I did not have to wait too long before the ground opened up and the demon arrived. He looked different though for gone was his elongated chin and ears and his hair had turned a golden shade of blond.

Chapter 5

“Now you could have given me a lift,” I said by way of greeting, “It would have saved me a lot of trouble.”

“Didn't you know that it is the journey to the answer,” the man said with a smile.

“And what a journey,” I said noting his change in character, “That bridge is dangerous.”

“Ah the Bridge of Sighs,” the man said.

“The Bridge of Sighs?” I repeated as a question.

“Well I bet it must have caused you a few deep breaths,” the man said with a laugh.

“Relief at the end was the biggest one. So have you got a question for me?”

“Patience, for that is what I am now. So tell me, and this is not the question by the way, how do you get me?”

“Patience,” I said, “I'm not sure.” and quietly thanked myself that that was not the question as I would have been sunk.

“By telling yourself that you are not quite ready for it yet but not to worry because when you are it will be ready for you.”

“Maybe,” I said because I could see the logic in it, “I'll give it a go.”

“Good, you do that; you'll be surprised at the outcome. So now you are ready for the last question, what is it?”

“What,” I said in surprise, “Shouldn't that be something that I had to ask you or are you saying that I have to ask it?”

“No, that is the question that you have to answer, what is it?”

I was confused as 'it' could be anything. I had come so far just to see it fall before me. Despair came over me and then something strange happened. It was like I had been taken over and yet it was still me. I found myself saying, “Some say that it is indefinable and yet it is central to my being. Some say that it is part of me yet it is beyond my understanding. It is the essence of my purpose yet they say that it lies beyond my grasp, it is the food that I must feed on, it is blessed wisdom.”

“Congratulations,” the man said and disappeared and I found myself with a heightened sense of awareness. I must have got it right I reasoned though even with this new sense of awareness I was none the wiser. I had to put it behind me though as I still had Shema to see. I saw a doorway at the far end of the room and entering it walked the short distance until I came to a large well lit cavern. It was there

that I saw her. Well I think it was her for legend had described her as a paragon of beauty unsurpassed by anything in the land of time but she was well er. no cave painting.

“You have done well to get this far,” she said begrudgingly.

“Are you Shema the guide?” I said for I was not sure.

“And you are Golah, son of Tray,” she said not answering me. “What do you want from me?”

“I have the Necklace of Nine Whispers and I would like the mantras of motion that accompany them.”

“If you had the necklace then you would already have the mantras, well that is unless you stole it of course.”

“No,” I protested, “I won it fair and square in the Wisdom Game against Diamund of the forge.”

“A thief and a liar, it is well known that Diamund of the forge died in the first battle of the man-Gods.”

“Well known by the ignorant perhaps, for Diamund of the forge up until recently lived in these self same hills but you knew that already.”

“I have to test your understanding; you might not be all that you say you are.”

“I understand your concern but the fact that I got this far should be a fair gauge.”

“Well true, and you now want the mantras, tricky that.”

“Don't tell me that you have forgotten them as well,” I said, my hope turning to despair.

“No I know them but I am afraid of the consequences of me giving you that power.”

“The consequences?” I said for not knowing what the power was I was unaware as whether there would be any consequences to it.

“Yes, look at the first war of the man-Gods, that was one of them.”

“Surely that was brought about by the higher Gods refusal to share it. That was more to do with the higher Gods than with the power itself.”

“Well alright,” She conceded, “But what about the other wars, they came about because of the man-Gods abuse of their power.”

“They never had the power though. Maybe if they had, had the full truth they would not have been blinded by it.”

“I doubt it for their actions have told me otherwise. They used the power that they did have to oppress and enslave the people around them. I would hate to think what would have happened to the world if they had had even more.”

“That logic sounds familiar, wasn't that the same logic that the higher Gods used to hold onto it in the first place?”

“Maybe its sound logic then.”

“Well I must admit that I am speaking out of ignorance as I don't know the nature of the power but I have heard that it will help me with my purpose so surely that's a good thing.”

“There are plenty of purposes that you could follow without the mantras, that reason falls quickly?”

“There is some truth in what you say but all these purposes come from anger or pride as I know to my cost. There is only one true purpose that I want to follow and that is love.”

“A very noble purpose,” she said and I noticed a slight mocking tone to her voice, “Though that might actually change when you come to know the mantras.”

“Why should that be?”

“Who knows the power of delusion better than a higher God, I'm sure they had good intent at the start.”

“I can't say of the future for I don't know what it will bring,” I admitted, “Though I think that I know in my heart that it wouldn't delude me.”

“As I said they all had good intent at the start.”

“Well I cannot answer for them as I do not know what's in their mind, but me personally I will make sure that they don't.”

“How can you prove that to me when you can't prove it to yourself?”

“I know my mind and I know my strengths and weaknesses. Have you a test?”

“A test?”

“You want me to prove it to you, well that's the only way that I can think off. If you have no test for me than all your accusations to my character are just groundless slurs.”

“Well you have answered five questions to get here so I guess another three will not hurt.”

“Do you mean the Wisdom Game?”

“A common drinking game I think not. Answer them correctly and you get the mantras, answer them wrongly and you don't.”

“Then I await you pleasure.”

“Golah, son of Tray, what is my name?”

“You are Alrebus known to all as Shema the guide.” I said and watched her squirm slightly.

“How did you know that?”

“Is that that second question?”

“No,” she said straight away, “I'm just curious that's all.”

“Well you could say that a little fly told me,” I said with a laugh.

“You can understand the language of the flies,” she said in surprise, “How can that be?”

“Curiosity again,” I said, “I got that gift when I got the Dagger of Diamund of the forge.”

“Really you have that. You are quite evolved for a man-God. Maybe I should be asking something a little more difficult then.”

“Your questions.”

“Golah son of Tray, the nine orders of Divine Heralds, what are they and what is the meaning behind them?”

I thought awhile and said, “The nine orders of Divine Heralds come in three triads, the first one is Cherubim, Seraphim and Thrones, the second is Kyriotetes, Dynamis and Exsual and the last is Archai, Archangels and angels. I'm afraid that I will need a little time to put them together.”

“Fair enough, I'm surprised that you got so far so be my guest.”

I thought for quite a while for it was quite a task before me but eventually I said, “To get to the meaning behind them you have to form three more triads. The first triad incorporates the first name of the original three, the second the second and the third the third.”

“Very good, and the meaning?”

I thought some more and said, “Triad one is

Spiritual Will- through knowing, loving self blesses life, work blessed with knowing blessing sees wisdom, wisdom through understanding God. Knowing Spiritual Will God's blessing.

Triad two Understanding-through knowing God's spiritual word (Blessed with life) transformation blessed with light. God's life blessed understanding (God's knowing Spiritual Will) God's light, will through God's purpose understood.

Triad three. Spiritual wisdom-Knowing (seeing light) and understanding through insight understood, loving understanding blesses God (God's purpose). God's light-will through God's purpose understood.”

“How do you know this, its loving spiritual wisdom? Did Diamund of the forge tell you?”

“No, it was a spider actually.”

“A spider, are you talking about Nebu?”

“Yes that's right; I gave him a lift and found his conversation quite enlightening.”

“I'll bet. So you know loving spiritual wisdom and can understand the language of the flies. That puts your request in a different light.”

“What? What do you mean?”

“Don't you think that you have enough power,” She said much to my surprise.

“What, what is this? What do you mean I have enough power? Who are you to judge?”

“I am the one that has the power you desire. That makes me judge, jury and executioner.”

“Wait,” I said totally confused now, “What is actually happening here? I have answered two questions that you have asked. I have gone two thirds of the way to prove myself.”

“Yes you have done very well but when you came here I did not know about your power. You are already a higher God, an enlightened Soul with a purpose to serve. You don't need these mantras.”

“No, no wait a moment we had a deal. You can't change your mind half way through. That's not fair.”

“Sometimes life's not fair what can I say?”

“No,” I snapped, “I have answered two of your questions already so don't give me any crap or by Adam's brow (oops think that must have been something I ate repeating on me) you will regret it.”

“Right, you want a question to try and prove your worth do you?”

“Yes, I've come this far.”

“Alright then, Golah son of Tray, what are the Nine Mantras of Motion and what purpose do they serve.”

“What,” I said spitting venom. I felt myself reach for my sword but stopped myself just in time. Instead I said, “You self righteous, sanctimonious piece of horse dung. Who the hell do you think you are?”

“I am the one that holds the key. I have the responsibility of looking after the power. If I gave it to the wrong person who knows what could happen.”

“Cut the crap, I'm not interested. It's the same lame excuse that the higher Gods used to hold on to it.”

“What are you trying to say?”

“I thought that I had articulated it quite well. Delusions of grandeur. In fact I would go as far as to say that what I've seen of this power and the effects on the people it touches I don't think that I want it.”

“What? Are you relinquishing your claim to it?”

“Yes, why not. I've seen what it's done to you so that must be the consequences of it.”

“What do you mean what it's done to me,” She snapped angrily.

“Well look at you, I've heard legends of your beauty but all that I see before me is an old hag. I've heard legends of you generous nature but all I see is a harridan clinging to her power for that is the only thing left that makes her different.”

“How dare you,” She shouted, “I am Shema the guide, you will speak to me with respect to uphold the dignity of my vocation.”

“Some vocation, you are Alrebus who lives her life as a lie. I think I've wasted enough time.”

I turned around and started my long journey back. She called after me but I just ignored her for it would have been some shallow excuse to try and appease her conscience. I was soon back on the Bridge of Sighs and crossing it without fear for my temper seemed to carry me. By the time I had crossed it I had calmed down enough to reason that I had learned enough from my adventure and gained in wisdom dramatically. This did not stop me from cutting the rope bridge and trapping her in her delusion (a little hurt pride maybe but hey I'm still growing, I still get the occasional hiccup)

I found myself outside after around thirty minutes so I sat awhile to try and work out my next move.

“So how did you get on?” a voice said and I looked up to see the robin.

“Waste of time, deluded old hag, mind you I did learn a lot on the way I suppose.”

“Good, I'm glad to see that you took it well.”

“Not much choice really.”

“So the Nine Mantras of Motion, what does it actually mean to you?”

“A lost cause,” I said down heartedly.

“Not if you look deeper.”

“Oh,” I said half heartedly, “Er. Spiritual wisdom and light (blessed light) through life of God's light.

Wisdom knowing God's understanding (seeing the word) light seeing wisdom (Blessed seeing light)"

"Have you the understanding?"

"Well not really."

"It comes in three parts but it might be a good idea if I simplify it first."

"I won't argue with that."

"Spiritual wisdom and light through life of God's light, blessed light is God's light so it should be bracketed.

"Right." I said making a note of it.

"Wisdom knowing God's understanding, that would be from seeing the word so that part would be bracketed. And light seeing wisdom that would be blessed seeing light so that would be bracketed, any the wiser?"

"Not really."

"What's the first one?" the robin said guiding me.

"Loving spiritual wisdom," I said just guessing really.

"Good, and the second?"

"Spiritual wisdom." I said, a little surer this time.

"Yes but it is also knowing for that is God's understanding, so what about the third?"

"Wisdom."

"And ain't that the truth." the robin said and flew off.

The Sermon of the Mouse

“So what is truth?” a voice said straight after the robin had flown.

I looked to where it had come from and saw a snake. “Well I can't say that I understand it but I wouldn't say I was none the wiser,” I answered.

“Ah, you see with the truth you have to get the full story and that is the ultimate truth.”

“If you take more than you need someone is going to have to go without.”

“Well that's on one level. Think of it as spiritual wisdom through love (God's purpose) wisdom blessing life (God's wisdom through wisdom knowing loving spiritual wisdom). The first part is saying that through doing God's purpose you get the divine spirit and this feeds your understanding. The second part is says that by knowing loving spiritual wisdom you know God's wisdom so you have God's wisdom and God's understanding through doing his purpose. You evolve in balance and walk with God.”

“Right, I think I understand that.”

“Good, so what now, are you in a hurry?”

“Not really, I've got nowhere to go.”

“Then rest awhile and we'll talk about the golden division, do you know it?”

“Yes, it's what gives nature its balance and harmony, 1.618, I think.”

“That's right Phi the spiritual word blessed, do you understand the components?”

“The components,” I said going deep into thought, “I thought it was just a geometrical term I didn't realise it went deeper.”

“You'll be surprised, think of one as the divine and the rest its components. The six spiritual laws, the collective conscious and the eight natural laws.”

“Well I know the spiritual laws; I'm not sure about the natural ones though.”

“Right, we'll clear that up then. They are that each organism is to be adapted to the best of its ability to survive in the habitat around it, the climate around it, the social climate around it, defend and hunt, find its niche in the balance of the eco system, find itself a mate for the perpetuation of the species, give its off spring the best chance that it can and finally to evolve to its purpose.”

“I've heard the last one; theorists use it quite a lot.”

“Oh yes, it's not really a law as such, think of it as time, it's the medium that all the laws must travel.”

“Yes, I can see that. I didn't realise that it worked with number as well as letters. So what about the square root of seven then, I was always told that it was associated with spiritual wisdom.”

“Well it works out at 2.591, wisdom and understanding and comprises the five states of destiny, the nine mantras of motion and an enlightened Soul with a purpose to serve.”

“I know the five states of destiny; I don't know how it fits in.”

“Afraid you only know the wisdom. Think of sub man as instinct, man as intellect, giant as spiritual negative, man-God as spiritual positive and higher God as divine.”

“Right, and the nine mantras?”

“Good that you turned them down, you serve me not the other way round otherwise you'll quickly get proud.”

“I sort of guessed that, so what actually is pride then, I've been trying to understand it in the hope I might lose it.”

“Pride is just a reflected God complex nothing more. You know people are actually proud to be proud. Well you would be I suppose for like purpose it is a self creating image. Now a downside to pride is paranoia. You see if pride is self consciousness paranoia must be negative self consciousness. I mean let's be honest what makes you so special that everyone is out to get you.”

"I never thought of it like that."

"Just think of it as after the intellect fell out with the imagination she started seeing others behind his back."

"Sorry?"

"I guess I had better take that apart. You are both your understanding and your purpose, that is your feminine and masculine side. Pride has no purpose but to create itself, your ego, it comes from the intellect so it does not have the imagination to see its true purpose for it hasn't the understanding. To put it another way it sees itself as God but it does not have the imagination to see what God actually is. Now the imagination has no purpose so it creates its own, its paranoia, for it is out of balance with the intellect and from this you get guilt"

"Right and how do I get rid of my guilt?"

"You have to find your true purpose and tell yourself 'I'm not here'"

"What, how would that work?"

"You remind yourself that you are there to serve a purpose so from an ego point of view you have found your purpose and become it. This shift in consciousness will get rid of your self-consciousness and you will blend into balance for when you truly understand your purpose you become both your purpose and your understanding of your purpose."

"When you think as one you become one," I said upon realisation, "And what happens if you keep your pride?"

"You get stuck in the philosopher stoned mentality."

"What?"

"Which came first, the chicken or the egg? You will only see the small picture, the time factor, and miss the real questions like what is your true purpose in life or what is the essence of your being. We'll call it the rooster factor for that is what created you. You see you were created for a purpose by a purpose (think of the grail). So which came first?"

"The rooster."

"In more ways than one."

"So what about anger then," I said thinking about my earlier outburst.

"Well it's the tendency to destruction as opposed to love the tendency to life. It generally ignites when your ego is threatened. It feeds on emotional turmoil and works through your understanding. It's actually a trinity; emotional anger would be personal indignation of the injustice to your being which is the experience of life and its effect on you. Mental anger would be righteous indignation, the understanding of life and its effect on you and spiritual anger which is envy and the basis of its existence."

"Sorry?" I said not understanding the last point.

"It envy's love for that is Creation and life eternal."

"Right."

"Now two points from that. God is not a spiritual being but a state of mind so that makes Him mental and from a god of anger point of view he comes over as righteous indignation."

"Yes."

"And its evolution in reverse."

"Sorry?"

"Well normal evolution is wisdom, wisdom through understanding and wisdom through experience."

"Wisdom, spiritual wisdom and loving spiritual wisdom."

"That's right, now anger is envy, indignation through understanding and indignation through experience. Love pulls you to life eternal and anger to emotional destruction. Think of evil-I'm only a reflection but hell I've got to live."

“Yes I think I understand it. Hell would be the emotional turmoil and that is what it feeds on so that is its life.”

“Good, now evil exists to serve a purpose, do you know what that purpose is?”

“To stop me from my purpose?” I said just guessing really.

“Very good, its reflected love with an ego.”

“Sorry?”

“It's a power thing, think of God's love as the power to give so reflected love would be the power to take and a one way journey to a negative god complex. This power has been the basis of most societies and civilisations and came about through the misreading of a natural law.”

“It did?”

“Everything must find its niche in the balance of the eco system. It got misrepresented and from it came the chain of being.”

“Ah,” I said remembering how I'd been with Truro, “So we are all equal in the eyes of the divine. What about the divine rite then?”

“You have to earn it. You do it through service. If you think it makes you better then you are deluding yourself and transgressing the Law of Equality. Bare that in mind and it might help you to control your pride.”

“Right.”

“Judge not lest ye be judged. It's not your place and its detrimental to your evolution for it comes from your ego. Now man being a rational animal has the power to know good from evil which having created evil he was half way there, and from this he got judgemental. Now nature does not judge as it evolves everything to the best of its ability. Fate is the actual judge. It was put in place to uphold the divine laws one of which is what you sow so shall you reap.”

“Judge not lest ye be judged.”

“Got it. Fate judges indiscriminately for it is only obeying laws. Understand that truly and it might help your life flow a lot smoother. It judges through God which is the imagination so it might help you to be less judgemental if you say 'my God only judges me so go and get your own.’”

“Alright,” I said taking it in.

“Now onto destiny, the triad of motive, love, anger and pride. This is what controls your destiny so make sure you choose wisely.”

“What you sow.”

“Good, finally the divine. Think of it as a father figure, my Father in Heaven kind of thing. He is personal to you and everyone of His children and to say that He isn't would be to call Him a bad father. He does not judge, what true father does, He's there to guide you so one day you might become one. He is your spirit, your maker if you like and through Him you find your true purpose, me. That should keep you busy for a while. So good luck Golah, son of Tray, light and love for you are now the power,” and with that the snake slid away.

I thought for a while after the snake had gone more for the reason that I was in no hurry as I had nowhere to go. The snake although it was a rattler talked good sense and gave me a whole new perspective about life and living in general. I pondered on pride and anger for around five minutes when a voice interrupted me. It was the spider, “So are you up to slaying Camen the giant?”

“What, you're not trying to tell me that he exists.” It seemed that what with Diamund of the forge and Alrebus reality was turning into fantasy.

“No,” The spider said and I'm sure I heard him laugh, “Are you up to taking the final step?”

“Sure, what does it involve?”

“I'll take you through it step by step,” The spider said and I'm sure I heard the noise again, “First the angel chants, can you recall it?”

“Er yes,” I said and recited it, “Alif lam Mim, Alif lam mim sad, alif lam ra, alif lam mim ra, Kaf haya ain sad, a hath sin mim, ya sin, saad, ha him/her mim 'ain sin, qaf. qaf.

“Right,” the spider said, “Or to put it another way

1 God, (God’s purpose blesses the word), God’s purpose, (God’s life), life blesses life

2 God, (God’s purpose) blesses the word, (God’s purpose, and God’s life) life blesses life understanding God’s transformation.

3 God, (God’s purpose) blesses the word, (God’s purpose), God’s life knowing God

4 God, (God’s purpose) blesses the word, (God’s purpose-God’s life), life blesses life knowing God

5 work of God, (the word), spirit of God blessed by God, (God’s blessed light).

6 understanding God’s transformation, (wisdom of God), spirit of God’s wisdom, (God’s spiritual understanding blesses light), life blesses life.

7 blessed by God, (understanding blesses light)

8 understanding God, (God’s transforming spirit), God’s life blesses life

9 spirit of God’s life blesses life, (God’s blessed life)

10 understanding blessed light

11 the Soul, God, the word

12 the Soul God’s word

Now is that any better?”

“Er no,” I said sheepishly. I suppose with all the new information I had received I was having difficulty in focussing properly.

“Well not to worry, we’ll take it one step at a time and hopefully it will become clearer.”

“Hopefully,” I said in agreement.

“Good, Alif lam mim, level one. First of all do you know what the word is?”

“Be.”

“Very good, existence though not life as it has not been blessed with God’s purpose.”

“Sorry?”

“It hasn’t got a Soul, a mountain can be but it doesn’t mean it has life.”

“Right.”

“So God, God’s purpose blesses the word is the spirit of life, the second part should be bracketed. Now God’s purpose, God’s life in brackets, what does that say?”

“God’s purpose is God’s life.”

“Right, and God’s purpose is to love, that is the creative force and also another of his spirits so life blesses life means a mergence of the two. A being with the ability to recreate, flora and basic fauna. So that’s level 1, are you still with me?”

“Yes I can go with that.”

“Alif lam mim sad then, level 2, God blesses the word, life blesses life. I have bracketed God’s purpose and God’s life after the word for that is what it is made off. The first God’s purpose is also bracketed as it is another aspect of love, which is?”

“Understanding.”

“Good, God’s transformation is the path that the Soul must take on its journey to reach its God-head and understanding this helps the Soul to grow for it is its life that’s why it is also bracketed. Now this understanding is instinct, another word for it would be intuition. It is the third spirit of God and the channel to the Earth Mother and heralds the start of a memory; you’ll find it in the lower realms of fauna.”

“Right,” I said taking it in.

“So level 3, alif lam ra God blesses the word, God’s life knowing God. Now from understanding comes discernment that explains the first bracket, the second is bracketed for the word is now God’s purpose.

With the development of discernment you get the knowledge of good and evil and become like Gods, you have the power to think for yourself.”

“Right.”

“Level 4 then, alif lam mim ra God blesses the word, life blesses life, it has been bracketed the same as level 2 for pretty much the same reason. Now knowing God as opposed to understanding God’s transformation what spirit does that invoke?”

“Wisdom.”

“Good, you have developed an intellect which grows with the spirit of wisdom. You also now evolve on two levels, wisdom and understanding.”

“Yes, I can see that.”

“You actually become two aspects on level three with thought and memory the evolution of this starts on level four. Now level five kaf ha ya ain. Work of God, spirit of God blessed by God. Work of God, the word has been bracketed for it becomes the work of God.”

“Sorry?” I said confused.

“It means you become a bit more charitable to your fellow man. This helps in the purification of the Soul for you start to lose a little of your self-consciousness.”

“Right,” I said understanding.

“Now spirit of God blessed by God, God’s blessed light in brackets is spiritual wisdom and this helps the expansion of your spiritual consciousness so this level is talking about divine service on one hand and knowledge of the divine on the other, as above so below.”

“Ok,” I said taking it in.

“Level 6 then, sad ta ha tah sin mim. Now understanding God’s transformation is the first part. God’s transformation is enlightenment which is the wisdom of God so that is bracketed. The spirit of God’s wisdom is your spirit and that is the second part. It is also known as light so God’s spiritual understanding blesses light, life blesses life is talking about the merge of spirit and Soul or wisdom and understanding and this happens when your Soul is pure enough to merge. This happens in your sleep.”

“Yes, I remember it well.”

“Level 7 then ya sin. Blessed by God with understanding blesses light in brackets, God’s blessing and a shift in consciousness from wisdom to understanding basically that is when you meet your maker and your old self dies.”

“Scary that.”

“Had to be I’m afraid. Now level 8. saad ha mim, understanding God, God would be God’s transforming spirit so that would be bracketed, God’s life blesses life. From the shift in consciousness you lose your ego and take on a more spiritual life putting the welfare of others before yourself. You also get the spirit of knowing for you now have an opening to the divine.”

“Right,” I said taking it in.

“Level 9 then, ha mim ain. Spirit of God’s life blesses life, God’s blessed light in brackets. The spirit of God’s life is the spirit of purpose, the final of the seven spirits. You find your true purpose in life and that is to serve the Earth Mother. You are now God’s blessed light so that is why it has been bracketed.”

“Yes,” I said understanding.

“Level 10, sin, understanding blessed light. Well blessed light is loving spiritual wisdom and by understanding it you purify your Self of your ego's negative memory.”

“Sorry?”

“Your emotional pain accumulated through the suffering you have endured,” the spider said and I’m sure it laughed again, “So basically sin causes it and sin takes it away.”

“Oh right,” I said dismissively

“Level 11 then, Qaf, the Soul, God, the word. The Soul is actually a transformer, its purpose is to transform wisdom and understanding of wisdom into knowing for in the evolution of life you are what you know. It is located at the back of the head and called the limbic system, God is your understanding and is located on one side of your brain hemisphere and the word is God’s purpose and located on the other. Level 11 is actually the true understanding of your purpose, the ultimate truth. Now the final one I'll leave to you.”

“What!” I said in surprise

“Level 12 Qaf, the Soul, God’s word. You should be able to grasp it.”

I thought back to what the snake said about when you truly understand your purpose you become both your understanding and your purpose so I said, “When you think as one you are one.”

“Go on.”

“Well basically as you understand your purpose both sides of your brain are in balance. Also as your Soul is fully transformed you become an enlightened Soul with a purpose to serve. Three becomes one and you are at one with your Self.”

“Very good, so that's it then. What's your next move?”

“I haven't really thought about it, what with one war or another things don't seem too safe.”

“South sounds good to me; you can hide in the land of man a lot more easily.”

“Really?”

“Yes, and as you are going that way you may as well give me a lift as its getting too cold for me here.”

“Oh right.”

“Well I don't want to pull rank on you but it is your purpose to serve.”

“Alright,” I said picking it up and standing up, “You're the boss.”

“So well,” the spider said as I walked along, “Let's get to the real questions in life.”

“Sorry?” I said slightly confused as I thought I had covered it all.

“Is that really Novak's ring you're wearing,” the spider said and I'm sure that laughing noise came back,

“By the way where did you meet him?”

(I met him at the candy store.....you get the picture)

The Mirror Cracked

Once upon a time in the land of the cavern bear lived the people of the Indus. A proud nomadic race of tall dynamic stature, they were held in respect by all the tribes around them and prospered well in this environment. They were ruled by Siga son of Nark who was renowned for his wisdom and prowess with the lance and his ability to see into the future. It was he who saw the arrival of Golah, son of Tray and the devastation that he would bring but that does not concern us just yet so I probably shouldn't have mentioned it.

The tale begins at a council of war not long after the annihilation of the southern colony of the man-Gods of which the Indus had played a major role. The five main tribes had gathered and in a mood of jubilation although Siga had reservations. All went quiet as he stood to speak, "Warriors of the south, the battle might be over but the war is not won. We should be strengthening our borders for the man-Gods impending arrival. I cannot see them lying down and letting us get away with it."

"I fear they have trouble of their own," a large heavily scarred man said interrupting him. It was Colon, son of Casper, "The people of the Great Valley have heard talk of faction fighting and major unrest with the giants of the west. They have not the manpower to attack us nor do we have the manpower to defend the border for soon it will be the time of the great harvest."

"I too have heard of the troubles to the north," Siga said, "But still I say that the war is not over and we should be ever vigilant."

"Whilst our crops waste away in the fields," Colon said, "No Siga for the people of the Great Valley the war is over. We have rid the menace once and for all."

"There speaks the voice of a coward," Valum son of Vega from the people of the Far Mountains said as ridding the south of the man-Gods had left a void and quite a powerful struggle to fill it, "While man-Gods still walk this land we are at war. Was it not they that enslaved us?"

"I know our history," Colon said, "As I know of yours Valum son of Vega. Was it not your people that ran at the Battle of the Trees?"

"That's a lie," Valum said and drew his sword, "It is well known the prowess of the people of the Far Mountains. I demand the honour to uphold their cause."

"Well that must be the first time in history," Colon said drawing his sword.

"Wait," Siga said intervening, "We are not at war with each other. We do not turn on each other like dogs at a table that is the domain of the man-God. Our strength is in our unity as our weakness is their strength."

"An insult must be appeased," Valum said, "It will not lie down."

"And I am no coward," Colon said, "This can only be settled one way."

"Tomorrow at the foot of Death Mountain," Valum said, "When the sun hits noon you will hit the floor," and stormed off without waiting for a reply.

"It has been said," Colon said, "So it will be done," and he too left the scene.

"Hot heads," Siga said, "So what of the borders?"

"The war is over," Stet son of Uther of the people of the Lakes said, "The fighting is done. Our homes and families beckon. I am sorry Siga, I am no coward and have proved myself on many occasions but I do not perceive the man-God as a threat any more."

"You will be sadly missed, what about the people of the Fens, what say you Goth son of Tract?"

"We too have homes, sorry Siga," and he too left. Siga watched him go with a heavy air of disappointment and a strong foreboding for the future.

Meanwhile to the north Golah son of Tray was heading Siga's way. Accompanied by Nebu the spider he was in a tired but happy mood.

“So Golah,” Nebu said with the high hills of Zarg in the distance, “How do you think you will fare in the land of the mortals?”

“A strange barbaric emotional breed, I should not think they will take too kindly to me.”

“Not as Golah son of Tray for your pedigree is too well known. I think it would be wise to adopt another name.”

“Sure, have you one in mind?”

“Glah of the western giants, travelling to escape the devastation of the north.”

“Sounds like out of the cauldron and into the fire, just to give you a little holiday.”

“No, it’s more than that. You are to get the Mirror of Madness from Siga son of Nark. With this mirror you’ll be able to see into the future.”

“The Mirror of Madness, I’ve never heard of it, nor this Siga son of Nark.”

“He is well known in his field, a mighty warrior renowned for his wisdom so be careful. The mirror you would probably know as the Looking Glass of Alrebus.”

“That sanctimonious bitch, but yes I have heard of it. How did Siga manage to get hold of it?”

“From the guide Shula, he is off her line.”

“He has the knowledge?”

“No, he lacks the true understanding of the man-God but watch him he’s still a worthy adversary.

Unlike the rest of the tribes of the south his tribe, the people of the Indus have not been blinded by land and crave the wisdom of truth. Like the man-God they are nomadic, watch him well.”

“I’ll bare that in mind, so tell me about the people of the south.”

“Not much to say really, the Indus are the main force, nomadic but the other tribes are different. In fact I am willing to wager that with the expulsion of the man-Gods you’ll be walking into quite a wasp’s nest.”

“Thanks.”

“Not to worry for their weakness will be your strength. Now the main players in this power struggle are Valum son of Vega, Judge of the people of the Far Mountains and Colon son of Casper, Judge of the people of the Great Valley. They call themselves kings though so bare that in mind. You also have the people of the Lakes who are led by Stet son of Uther and the people of the Fens led by Goth son of Tract. In fact it might be a good idea to acquaint you of their ways so you might find it easier to fit in.”

“I won’t argue with that, we’ll start with King Siga.”

“Protector, the Indus do not have kings for they are not tied to the land.”

“Sorry?”

“The welfare of the king is believed to be tied in with the land, they are a strange superstitious lot these wisdomers.”

“Wisdomers?”

“They have their consciousness in the wisdom side of the brain so they lack true understanding. Now protector Siga is their leader in times of war but in times of peace it’s every man for himself. Up until their expulsion the man-Gods kept them in their place, but now.”

“You mean I could be walking straight into a blood bath.” Golah said stopping in his tracks.

“Almost certainly, that’s why I’m trying to tell you of their ways, it could keep you alive.”

“Oh, I’ll be quiet then.”

“Right, we’ll start again then. Man though he thinks he’s rational is emotional by nature and so has a conflict between reason and desire. Generally his desire is stronger than his reason, bare that in mind and you will fare well.”

“Sure, anything else?”

“They do not play the Wisdom Game so you will not be able to win the mirror. They are ritualistic though and rely heavily on ceremony. To question their honour and integrity is the ultimate

insult and as they are, especially the Indus hot headed you could end up in a lot of trouble.”

“They sound like man-Gods.”

“It will be just like going home then,” Nebu said and made that strange laugh like noise.

To the south time had moved on and evening was making its first appearance as Siga looked into the Mirror of Madness. Mist shrouded it at first but after its disappearance a woman's face appeared

“So Siga,” She said in a soft, slow tone. “Your allies are deserting you and turning on each other, they think that the war is over.”

“Maybe they are right, I have heard stories of mass devastation, they are too busy turning on each other to be a threat to us.”

“The man-God as a race is finished but the war is not over as you have the Earth Mother to deal with. Her coldness will drive the giants and the men of the north towards you in search of land. If you are weak they will drive you into the great glass sea.”

“And death, how much time do we have?”

“Many moons, many, many moons but by then you will nearly have destroyed yourselves so you will be no match for them. The tribes need a purpose to keep themselves together otherwise they will turn on each other.”

“It has already started.”

“That will just blow over, Valum is all bluster. When the drinks wore off he will be a different person. Your real threat is on the way; he has come for me and make no mistake he intends to have me.”

“Over my dead body, who is this so called threat?”

“Golah, son of Tray and believe me he is a real threat.”

“I have heard his name mentioned,” Siga said going deep into thought, “Isn't he some sort of mercenary?”

“In a way, it was he who killed the last of the troglodytes. He is an agent for fate although he doesn't know it.”

“Then we are lost for no one can go against fate.”

“Not necessarily, he'll die the same as the next man. Be vigilant and you will find him.” with that the woman's face started to haze and the clouds returned.

“Golah son of Tray.” he said aloud before turning to Tonac, his chief advisor and saying, “What do we know of this man?”

“He is a man-God, he has a certain renown amongst his people and many legends have sprung up in his honour. They say that he killed the giant Degar with a single blow of his sword. Took his head as a souvenir and ate his brains because he was hungry.”

“Sounds like a demon, what say you Tonac?”

“I would say so, a very dangerous man and no mistake.”

“He should be stopped at the border; blast these land lovers and their small mindedness. I will go myself and meet him man to man, is my chariot ready?”

“It always is Lord Protector,” a large guard that was standing behind Tonac said.

“Then destiny awaits, call out the guards,” and quickly left his tent.

Meanwhile in the north Golah had already crossed the border and was looking for shelter for the night... “No caves, nothing, and it looks like it's going to be a rainy night.”

“There's a dugout over to your left,” Nebu said, “It's already inhabited so you'll have to use your charm.”

Golah made his way to the left and quickly found the dugout “Is there anybody there,” he said as he got there. “I need shelter for the night.”

A tall Goddess of a woman left the dugout and holding a lance to Golah's throat said, “Who are you to make demands of me?”

“A stranger to your parts in search of shelter from the impending storm. I am Glah of the west, who are you to hold a spear to my throat?”

With that the woman lowered her spear and said, “You cannot be too careful these days, there still might be a few man-Gods on the prowl.”

“I have heard they are no more in the south, that’s why I came down, to get out of all the carnage they are causing.”

“I have heard that it is grim up north. I am Silka of the Indus; you are welcome to take shelter. You can tell me all about the north for it is a place I would like to visit.”

“Not at the moment I fear,” Golah said with a laugh, “And I thank you for your hospitality,” then followed her inside. It was a large dugout which could have slept about 20 which was quite a large party for the Indus at peace.

“So Glah, are you a drinking man?”

“It’s been known, if the company is good.”

“Time will tell on that one,” Silka said and took out a large goatskin from under one of the blankets that lay on the floor. She poured them both a drink and said, “So tell me of the north, is it true that the man-Gods take heads as souvenirs?”

“I have seen it myself,” Golah said getting into the spirit of things, “One they call Golah, there must have been twenty skulls around him. I could not tell which was really his.”

“And they eat children that’s what I heard anyway?”

“By the bucketful, er. Have you never seen one?”

“No.”

“Oh.” Golah said thinking it strange but not pursuing it. He took a drink from his vessel and said, “I have heard great things about the Indus and protector Siga. You are from a great people renowned for their hospitality and wisdom. Your name is known all around the north.”

“As is your Golah son of Tray, I’ve been expecting you.”

“What?” Golah said, completely taken back by her change in character.

“I am the guide Shula, immortal like yourself. You have come for my mirror I believe.”

“That’s right, one way or the other.”

“Oh you are most welcome to it, I will even help you.”

“You will?” Golah said with more than a hint of suspicion.

“For a price that is,” Shula said and his suspicions were allayed somewhat.

“And what might that be?”

“The Dagger of Diamund of the forge, I believe that it’s in your possession.”

“I have it but I want to keep it, your price is too high.”

“You’ll be able to see into the future, not a bad swap for a cheap metal dagger.”

“That cheap metal dagger is my line to the Earth Mother as you well know. Besides a woman of your beauty should not be carrying daggers I think I might have something more befitting.”

“You have?” Shula said, it was her turn to be suspicious.

“The Necklace of Nine Whispers.”

“I have heard of it, where did you get it?”

“Of Diamund of the forge himself, in the high hills of Zarg.”

“How can that be, I thought he was dead.”

“He is now, so what of the necklace?”

“Let me see it,” Shula said and Golah took it out his bag and passed it over to her.

“He was indeed a great man,” Shula said looking at the exquisite design of the necklace, “You have a deal.”

“I thought that Siga was of your line, some would call that treachery.”

“The ignorant maybe. I have my reasons Golah. Now I would say that he knows you are on your way and would be riding out to the border to meet you.”

“Just over a mirror, he must be a vain man. So what would you recommend?”

“Steal it; I know where he keeps it. I could take you to it right now if you wanted me to.”

“Tomorrow is another day,” Golah sensed Nebu's voice so he said; “We have plenty of time, all the time in the world.”

“Well it's easily done. Yes I have heard much of you Golah, what will happen to you when the age of the hero is passed?”

“They'll always need heroes though I'm not in that game any more.”

“There'll be no competition soon, what is this disease that drives men to want to war?”

“Boredom I guess, so tell me of the south,” and took a drink.

“Uneasy at present, war is still in the air.”

“They must have a taste for it now,” Golah said with a smile and took another drink. It was around about then that he started to feel quite strange. Shula's voice seemed to waver and he had difficulty focussing his eyesight. He felt himself losing consciousness and helpless to fight it. He drifted off to the sound of rain cannoning off the roof.

Siga nearby was very wet. He had thoughts on taking shelter and these mixed liberally with cursing his rashness. He had sent men to cover the passes but as there was that many of them his men were very thinly spread. It was no good he thought as he looked into the heavy rain in front of him.

“A needle in a haystack,” he said out loud and taking out his long horn sounded the rallying call. Golah would soon have company.

Chapter 2

Golah woke up to a throbbing head and an empty dugout. On seeing he was alone he instinctively checked his bag and found to his horror that it was empty. “The thieving,” he got that far before the sound of voices made him go quiet.

“Tis a hard night and no mistake,” the first one said and another voice saying, “Aye,” followed.

He looked around but could find nowhere to hide. He was about to resign himself to his fate but a voice came to his aid, “Tell them you are Degar's brother and you should find them pretty amiable.” He looked to where it had come from just in time to see a mouse scamper off.

“You are not of the Indus,” a voice said bringing him back to reality, “Who are you and who allowed you to use this lodge?”

Golah looked up to see two fairly tall men looking at him menacingly. They were slightly smaller than him but they held themselves defiantly. Golah decided to try and brazen it out, “I am Glah of the western giants and I was not aware that it was your lodge. My apologies for any insult for it was not intending. I'm afraid that I am ignorant of your ways.”

“Then perhaps we had better enlighten you,” the one who had already spoken said and moved forward in stance. Golah got ready for combat but before anything could happen they were interrupted by a voice, “What is going on?” it was Siga, although Golah did not know this at the time and he had three guards with him.

“A viper in the nest,” the aggressor said, “He says his name is Glah of the western giants.”

“What is your business here?” Siga said interrupting him.

“I have come to escape the devastation of the north. My family was wiped out so I have nothing left to fight for.”

“So you are looking for a fight.”

“I'm looking for peace.”

“You'll not find it here.”

"I'll find it where ever the man-God isn't."

"I am Siga, son of Nark, protector of the Indus. You are welcome to stay here whilst the storm lasts. So tell me of the north."

"It's on fire and its getting colder."

"Getting colder, so I have heard. Tell me have you ever heard of a man-God called Golah son of Tray?"

"Much to my loss wasn't he who killed my brothers Degar and Aswar."

"And you know what he looks like?"

"Much to my horror. I will never forget his face for I mean to kill him the first chance that I get."

"Then maybe this peace you are looking for will end up in a fight for I have heard that Golah is in the south."

"Then I have a purpose and revenge for my family."

"And an ally for I too want this man-God, they say he is a mercenary."

"That's one word for it though not mine. He's a callous butcher like the rest of the man-Gods. I take comfort from the fact that they'll soon be no more and pray to the Gods that Golah is the last and I am his killer."

"You are most welcome to that prize and I will help you find him."

"Then I am most grateful to you and I pledge myself to a life of service to you for the honour for after Golah's death I will be free from the debt of obligation and be in need of a purpose."

Now to anyone reading this in the dark as to what the debt of obligation is I had better elaborate. The brother of the slain or son depending on the giant's age was obliged to avenge him and uphold the family's honour. This was called the blood trail and was eternally binding.

"Then you must have known Golah was in the south."

"I guessed, you only confirmed it for me."

"A man that keeps his business quiet," Siga said and went quiet himself.

"It is a sacred pact."

"You know you might be useful to me, once you have killed Golah that is. Prove yourself and we'll talk some more."

"You say that you know of his whereabouts?" Golah said getting into character some more.

"No, I only know that he is heading south. As yet he might not have arrived."

"A cunning man, he might not be easy to locate."

"I know where he's heading so it matters little where he is now."

"Then I come out to play and my kinship is restored to me, a star in the making."

"Maybe, we shall see." With that the storm abated and they left the dugout. Within 2 hours Golah was standing in the camp of Siga and taking in the great spectacle around him. Tents stretched as far as he could see, a blanket of canvas that covered the landscape. "And this is the Indus; you truly are a mighty people."

"Oh no, this is our camp of war. The tribes are gathered at present. Soon most of the tribes will leave as they fear the war is over."

"I thought that it was?"

"With the man-God, though the fighting will still go on for we still have your kin to the north."

"I have no kin in the north but I see the truth in your words for the ice wall is driving them closer to you. They say that was the real cause of the war of the man-Gods."

"You have good understanding for that is the truth. Tell me Glah; are you a man of wisdom?"

"I know a pearl when I see one, why do you ask?"

"I see you might be useful to me I need someone who knows the north."

"I have travelled all over the north and I know well of their ways. There are many tribes but I know them all. Anything you need to know I will gladly tell you if I can."

“Good, though some might see that as treachery.”

“The ignorant maybe, I owe my allegiance to kin not land.”

“You are a nomad; I thought that the giants to the west were landlocked.”

“No, that is for trees and saplings.”

Siga looked at Golah and said, “Then we are of one mind. I have to leave you now for my woman beckons but worry not for you will be attended to.” A tall dark haired woman came over to Siga and said, “It is ready protector.”

“Good, this is Rena; she will show you to your bed.” and left them.

“My lord,” Rena said and bowed her head before saying, “Would you care to follow?”

Golah obeyed and they talked little as they walked the short distance to Golah's new home. It was a large tent that would normally have been occupied by a family. As he looked at its size he said “I hope I haven't put anyone out.”

“There are plenty of tents, death has seen to that.”

Golah settled in and Rena left him, though he was not alone for long.” So you have entered the viper's nest,” he looked down to see a spider.

“Nebu,” Golah said, “How did you get here, where did you get to and why didn't you warn me about Shula?”

“A lot of questions Golah, I was hiding in your bag so I was with you all along and why didn't I warn you about Shula? I didn't know.”

Another thought came to Golah, “I have lost the dagger, how is it I can hear you?”

“You still have Mother's approval, you keep the power all she gets is the shell.”

“So the dagger will be no benefit to her, that's something I suppose.”

“What are your plans? You do know that you can't steal it, it has to be either won or freely given.”

“No I didn't know that. You never mentioned it before.”

“I didn't want to worry you with unnecessary luggage, not until you were ready to handle it.”

“Very kind of you.”

“Anyway if I were you I would take a little time out and get to know the ways of the people of the south, you're in no hurry.”

“Sure, so what about Shula?”

“Now, now Golah I thought that revenge was not in the nature of the man-God.”

“No I was thinking about her identifying me to Siga.”

“No chance of that, she doesn't walk in is world.”

“She doesn't?”

“No, she is not from the world of matter she is a spiritual being.”

“She looked real to me.”

“The shell was Silka, she just took it over. When Silka comes round again she will not remember anything after she was taken over though she will remember you.”

“I'm confused, if she's not from the world of matter what does she need the prizes for?”

“She doesn't, she just thinks that you do that's all. Now she has them she thinks the mirror is safe so her job is done.”

“So what is her connection to it, I mean why is she worried who has it.”

“Alrebus is her sister; she made the mirror with the essence of Shula so if you get the mirror you get her.”

“Well if she is the mirror surely she will tell Siga next time he uses it.”

“You're safe; in fact she thinks you're already dead.”

“What?”

“She doesn't know that you have the seal, if you didn't you would be dead by now.”

“Really?”

“Without Mother's approval you are just a will of light, an enlightened Soul so once those trinkets are gone so is the light.”

“So I would be nothing, so what am I with Mother's approval?”

“A self of love, an enlightened Soul with a purpose to serve.”

“A higher God, yes I see, I never realised.”

“So she will tell Siga that you are dead and the threat is over. The only way to identify you would be if she saw you through the mirror.”

“What about taking over someone else?”

“No point, she believes you are dead. She can't afford to waste her power chasing shadows. No, you'll be safe.”

“Just keep away from mirrors,” Golah said with a laugh, “So Silka must still be around.”

“Could be in camp as we speak. Why, has she caught your eye?”

“Well she's pretty easy on it.”

“Good, you need companionship. Anyway I must leave you now. Get some rest because you are in for a busy morning.” and with that Nebu scurried of into the darkness of the evening.

Meanwhile in a tent not far away the diplomacy of cowardice was at work. Colon and Valum were both having second thoughts about the morning to come. The drink had worn off and they had come to their senses. A quiet meeting had been arranged and the politics of treachery had come out to play.

“We don't need to fight,” Valum said, “Why waste precious men when we have lost too many.”

“You speak with truth,” Colon said, “It's too high a cost to pay for a little pride.”

“My thoughts exactly,” Valum said, “A new world is about to open up and there is more than enough to share.”

“Have you something in mind?”

“Together we are strong, more than a match for the Indus.”

“The Indus, I thought they were our friends.”

“At present but what of the future. I see a power struggle to replace the man-God both in the north and south. My spies tell me they are all but finished. They also tell me that the land is laid waste by the ice wall at the top and its effects throughout the land.”

“It's effects?”

“The wars, I have heard that by the time the fighting will be finished there will not be a tribe with any noticeable strength. We could just march in and take over. A couple of months and there will be nothing to stand against us.”

“Then we need not argue for the land will need two kings, one for the north and the other for the south.”

“My thoughts exactly, the fens and lakes together are nothing so they will not stand in our way.”

“The only ones in the way are the Indus though I don't see them as a threat as they care not for the land.”

“Neither do I, I was just pointing out that they would be the only tribe that could stand in our way if we were divided. Having said that who is to say of the future for they might have a change of heart.”

“True,” Colon said, “Who can really say what the future will bring.” And on that profound note we move to Siga and his two way mirror.

“So Siga the threat has been lifted for Golah is no more.”

“Golah no more, how can this be?”

“I thought it wise to take the necessary steps as I said he could have been a dangerous man.”

“You did not think that I was up to the job,” Siga said with anger through hurt pride.

“Hypothetical, besides a new threat is starting to materialise.”

“From the north, curse them for not listening to me about the borders.”

“I fear that the threat comes from within.”

“From within, you speak in riddles.”

“Is it a riddle you require? Alright if one is greater than the two and he joins forces with another one that is greater than the two together they are greater than the one.”

“What?”

“You are the one,” Shula said and mirror hazed. Siga looked around at Tonac and said, “What do you make of that?”

“Treachery, the two are the people of the fens and lakes. The one that is greater is Colon and the other one is Valum.”

“They mean to make a pact,” Siga said upon realisation, “To what purpose, the last I heard they were at each others’ throats.”

“Now that I could not tell you.”

“I will keep an eye on them, maybe another spy is needed.”

“You have someone in mind?”

“Maybe, I might know just the giant.”

In another tent not far away Silka awoke from her slumber. Her last memory was listening intently to some traveller in the northern dugout so she was more than a little confused. She saw the trinkets at her feet and this only added to her woe. Was the drink much stronger than she thought? No, she quickly dismissed it for she had had only a sip yet that was the only answer she could come up with. She racked her memory banks but nothing came to her. An hour passed and she was still none the wiser as tiredness once again took her to her slumber.

Chapter 3

A bright new day saw Golah being awakened by a woman's voice, “If you please my lord,” it was Rena, “Protector Siga requests your attendance.”

“Er, sure,” Golah said still half asleep, “Tell him I'll be along in a moment.”

“He is outside waiting,” she said and left him to get dressed. After a while Siga entered and said, “I have news of Golah.”

“You know of his whereabouts?” Golah said pleading ignorance.

“I know that he is now dead and your obligation is over.”

“Dead, how know you this?”

“I killed him myself, he came in search of my tent and I caught him. I'm sorry that it took away the privilege from you but he was well armed so there was no other way.”

“Yes, I could not see him giving up without a fight. So now my obligation is to serve you for you have restored my honour.”

“That's what I thought and I have just the thing to start your service.”

“You have?”

“You are a stranger to these parts, not known by anyone, that would be ideal for the purpose I have in mind.”

“Purpose?”

“I need a spy for I fear that the south will fall through treachery.”

“A spy, I'm not sure about that but I am obliged to serve.”

“Only a temporary thing to cut your teeth on. I know it's a dastardly trade without honour but it has to be done for in truth I feel that I can trust you so it's not an insult.”

“Then it will be an honour, just tell me off the traitors and I will back your cause.”

“Good, two land lovers by the name of Colon son of Casper and Valum son of Vega.”

"I have heard of those names."

"They head the second two most powerful tribes. They have made a pact where once they were enemies. I want you to find out why."

"Tricky, I could never see them telling me."

"I have a plan; if it works you will be held in high esteem by them."

"I am listening though on further thought I might know of their plan."

"You might?"

"Would I be right in thinking that together they would be stronger than the Indus?"

"I would say so though not in bravery."

"And the Indus would be the only threat to them in the south?"

"Well yes," Siga said impatiently.

"Well to a man with a craving for land at the present the north would be the greatest asset. By the time the northern conquest is finally over because of the intricacies of their allegiances there will not be a tribe to stand up to an invasion."

"You think that they mean to invade the north, how would the Indus fit in with that?"

"Two kings for two kingdoms, one for the north and the other south. The Indus need not be involved unless they think you would stand in their way."

"Maybe you have saved yourself a journey. You have the freedom of the camp as I now consider you of the Indus. If you need anything at all Rena is here to please you." and left Golah who quickly dismissed Rena and took a walk around the camp. Around a quarter of the tents had gone as both the people of the lakes and fens had dispersed during the night but it was still an awesome sight nevertheless. It was a hot day so he stopped at the well to quench his thirst. It was there that he met Silka. Initially he was wary for he thought she might be Shula but this was quickly dispelled by her nervous approach to him. Seeing her discomfort he came to her aid, "Silka quite a night, where ever did you learn to drink like that?"

"Oh," Silka said thinking that maybe she had had more than just a sip, "I'm afraid I have little memory about last night, how did I get home?"

"I walked you back after the storm had gone."

"Right," She said unsure, "And I seem to have some of you things."

"Gifts for the fairest maiden in the land."

"But I have nothing to give you in return."

"Your company is more than enough, care for a walk?"

"Er, sure."

"You could give me a guided tour if you like for now I am of the Indus I would like to know what I'm getting into."

"An honour, you say that you are now of the Indus, how did that come to be?"

"My service lies with Siga now for I owe my honour to him."

"A lucky man my brother for you are indeed an honourable man."

"Siga is your brother," Golah said in surprise, "Then my service must also lie with you, my lady I humble myself before your grace," and bowed to her.

"A blessing upon me, an appeasement to my heart."

"So tell me, how is it you have never seen a man-God?"

"I am to be a priestess, my service lies in the temple of Shula. From a child this has been so. It is quite an isolated life as we weren't allowed to leave the place."

"And now?" Golah said wondering why she was not at the temple.

"It is the journey of the three moons before my consecration."

"Sorry, the journey of the three moons?"

“To make sure I am up to the job I must walk the world for three months and purge myself of my family ties.”

“A hard choice in life, one I could not take.”

“It is more from duty than choice. I know of no other life though so I have nothing to compare it to.”

“There are many lands and many peoples. A world of knowledge, why waste your life as a priestess?”

“You are not of our kind and know nothing of our ways. I have no choice in the matter as I am of the line of Shula. Anyway I will show you the camp and tell you more of our ways so you may truly know us.” and took him on tour.

Meanwhile in a tent on the east side of the camp Colon and Valum were adding substance to their flair.

“I have given the matter some thought,” Colon said, “And see a lot of truth in your words. I fore-see that there might be a problem though.”

“You do what might that be?”

“Should the Lakes and Fens join with the Indus then we have lost. I have thought much into the matter.”

“And?”

“If we move quickly we can defeat them. I propose a march on Stet and a decimation of the people of the Lakes. This will show the others that we are not to be messed with and give us back the edge.”

“Logical yes, a quick surprise attack before the others can muster; all we need is a reason.”

“And there lies our problem.”

Meanwhile back on the west side Siga was having problems of his own.

“Events turn quickly Siga,” Shula said, “You need to be like a falcon to keep up with them. You have understood my riddle?”

“Colon and Valum are to make a pact. They have thoughts of invading the north.”

“Good, you are that falcon.”

“So what do you suggest?”

“Let them go for it will cull their numbers. Then strengthen the borders behind them to block their retreat.”

“You mean to decimate them.” Siga said in surprise.

“It's the only way; otherwise they will do it to you.”

“Then it shall be so,” Siga said and watched the mirror haze. He turned to the guard who was standing by Tonac and said, “Fetch Glah of the west.” and the guard left the tent.

Meanwhile Golah was still on tour and trying his hardest to dissuade Silka from her destiny. “But what of love have you no heart?”

“My heart is with Shula, I can dance with no man.”

“I want you to dance for me; I want you to be my woman.”

“But you do not know me, how can you say that?”

“I know you Silka of the Indus for you have captured my dreams, my heart lifts every time I think of you. My life I place before you.”

“It cannot be, I am betrothed to Shula.”

“And that is the only reason,” Golah said clutching at a straw.

“It is reason enough,” Silka said and with that Golah got his summons. On arrival at Siga's tent he found him in a jubilant mood. “Ah Glah,” he said, “It's good to see you, it seems you are right.”

“Oh.”

“I have decided to let them go and close the borders. That should settle the matter.”

“I think not Lord Protector for the trouble will start in the south. They will have to conquer the south before they move north.”

“You think so?”

“They will need a firm base from which to war. They could not risk being attacked in the south whilst most their forces were in the north.”

“Yes,” Siga said going deep in thought, “I have been badly advised. What would you recommend?”

“Patience and keep the warriors ready. There's not a lot you can do until they make their move.”

“And what do you think that move might be?”

“Now that I cannot say, maybe an attack on one of the lesser tribes to reduce their opposition.”

“That sounds the most likely but which one do I send my warriors to,” and went back into deep thought mode.

“Might I make a suggestion?”

“You have advised me well thus far.”

“A reactivation of your plan for a spy is needed.”

“My thoughts exactly so onto the plan itself, tonight we hold council; it is there you make your appearance. You will be a stranger newly arrived from the north and in search of sanctuary. I will make my excuses and refuse you and then one of the others will offer their aid.”

“You think that it will work?”

“They crave news of the north; I would say they will welcome you with open arms.”

“Then it shall be so.”

“You have a certain knowing, how did you come by it?”

“It is a gift from the Earth Mother bestowed only to the seventh son of a seventh son.”

“Then you are a seer, a rare and noble gift.”

“And yours for whatever purpose you assign me to.”

“Then I am a lucky man and you shall prosper greatly with the Indus for we are renowned for our generosity.”

“The honour of being part of such a great people is prosperity enough.”

“It is good to see that you shun wealth, the mark of a true man of wisdom. Let it be known that I am in your debt and will grant you anything you desire.”

“A noble gesture, I have heard much of you generosity and look forward to its benefit.” With that Golah bowed and left the tent. Outside Silka was waiting, “You have spoken with my brother?”

“In my capacity of seer.”

“You have that power that is what I crave.”

“You will never get it in the service of Shula. Walk with me Silka and you will be the seer of the unseen and the knower of the unknown.”

“You can do that?” Silka said looking at Golah in a new light.

“That and much more.”

“But I am committed, it is my purpose.”

“You must do what you must do, just follow your heart.” and left her to think it over. On his return to the tent he found Nebu waiting, “So how goes it Golah?”

“I am to be a spy, to find out two traitors plans.”

“Ah Colon and Velum,” Nebu said much to Golah's surprise, “They mean to attack the people of the Lakes.”

“Well that's saved me a journey.”

“Not necessarily, it might be wise to keep your role awhile.”

“You think so, why would that be?”

“To ingratiate yourself with Siga, he is noted for his generosity. To the Indus a niggard it the lowest form of life.”

“You think that he might give me the mirror, I can't see it myself.”

“Why not, you have already discredited its power once. Soon he will rely on you and shun the mirror

and you will have it as a gift.”

“Discredit its power, when was that?”

“It's advice, that's where Siga gets his information from.”

“I did not realise.”

“Yes, but you see the mirror has a slight fault so you can use it to your benefit.”

“A fault, what would that be?”

“When it was made it was flawed. The glass has a slight crack and this affects her ability.”

“Really, in what way?”

“It cannot see the immediate future so although the advice was good it was useless because it was one step beyond. Also she puts her emotional interpretations on it so it comes from pride.”

“Right, I'll bare that in mind.”

“Anyway I must go now for you are about to be summoned,” and scampered off to hides in the confines of the tent.

“My lord,” A woman's voice said making Golah turn around. It was Rena, “It is time.”

Chapter 4

“Well Colon, Valum,” Siga said, “It's good to see that you have made up your differences, it does not do to stand divided.”

“It is for the good of the south,” Valum said, “Our differences fall to nothing before the good of the land.”

“Very true,” Colon said, “And nobly put.”

“Thank you good Colon, it is indeed an honour to hear that from a man of your understanding.”

“Yes,” Siga said trying his best to keep his stomach down, “Now onto the business in hand.”

“Ah the borders,” Valum said, “I'm afraid that I have had a change of heart, Colon talks with good sense.”

“If you please Lord Protector,” A guard said entering the tent.

“Yes, what is it?”

“A stranger from the north seeks sanctuary, he craves an audience with you sire.”

“But we are in council, have him wait.”

“Maybe he could be useful.” Colon said

“How?” Siga said playing hard to get.

“We could ascertain the situation in the north. Then we will know for sure about the need for security at the border.”

“Very well,” Siga said and turning to the guard, “Show him in,” and this was dutifully obeyed. Golah prostrated himself in front of Siga and said, “Lord Protector, I have heard of your generosity and seek a boon.”

“You are a giant; tell me stranger, east or west?”

“I am of the west, I am Glah.”

“Then I cannot give you sanctuary, the people of the Indus and the giants of the west are sworn enemies.”

“I am not of them any more for were they all not killed in the war of the west, I am the last.”

“Then I will spare your life but you will not receive sanctuary with the people of the Indus.”

“If I might make so bold,” Colon said, “Though it is true that the Indus and the giants are sworn foes the people of the Great Valley are not enemies. For the honour of the south and if you have no objections I will give the giant sanctuary.”

“It is not in my power to stop you.”

“I mean no offence Lord Protector,” Colon said on seeing his mock displeasure, “It is for the people of

the south I do this.”

“Very well,” Siga said pretending to be appeased, “The land must come before petty differences.” And turning to Golah, “You are most welcome to my hospitality whilst you are in my camp.”

“A thousand thank you's lord protector.”

“Now tell me Glah,” Colon said, “So you are the last of the giants of the west and the one that got away to tell the tale as is always the way how fares the north?”

“It is in a bad way mighty King, vast tracts of land have been decimated and multitudes slain.”

“How know you I'm king?”

“You are Colon son of Casper, your reputation is well known in the north.”

“Really,” Colon said Picking up, “I never knew.”

“They speak of your prowess with the lance and bravery in the field.”

“So,” Valum said interrupting them his mind tinged with a little envy, “What of the tribes?”

“The man-Gods are finished mighty Valum but it was a heavy price to pay. The giants of the west are no more, in the east they are but a handful. The people of the Aspic are done as a nation; in fact I would say that not a tribe has escaped the carnage.”

“That bad,” Valum said revelling in the fact that he was known to the giant and turning to Siga, “It seems my change of heart was not misplaced.”

“So it seems, then we may return to our homes for the war is finally over.” With that the meeting finished and Golah went back with his new found friends. As they walked through the camp Valum said, “So they know of me in the north?”

“Yes sire your feats of strength are a legend. Even the giants of the west know of your power.”

“Really, I never knew.”

“So Glah,” Colon said, “What are your plans now you have left the north?”

“To serve my new master for that is the way of honour.”

“Good,” Colon said, “You could come in useful to me for I crave to know of the north and their ways.”

“By your command but I am afraid that by the time the wars have finished there will be nobody left to talk about.”

“That bad is it?”

“Yes sire, it is definitely a good time for an enemy of the north for it is wide open.”

Colon studied Golah as he said, “You think so?”

“I don't doubt it, it's just lucky that the south is at peace.”

“And if it wasn't,” Valum said, “Where would your loyalties lie?”

“To serve my new master, I have no ties to the north as they've all been severed.”

“Then we know where we stand,” Colon said, “That is good because there should be no confusion between friends.”

“I class that as an honour, to be considered friends with the great Colon and mighty Valum is the ultimate achievement. I will serve you well for my life will be your protection.”

“I have heard that the giants of the west are noted for their wisdom,” Colon said, “Tell me Glah are you a wise man?”

“I have a certain insight.”

“So just as a matter of interest,” Valum said, “If someone was to invade into the north, what are their chances of success?”

“If their base was secure they would have no trouble whatsoever.”

“And if it wasn't?”

“Then they would fall for they would be open to a rear attack.”

“My thoughts exactly,” Colon said, “I can see that you will be most useful to us Glah and richly rewarded for your pain.”

“Your association is reward in itself.”

“You will want for nothing,” Colon said and showed Golah to his new home. It was not long before he heard Nebu's voice. “So we have a spy in our midst.”

“How did you manage to get here?” Golah said in surprise.

“I am everywhere, I am not hard to find. So what now Golah?”

“Find out what's expected of me. Until I know that I cannot make a plan.”

“They are looking for an excuse to invade the people of the Lakes, that is what's stopping them.”

“They'll not get one from me, slimy land lovers, they remind me of lizards.”

“Aren't you being a little hasty? If it's meant to be then it will happen, who are you to stand in the way of fate?”

“I can't see fate doing that, what purpose would it serve, not love surely.”

“It's just upholding its laws, what you sow so shall you reap.”

“Oh I never realised.”

“So they are looking for an excuse, I suggest that you give them one.”

“Well if it's decreed who am I to argue, what would you suggest?”

“A questioning of bravery might do, it does not take much to start a war.”

“I'm not sure; I can't see it working myself.”

“Try it, you'll be surprised.”

On the west side Siga was having a supernatural conversation of his own. “So Siga it appears you have a traitor in your camp.”

“One of two but I have my eyes on them.”

“That is good;” Shula said at cross purposes, “For your strength comes from within.”

“I'll bare that in mind,” Siga said as the mirror hazed once more. He turned around to see Silka waiting to catch his attention. “Silka,” he said in surprise, “Have you come to say good bye?”

“No Lord Protector, I have come to renounce my vow of service to Shula.”

“What,” he said angrily, “What of your duty as a daughter of Nark?”

“It is not what I desire; would you condemn me your own sister to a life of unhappiness?”

“It's a man isn't it?”

“I cannot say, though I do not need your approval I've come for I want your blessing.”

“I'll need to think about it, you are talking about generations of tradition. I will call for you when I've decided.”

“My lord,” Silka said bowed and left.

“What has become of us Tonac?” he said after she had left, “Centuries of tradition just thrown away.”

“It is a new world sire, besides you now have Glah, Shula has served her purpose. He seems to have a better guide.”

“True,” Siga said and went deep into thought before saying, “Yes you are right he seems to have a firmer grasp of the situation. My father would re-burn in the ashes if he knew.” and laughed quietly to himself.

Golah back east was having a meeting with Colon and Valum, “Tell me Glah,” Valum said, “If the giants of the west wanted to start a war what would they normally do?”

“Depends on the situation what they would usually do if it was a just war just start it.”

“Yes,” Colon said, “But what if the enemy had powerful allies and it wasn't a just war?”

“Ah that's a whole new war game. I would really need to know a little bit more about the situation.”

Colon looked at Valum who nodded so he related his plans to Golah.

“I see your problem; usually an accusation of cowardice would suffice.”

“Wait a moment,” Colon said, “I think you might have it.”

“I have?” Golah said in surprise.

“He has?” Valum said.

“Yes, the dual we nearly had after the council, as neither of us turned up the accusation could count double.”

“So we could both declare war on them,” Valum said, “I think we have found ourselves a just cause.”

“You have served us well Glah,” Colon said, “You will be well rewarded for this, of that have no doubt.”

“Your gratitude is reward enough in itself. To know that I have been of service gives me reward for that is my purpose.”

“Then you may go with your head held high,” Valum said and Golah went straight round to Siga.

“I have news Lord Protector,” he said on arrival.

“Good, and with speed.”

“I came as quickly as I could; it is to be the people of the Lakes.”

“And the motive?”

“A false accusation of cowardice on both Valum and Colon.”

“Tricky that, it means taking them both on and without allies we would not be up to it. We must send for help from the people of the Fens.”

“It will be done,” a guard said, “They should be here within two days,” and left.

“Two days,” Siga said and turning to Golah, “When do they plan to attack?”

“I’m not sure, they didn’t tell me. If I was to make a guess I would say as soon as they can muster.”

“That gives us a couple of days grace then, you must get back before they miss you.” After Golah had left Siga called Silka and gave her his blessing. By the time this was done Golah was back with Colon. The tents were being packed and the tribe getting ready to set off.

“The people of the Great Valley on the move,” Golah said “Truly a marvellous sight I count myself lucky to be one of the stars.”

“You are an honourable man Glah and I count it a privilege that you are in my service. I must say my goodbye to Siga soon and then you will see the people of the great valley at war.”

“Truly an awesome sight, I have heard of the legends. Was it not your people that won the Battle of the Trees?”

“You know of that?” Colon said surprised for it was by no means a major battle.

“Truly awe inspiring, they say that the fear of the people of the Great Valley was the only reason that stopped the north from invading long ago.”

“Really, I never knew.”

“It surprised me though.”

“Sorry?”

“I mean the legend unless I got it wrong and if so I apologise said that the people of the Far Mountains ran. It surprised me that you were allies.”

“Circumstances dictate and fate throws up strange bed fellows.”

“You know what’s best, I humble myself before you and apologise for trying to sow discord.”

“No, you are right in what you say and to point it out to me. Don’t worry I’ll keep my eye on him.”

“Then you are an astute master,” Golah said and bowed his head, “My service has not been misplaced.”

Chapter 5

“My Lord Protector I must leave for the great harvest awaits,” Colon said

“You will be sadly missed, a true friend.”

“And I’m afraid that I too must leave,” Valum said, “For home is where my heart now is.”

“You too Valum, a truly noble warrior. Legends will tell of our victories and we shall go down in history. May I ask a boon of you before you go Colon?”

“Anything I have is yours lord protector.”

“I request the services of Glah of the western giants.”

“Er, sure” Colon said with a marked tone of suspicion, “May I ask as to what purpose?”

“For our chroniclers so they may tell of the final demise of our enemies.”

“Alright,” Colon said with relief in evidence, “How long will you need him?”

“About a week, that should be long enough.”

“It is a pleasure to be of service,” Colon said and he and Valum both left. Golah was duly sent for and they both watched with misgivings the two tribes’ departure.

“And soon the carnage begins,” Siga said sadly, “What price honour when land is there for the taking? I have sent messengers with warnings to Stet but I fear it will be too late.”

“You have done what you can, it’s just a shame that we never found out sooner.”

“Yes, my previous advisor was definitely at fault.”

“No man could foresee this; you would have thought they'd have had enough of war.”

“It should have been foreseen,” Siga said sadly and said no more.

On the road to Stet's Valum and Colon were putting their final touches on their plan. It was Colon that spoke, “I say that we send in a third of our men, hand picked for their barbarity to sweep through like locusts and decimate anything that moves.”

“Why not all of them, it would make short work.”

“We need to guard against a rear attack; if Siga were to hit us we would be finished. I say hold most of the men back and keep them fresh for as soon as Stet is finished we march on Siga before he has time to get help from the people of the Fens.”

“Yes, good idea, we should send them on ahead then and wait here for news.”

“Good thinking, it will save a long march back,” and this was duly done.

In Siga's camp Silka and Golah were deep in conversation, “So you are to leave me soon and my heart will lose its purpose, what price love when duty is about?”

“Maybe not, tell me about your power.”

“It comes from the Earth Mother, what do you mean maybe not?”

“I have had a change of heart; it seems that your power is greater than Shula's so I would be wasting my time.”

“You mean that you will dance for me?”

“Once you have proved yourself to me.”

“My lady a blessing to my heart. I will do whatever is required of me and do it with zest for the reward is worthwhile.”

“We'll see,” Silka said and with that we move to Siga and a frosty glass.

“You have a traitor in your camp,” Shula said, “A dangerous man and yet you let him live, what madness has befallen you?”

“The traitors have gone; they march on Stet as we speak.”

“Not Valum and Colon fool I am talking of Glah of the western giants or should I say Golah son of Tray.”

“That cannot be didn't you tell me yourself that Golah was dead?”

“I was wrong and now you must make amends.”

“You were wrong, how can that be?”

“Yours is not to question me, that is not your place.”

“Then I think it should be, you seem to be getting things wrong quite a lot recently.”

“How dare you, I am never wrong. Be careful Siga because you need me more than you realise.”

“If I need bad advice perhaps, you said that the north would attack the south and it turns out they are not even strong enough to defend themselves.”

“I was talking about the future; you must always have strong borders to protect yourself.”

“From what,” Siga said scornfully, “The north wind for that is the only threat to us, well that and your stupidity.”

“You go too far Siga, your anger will get you into big trouble, think on,” and with the mist appeared.

“Useless bitch,” Siga said and turning to Tonac, “What say you Tonac, do you see Glah as a traitor?”

“Well sire, if he was a traitor I would say that his advice would have been flawed but up till now it has been perfect.”

“My thoughts exactly, he is an honourable man and I am obligated to him. So what do you think is happening?”

“I would say jealousy sire, for he seems to have more power.”

“He is definitely a man of some understanding. I would say that he has saved us from the treacherous land lovers. What traitor would do that?”

“Indeed sire and not wanting to add wood to the fire but I have heard rumours that Golah was killed in the high hills of Zarg.”

“Then no more shall be said for if I accuse Glah of being Golah I would surely lose a friend. Was it not Golah that killed his brothers?”

“Yes, do you think that she meant to sow discord?”

“Undoubtedly but to what purpose would be anyone's guess.”

“Might I hazard one sire, Silka's refusal to accept her vows?”

“Yes Tonac, I think you speak with truth. I fear that Shula means to wipe us out for that transgression she is indeed a jealous bitch.”

Meanwhile as luck or fate depending on your perception of life, would have it Colon's outriders saw Stet's convoy in the distance. They had been delayed at the great river for the banks were too high to cross and so had to wait before the water was low enough for them to ford. The news met with a jubilant Colon, “See Valum fate is on our side.”

“Then it is meant to be.”

“We'll muster half the force and attack straight away if you are agreeable, then turn back and decimate the Indus.”

“My thoughts exactly, we are truly at one.”

Back at the camp of the Indus Siga and Silka were in conversation, “You chose well to turn your back on Shula, her power is tainted, she is no longer my guide and I ought to smash the mirror.”

“Not so hasty Siga I would like the mirror myself.”

“You would, to what purpose?”

“To return a gift.”

“That man of yours, he must be generous to warrant such a gift.”

“Yes and noble.”

“So who is he, is he of the Indus?”

“I cannot say until he has proved himself to me for is that not the way of the Indus.”

“True,” Siga said and left it at that.

In a tent close by Golah and Nebu were spinning a few yarns (not really but it sounded good)

“So Golah Colon and Valum march on Stet soon the people of the Lakes will be no more.”

“Yes, a couple of days I would say.”

“Or a few hours.”

“No chance, Stet's land is a good three days away and they had a good start.”

“I'm afraid they were held up at the great river. It was too full to cross.”

“It must have been the rain, I must warn Siga.”

“I would say that he as prepared as he ever will be, but it is a good thing to know nevertheless. First the

mirror though.”

“Not much chance of that, he’s never mentioned it”

“It is on the way as we speak, see everything comes to those that wait.” and disappeared into Golah's bag.

“Glah, are you there,” a woman's voice said, it was Silka.

“Come in,” Golah said and she quickly entered, “I have a present for you, and then you must prove yourself to me.”

“My time has come.”

“We'll see,” She said and took out the mirror, “This is the Mirror of Madness, with it you can see into the future. This is my gift to you Glah of the west. Tomorrow I will come by and you will prove yourself to me.” She left the tent and Golah in confusion.

“Everything comes to those who wait,” Nebu said once more.

“So this is the looking glass of Alrebus, and it was freely given.”

“It was Golah; it is yours to do with as you will.”

“Do you think I might use it, I would love to see the look on Shula's face?”

“Now, now Golah you have a wicked sense of humour, you are coming on really well. Yes you may look in the mirror. You must think to yourself great Shula come forth and radiate your wisdom so I might understand.”

Golah thought the words and watched the mirror cloud in front of him. As it was clearing he heard Shula's voice say, “So you have come to your senses Sig...Golah.”

“So you remember me.”

“You were supposed to be dead, how can this be?”

“These things happen I suppose, I will call you again when I need you,” and tossed the mirror to the floor.

“Like your style, treat them mean keep them keen.”

“What am I to do with it now I've got it, I wouldn't trust that Shula for impartial advice.”

“You will know when the time is right. Now you must warn Siga for if he is quick he can be on them as they fight Stet. One thing though Golah. You are Glah of the western giants. Golah is no more so from now on I will call you Glah.”

“Very well,” Glah said shrugging his shoulders and rushed out to warn Siga. Siga was astounded by the news and they rushed to muster.

Meanwhile back at the camp of Colon and Valum half their forces were armed and about to march.

“For glory, honour and fate,” Colon said as they were quickly led out. Within 15 minutes they were on the people of the Lakes who were taken completely by surprise. The rear of the convoy was completely annihilated before they had chance to muster and then the fighting truly began. Colon led from the front and proved himself a worthy warrior. Valum hung back and kept out of immediate danger and this was noted by Colon and duly filed. Stet fought like a lion and took many before he finally fell just in time to hear the charge of the people of the Fens.

“Bring out the rest of the warriors,” Colon shouted to Valum who quickly raced back to the camp. It seems the people of the Fens were also held up at the great river and had not long departed from Stet when the outriders saw the convoy. They were still no match for Colon and Valum but they took a heavy toll on their warriors. The clash of weaponry echoed all around and bodies piled up where they fell. Blood soaked the ground and ran like the great river itself. Half of Colon's troops lay dead before it was over and not a man; woman or child was left out of both the people of the Lakes and Fens. When it was finally done Valum was in a jubilant mood. “It is done Colon, now the Indus and then the north.”

“How is it Valum,” Colon said angrily, “That I have lost half my men and you have only lost a quarter of yours?”

“The prowess of the men of the Far Mountains is well known,” Valum said somewhat taken aback, “We are better warriors that’s all.”

“And how is it Valum,” Colon said even more angrily, “That when I was in the thick of the fighting you were at the back.”

“What is that supposed to mean, are you questioning my commitment to the cause?”

“I am questioning your bravery; you are a coward and have always been.”

“No man calls me a coward; we will settle this after the Indus have been defeated.”

“We will settle this now. I will not go into battle with a coward; you will not live of my honour. The poets will remember you for what you are a coward and a liar.”

“You shall die for that,” and they quickly fell into combat. All around them fighting broke out and soon the whole camp was like a battle field. By the time Siga got there it was just a case of mopping up so the whole affair was finished pretty quickly. It was a jubilant Siga that returned back to camp.

“Glah you have proved your service to me once again. You truly are an honourable man. Now we have peace.”

“True peace for it will be everlasting.”

“I owe you my life and the gratitude of the people of the Indus will always be with you, yet you ask for nothing of me.”

“I have something to ask of you, now that we are finally at peace.”

“Anything you wish, you are more than welcome to it.”

“I want you kinship for I have none of my own.”

“You shall have it and with my blessing. I have many sisters. I am sure that out of them you will quickly find one that will lift your heart.”

“I have found one already.”

“Silka,” Siga said as it dawned on him, “Yes, you have my blessing.”

“I thank you sire, now that I know that I will gladly prove myself to her.”

“Good,” Siga said, “Then you are my kin.” They drank heartily that night and the next morning saw Glah with a blinding headache.

“One too many I fear,” Nebu said on seeing him awoken.

“Twenty too many more than like. Oh my head, why do I do this to myself?”

“I ask myself the same question.”

“And this coming from someone that eats flies, I think my world is lost.”

“North and south, anyway your world is about to be found again as Silka is making her approach.”

With that Silka said, “Glah are you there?”

“Enter Silka and light up my tent.”

Silka entered and said, “Now you must prove yourself to me.”

“Anything you ask and I will lose my life to try and obtain it.”

“How are you going to do it?”

“Sorry?”

“Show me of your devotion.”

Glah looked at the mirror and found his inspiration. He picked it up and said the words quietly and with that it started to mist and Shula's face appeared. Before she had chance to speak he said, “Who are you and who do you serve?”

“You know me as I know you.”

“Who are you and who do you serve,” He said interrupting her, “If I have to ask a third time you know what will happen.”

“I am Shula, guide to the Indus, I serve the Earth Mother.”

“You serve yourself, a self of pride.” and with that he smashed the mirror sending glass in a myriad of

directions. He turned to Silka and said, “How can I look at another woman when you walk this land, now dance for me.”

“Your obedient servant,” Silka said and Glah had found his woman and with that the age of the hero was dead and the age of enlightenment began.

The Wilderness Years

As time passed by Glah and Silka grew in understanding of each other and became as one in the light of their being. They entered a time of prosperity and peace and under Protector Siga's guidance the people of the Indus grew in wisdom and followed the Earth Mother's ways.

Time though to Glah was different to the rest. He was no longer on the cosmic wheel of life and re-birth and so he never fell to age. He could not reveal his secret though for with it would come his true identity and the stigma of the man God had not yet healed. No Glah was condemned to watch Silka grow old and wither though fate in its infinite wisdom was to relieve him of this burden. Silka died giving birth to his still born first child and to Glah in his misery it was the end of the world. He left the people of the Indus and headed to the bleak, now empty fens to be alone with his sorrow and at one with despair. Seasons turned to years and still he was unmoved. He saw no point to life yet death was no option.

The people of the Indus forgot about Glah eventually and got on with the process of life. It was the time of the long reigns. Siga ruled 60 years then Dinal for 40, Edjin, 50 and Stigel 40. Slowly they increased in number as the harshness of their lifestyle kept the population in check. More kings followed as the term protector fell from favour and though their reigns were short and unaccomplished it was still a time of peace.

To Glah in his self imposed exile though it was anything but a time of peace, it was a time of mental restlessness and high anxiety. He had become a shadow of his former self, gaunt and haggard he blended in with the desolation of his surroundings. Time passed surprisingly quickly for having lost all track of it, it was not structured any more. A thousand years, a blink of an eye what was time to an immortal being like Glah.

The people of the Indus unaware of his presence grew in strength eventually and split into smaller bands. Power now evolved to sub kings, the over lord or higher king now being just an honorary title and the land around them became too cramped for their needs. A northern expedition was proposed by sub king Genum and soon 2,000 years of peace were to come to an end. Genum took his band northwards, lightly armed for he thought the place to be empty but found out to his cost that it was not. The remnants of the northern tribes had grown in strength and though their constant feuding had kept them divided the arrival of the southern invaders changed all that. They united against the common enemy and Genum and his band were quickly dealt with. To the battle hardened veterans of the north with their taste for flesh it was an invariable feast one that left them yearning for more. They combined under Gruff the great and the time of the raids began in earnest. The southern tribes unskilled in war did not know what hit them and soon fell into slavery. Many were taken back to the north and never heard from again. The once proud people were forced to pay tribute to pacify this insatiable enemy and though the raids continued it was to a lesser degree.

Within ten years the raids turned into a full invasion and whole scale settling happened all along the borders. Vast numbers of the Indus took to the mountains for safety though it was only comparative as they were hotly pursued. Even the fens were not excluded and Glah found himself in bad company. He chanced upon a Northman lost and alone and looking for direction. The years of isolation had made Glah unsociable though, "I am Golah, son of Tray this is my land you have no reason to be here." "This is our land," The man said, "What did you say, Golah son of Tray, you dare to mock our Gods." Now it was Glah's turn to be shocked, "What do you mean Gods?" But the man was in no mood to talk so Glah quickly overpowered him and tied him up, "Speak now or you will quickly lose your life." "I have no fear of death, in fact I welcome it so do your worst." "I'm in no hurry; I have all the time in the world. You will tell me eventually of that have no doubt."

"I will tell you nothing. I did not come alone; you will find that out to your cost. You dare to mock our Gods, for that you will pay dearly."

"I am who I say I am, if you choose to see me as a God that's your affair. Tell me what your legends say about me and I will spare your miserable life."

The man seeing his predicament had a change of heart, "Very well for all the good it will do you, untie me first." and Glah duly obliged, "Legends tell of a noble warrior who ate the brains of all he defeated."

"Are you talking about the Wisdom Game?" Glah said in surprise.

"Why yes, how did you know about that?"

"I am who I say I am."

"Legends say that you died in the high hills, in the final battle of the great wars."

"I too have heard that legend though I don't believe it myself."

"I never thought it to be true. It did not make sense to me as you are an immortal."

"I can fall to the sword though I can't fall to old age. No I headed south as it was the wise thing to do. Are you from the north?"

"Yes, I am Else of the Cinty tribe."

"You're a bit far from home, is the north still as desolate as when I left it."

"Now that I couldn't tell you. It is a bleak place but our legends tell of a time when it was a lot bleaker. Speaking of legends why didn't you close Cassandra's Box when you had the chance?"

"What?"

"Cassandra's Box."

"I haven't a clue what you are talking about."

"Then you can't be who you say you are."

"I am, but I also know to my cost that some legends are not what they seem. Tell me the legend so hopefully I might gain some understanding."

"Fair enough, great Cassandra was queen of the giants, mythical creatures that used to roam the land. She was the last queen of a dying race, her husband Aswar slain by Golah in his guise as head hunter."

"So he was married then, I never knew."

"You might be able to prove yourself once and for all, legend says that they played the Wisdom Game and even says what the questions were."

"I've played the game many times and many questions passed between us. Why not just ask me the questions?"

"Yes alright then, the first one was who is it that makes the great rock charge the sea?"

"What, great rock, what's all that about?"

As it was getting dark Else pointed to the sky and said "The great rock."

"That's the moon and it doesn't actually charge the sea it pulls the tides. Do you have a Goddess Fromosia by the way?"

"That's the answer."

"I wasn't sure if her name would still be the same," Glah said with a laugh before saying, "The answer is the Goddess Fromosia with invisible thread that she bought from Nebu."

"I don't think the second part was in it, it was just who not how."

"Knowledge gets lost over time, so what's the next one then?"

"I guess it doesn't matter, I now know you to be who you say you are."

"Good, so on with the legend."

"Well anyway, she was a Goddess with all their special powers."

"Special powers?"

"She could fly, turn herself invisible and most importantly cast spells."

“Oh right.”

“So she cast this great spell, the ingredients of which were to turn the mind into madness, the scent of a fawn to draw your mind into the shadows, the whispers of a fish to guide you to despair and finally the tooth of a bee to take bites out of your sanity. She put the ingredients into a great box and their merger gave off a powerful scent that gave madness to anyone that smelt it. She put a spell on it that you and only you could close it.”

“Why me, that doesn't make sense, oh hang on a while, she wanted me to take his place.”

“Well that's right, so why didn't you?”

“I didn't know that Aswar was married. I do know of their custom that the king slayer takes over his role. They were a complicated race with lots of laws on honour and things. And you think this box exists?”

“I'm not sure; I've got to admit that you've strengthened the case.”

“But she would have long since died.”

“Our legends say that she lives in the high hills, where the God Desmond used to live.”

“Desmond?”

“Desmond of the ford.”

“Diamund of the forge, I actually know where that is.”

“Well they did say that you killed him.”

“Ah, I was a bit wild in my youth.”

“What, you sound like you regretted it.”

“I did, he was an old man and my temper got the better of me.”

“That's how it should be.”

“No, to take a life is the worst thing you can do.”

“I thought that to take a life was to add to your honour after death. The more death the greater the honour.”

“Wherever did you learn that from?”

“You said it to Heald the wanderer in a dream.”

“I didn't, why would he say that, was there a war on?”

“As a matter of fact yes, mind you we've been warring ever since I can remember.”

“And this Heald, is he still around?”

“They say he is deathless though he hasn't been seen since my grandfather's time.”

“Oh right, no wonder you're always warring, you're trophy hunting. No believe me killing is the worst possible thing.”

“Right and what about eating human flesh to add to your strength in this life?”

“What, you eat human flesh?”

“Yes, I thought that everybody did. You used to eat the brains after all.”

“That was before I knew better.”

“Well that's how it came to be. I mean if you get wisdom from the brains why not strength from the body.”

“You don't though, that's the whole point.”

“Well how do you know that you knew better?”

“I lived the story, you only heard it. No I found that to my cost.”

“So why would a story like that come to be, it doesn't make sense.”

“I guess there must have been a shortage of food. I remember when I first came south the ice walls were taking most of the land. It was pretty bleak then and getting worse.”

“That would make sense then, it seems that a lot of what I've been taught is false.”

“I got the same feeling when I met with Diamund of the forge. Anyway, you have just met a legend,

surely that means adventure.”

“What?”

“I’m going to close Cassandra’s Box.”

Chapter 2

“What really,” Else said, “And you want me to come with you?”

“Yes why not, we can start tomorrow. Its six days walk and I could do with the company.”

“Alright then, well if you think I’ll be up to it that is.”

“You will by the time we get there, you will drink from the Goblet of Elam.”

“I have not heard of this goblet, what does it do?”

“It will turn you into a God.”

“The Goblet of Velvo, you have it?”

“I am it, it’s a state of mind brought about through enlightenment. Your lessons will start tomorrow,” and with that they both went to sleep.

Morning saw them up bright and early and as they set off Glah said “So enlightenment then, what do you actually know about it?”

“Er, it can turn you into a God.”

“Not a lot then,” Glah said with a laugh, “Right we’ll start there then. Enlightenment is the transmutation of the Soul through a higher state of awareness through esoteric knowledge.”

“Esoteric?”

“Knowledge of self and purpose. The higher truths. Now this knowledge is called the word and is actually spiritual wisdom. This is the light to your being and through it you grow in understanding of self and purpose.”

“Understanding?”

“It’s knowing on a deeper level. Take that question yesterday. You knew it was the Goddess Fromosia, you knew who but you didn’t know how. Understanding is the how that accompanies the who.”

“Oh right, and is there any difference between them then?”

“Knowing strengthens the will and understanding purifies the self. We’ll go into more detail about that tomorrow as the time is not right.”

“Well you know best.”

“So basically that’s the first aspect of enlightenment. Not only do you know the spiritual word you can actually understand it. The second aspect of enlightenment involves the evolution of the will for spiritual wisdom turns it spiritual.”

“As opposed to?”

“Physical.”

“And er. What’s the difference?”

“Physical relates to the reality of life and spiritual relates to the purpose of life. It’s a deeper level of understanding that’s all.”

“Well not being funny but surely it is better to live in the real world so a Spiritual Will might actually be a disadvantage.”

“Oh no. you still live in the real world as you put it but a Spiritual Will gives you the understanding to cut through the illusion of life. You start to see it for what it is, just mental vanity. Not only that it also leaves you better equipped to deal with the trials of life for your understanding sees them for what they are, just tests for mental and emotional growth. Without this understanding you are in ignorance and will just see despair.”

“Oh right, I can understand that.”

“Then you are halfway there,” Glah said with a laugh, “So that’s the second aspect then, you evolve a

Spiritual Will. Now the third aspect involves love though it might be a good idea to define what love really is.”

“That sounds good to me I always took it for sexual attraction evolved.”

“Sorry?”

“You know, you see someone you are attracted to and eventually you fall in love.”

“Oh right, no, what I'm actually talking about is selflessness.”

“Well I was pretty close. I mean when you truly fall in love you do become it.”

“There is that, except that state of mind is with life itself. This is the state of mind that you have to be in to receive spiritual wisdom in its true understanding.”

“So there are other ways of understanding it then. Now that I never knew.”

“Oh yes, the first way is not understanding, just knowing it and this strengthens the will though without any understanding it falls quickly to pride.”

“And why is that then, well if you don't mind me asking?”

“Not at all, in fact it's a very relevant question. It falls to pride because the knowledge itself generates love. Now with its understanding it goes to the Self which in its purest form is the Soul. Without its understanding it goes to the impure Self and becomes self love in other words pride.”

“Right, so it actually creates itself.”

“That's right, now your understanding is actually your Self so it gets quite confusing.”

“I'll say.”

“It might be easier to use the term depth for a while then. Pride has no depth for it is a shallow type of existence. With pride not only does it take things at face value it also relates them to itself. With spiritual wisdom you develop a God complex but as you do not know what God actually is you think that it is something to be idolised therefore you also want to be idolised.”

“Yes I can see that.”

“Good, now the next way is to have a little understanding and start to see a little bit of the big picture. The God complex that comes from this is slightly deeper than pride but is still misguided nevertheless. You look around the world and see all the injustice and this ignites a thing called righteous indignation. You don't serve yourself you serve an outside force that you call God. This god though is one of anger and so your understanding will be one of anger. It is another form of self love though on a deeper level than the first.”

“I'm a little confused, what actually is God then?”

“God is the purpose that you serve on this level of understanding. It's actually your Self or understanding so it evolves with you. You might perceive it as an outside force but it isn't, it's your understanding of life and what's beyond life.”

“So er, when we worshipped you it was all in vain?”

“Anger more than likely,” Glah said with a laugh, “Rest assured though for all your worship I did not benefit from it in a single way.”

“What a waste of time then,” Else said getting a little angry.

“Ah anger, so you see you did serve your Self.”

“You're right; I wasn't serving you at all I was serving my anger.”

“Experience good, so finally before we move onto love, you do get a deeper understanding of life but not much more than pride. You can also perceive God as an outside force in a loving father role. This gives you a deeper understanding than anger but it is pretty hard to maintain in an unjust world.”

“Oh, so that's love then?”

“No but its pretty close. Love is actually when you perceive God as an enlightened Soul with a purpose to serve. Basically by this stage of your evolution it's you with a purpose. Your whole understanding of life will be centred around this purpose for you know that this is actually your life. So the third aspect

then, you develop true understanding of life.”

“Right, is there any more?”

“Just the one and we'll call it a day.”

“Oh, but it's still early.”

“You'll need time to let it sink in; it will promote a better understanding.”

“Alright then, you know what's best.”

“Now finally I would like to talk about the Divine Spirit.”

“I don't think I've come across that before.”

“This is what actually transforms your Self; it's a strange feeling to explain as it has to be experienced.”

“Oh, is it painful?”

“No, you'll feel it soon so don't worry about it, the sensation is actually the Soul transforming the Self so it should be welcomed as it means you are making progress.”

“I'll look forward to it then.”

“You'll have to earn it first. Now you get this transformation by serving God's purpose so it might be a good idea to tell me what God's purpose actually is.”

“I haven't a clue; all this is new to me.”

“Well we did mention selflessness; I thought that might be a clue.”

Else thought awhile, “Serving others, no, that can't be right.”

“Why not?”

“Well the more evolved you are the greater you are. Great men don't serve, they are served.”

“I'm afraid that you are wrong, no man can be greater lest he be more humble.”

“No that can't be true, can it?”

“Afraid so, it seems you have been misguided.”

“On many occasions by the sound of it. So how does it work then, with reality I mean?”

“It wouldn't work in your reality but it might be worth your while finding out how it works in the reality of truth.”

“Well fair enough but I'm afraid it's been engrained in me that much it will take some shifting.”

“I'll give it a go. When you are humble you have no pride and so all of your actions are selfless ones.

Now these selfless acts are called acts of God or acts upholding God's purpose if you like. Through this you transform your Self and evolve in understanding. The reality that you talk about is illusionary and can be very detrimental to your progress for those that seek comfort in material life are rewarded in that manner.”

“So you can have a good wealthy life then?”

“Yes though you won't evolve. No the more evolved you are the more humbler you become.”

“Quite a choice then, I'm not sure which I would actually take”

“Early days yet, one thing though, if you do take the road to wealth your life might be rich but it will be short. It's one or the other I'm afraid.”

“Looks like I'm going to end up poor then.”

“You won't see it in that way. That's the final aspect then; you get transformed through serving God's purpose.”

“This is the transformation that keeps you young then?”

“Yes, the transformation is actually your life so as you can imagine it's pretty important.”

“I'll definitely bare that in mind so now that's done what next?”

“You just have to recap them for me and then that's it for the first day. This is just for my benefit as I want to see if you understood them.”

“Fair enough,” Else said and thought awhile before saying, “From enlightenment you understand the spiritual word, your will turns spiritual, you develop true understanding of life and you get transformed

through serving God's purpose."

"Very good, you have grasped it well. The next few days will be more difficult as the first day is just a grounding. You'll be alright though. Anyway whilst we are walking tell me more about the north and the tribes that are there. It will pass the time if nothing else."

Else told him of the north as they walked along and the day passed pretty quickly. By the end of it they had crossed the fens so they rested at its edge.

Chapter 3

The second day saw them crossing the great plain and talking about the evolution of Will and Self. I won't go into too much detail as shortness of space forbids it but the day passed quickly and by the end of it they had nearly crossed the great plain. (See six day of creation in no strings attached)

The third day saw them talk about the benefits of being an evolved being, a spiritual life, spiritual understanding of life and the spiritual word. By the time it was over they had got to the border.

The fourth day saw an expansion of the first and by the time it was over they were well over the border. The fifth day was an expansion of the second and by the time it was over they had reached the high hills of Zarg. The sixth day was an expansion of the third and by the time it was over they had reached their destination.

Glah looked around the desolate hills and said, "The last time I was here it was all turning to ice. Now look, it must have retreated by miles."

"Is she near here?"

"Not far," and took him to where he had last seen Diamund of the forge. He called out "Cassandra" and soon a surprisingly young looking woman made her appearance.

"What do you want from me?" She demanded.

"I am Golah; I have come to close the box."

"You took your time, first though we are to be wed."

"I have not come for marriage. Our kind has died out long ago. Time has long moved on since then."

"Then it will never be shut and legends will tell how you were defeated in your quest. Yes you may have defeated my husband Golah son of Tray but come to his wife you were proved sadly lacking."

"Your codes of honour have no meaning any more. Your people are dead and gone. There is no one to hear those legends that you speak off. No there is no need for us to be wed. Let me close the box and peace return."

"You must not know the legend then. If you close the box without making me your woman I will fall to age. No whilst that box lies open I live. What is wrong with me, am I not appealing to you?"

"Well yes, you're easy on the eye but my heart lies with another."

"What, who?"

"Silka of the Indus."

Cassandra looked at Glah strangely and said, "She is dead, well that is what I heard. Are you saying she still lives?"

"In my heart she still lives and always will. No once I have given my heart it is a lifetime commitment."

"To a memory, that's all she is now. I am real. How many times must you insult me?"

"Nothing personal, I did not know that your husband was a husband."

"Maybe but now you refuse me because of a memory, how do you think that makes me feel?"

"I'm sorry but that's no concern of mine. You live by an outdated code of honour that I was never a party of in the first place. I am not a giant, that is not my manner."

"That is your last word on the matter, you have one last chance."

"No, it could never be."

“Then that box will never shut, it is not only me that you failed.”

“We'll see about that, I only have to find it that's all.”

“Then what, without me as your woman you'll have no protection.”

“I can live with that, I have faced many kinds of danger.”

“You'll fall to madness just like the rest of them, you're nothing special.”

“That's a chance that I'm prepared to take. Besides I know these ingredients you were supposed to have used do not actually exist. I would say that your spell has no power because just like the giants code of honour it was based on nothing.”

“You doubt my power and you dare to insult my race, for that you will pay with your sanity. Very well the box lies within that cave “and pointed to the cave to the left of her, “You have been warned so my conscience is clear.”

“Thank you,” Glah said and made his way towards the cave. On entering it he let his eyes get used to the darkness and soon saw a large ornate open oak casket. He looked around for potential danger and sensing none made his way towards it. When he got about 1metre away much to his horror he found he could not get any closer. It was like there was a force field around it and as hard as he tried it did not make any difference. He tried to walk backwards but found that option also closed. A mocking laugh emanated all around him and though he looked he could not find its source.

“Show yourself, am I supposed to be scared of a coward.”

The laughter continued unabated though Glah took no notice, He was more concerned with the casket. Thick green smoke had started to leave it and fill the cave around him. Its acrid taste made his eyes water and him cough violently, “Golah, Golah,” a voice sounded in his mind. It sounded like Silka but he knew that it couldn't be as she had never known him by that name.

“Who are you, reveal yourself to me.”

“Golah, Golah, what have I done to you, why have you forsaken me?”

“Who are you?”

“You know me,” and a deep sadness came over Glah. All the bitterness, all the despair flooded in and washed away his resolve. Memories came to haunt his mind, memories long suppressed though never forgotten. He watched Silka die before him delivering a lifeless child. His legs felt heavy for it was too much of a load to carry.

“Come to me and we will live forever,” the voice said and from the shadows a figure emerged, “We will be together for all time.”

“No, no,” he shouted regaining his strength slightly.

“Golah, I thought that you loved me.”

“I don't know you.”

“You know me Golah,” the voice said and the pull got stronger, “We were meant to be, come with me it will be safe here away from the cruel, hard world. Come to my world Golah and you will never look back.”

“No, no, you are not who you say you are, who are you?” and with that the shadow dissipated and Glah heard a loud scream. He felt his strength return slightly and so tried to reach the box once more. He found himself unable to though and so waited for the next onslaught. More smoke left the box but this time it was coloured brown and as it settled around him a myriad of different voices entered his head.

“You are not in control any more,” “You are losing you mind.” “There is no hope for you as you are trapped and alone.” Over and over they came sometimes consecutive and sometimes concurrent. A strong feeling of despair came over him and though his will was strong he found that is was being eroded. “Why have you come here if not to face your death?”

“I cannot die.” Glah said fighting it off.

“Oh but you can, you can fall to the sword or you can take your own life.”

“You have no sword and I know the consequences of taking my own life,” and with that the voice disappeared and another took its place, “Then you can stay here for an eternity. You are not strong enough to take us on. We can hold you here forever. No one will come for you for you are no one. You are no one.” It repeated.

“I am Golah, son of Tray. My pedigree is well known to those who care to look. You are no one for you don’t exist,” and with that the voice disappeared though it was quickly replaced.” Your name means nothing only to yourself. You are from an age long dead. There are no more heroes Golah, just memories of what used to be. You have served your purpose so are surplus to requirement. Time has moved on Golah, put this world behind you.”

“The world needs me “Glah said, “The world needs me,” he said again to emphasis the point as the last voice had made a little headway.

“Only in your mind Golah son of Tray, what a way to finish your life, a has been.”

“It’s a lot better to be a has been then a never was,” and another voice fell though there was still more to come. “You may banter away until your heart’s content but it will get you nowhere in the end. You are losing your mind Golah; it is too small to cope with what’s happening to you. You will never recover from this, that’s if you ever leave the cave.”

“You cannot hold me forever, what madness had befallen you to think that?”

“Oh but we can though in your small mind it will seem even longer.”

“Forever is a long time. Your power is not that strong in fact you are losing it as we speak.”

“You think so; our mind is greater than you. We are many and you are one. How do you think you will manage in a battle of wills with us?”

“I am also many but I am at one and as for managing in a battle of wills with you I already am.”

Another voice went down but it was quickly replaced. Glah started to feel that he was getting nowhere. He knew he was defeating them but on and on they came.

“What’s the point?” a voice said as if it had picked it up, “It’s no use fighting, we will get you in the end. Give up now and make it easier on yourself. You know you will have to eventually so all this is a waste of time.”

“I’ve got all the time in the world,” Glah said making a mental note that his mind was being read.

“That’s a long time in captivity. An eternity as a slave when once you were a great man.”

“My life is one of service,” Glah said stalling for time whilst he debated his next move. He knew his mind was being read, how could he use it to his own advantage?

“Not any more your life belongs to us now.” Glah remained silent gathering his thoughts, “You have no answer, then your will is ours.”

Glah conjured up a verse he was taught as a child. “When life is bleak don’t be meek. When life’s unfair just don’t care. When you think things bad and they make you sad believe me they’re not there,” and with that the voices disappeared.

“You will pay dearly for that,” a gruff voice came from the shadows.

“Show yourself,” Glah said, “Or is it that you are too scared to leave the shadows.”

“You are in my world now on my terms; do not presume to dictate to me.”

“Whilst you hide in the shadows all that there is, is presumption. I mean how do I know you actually exist, you might be a thought within my head?” and with that there was a loud scream that seemed to emanate from Glah himself.

“I am within you as I am around you,” the voice said, “Just by being here is harming your rational. You will never defeat me as you will just be fighting yourself.”

“You cannot harm me; you do not live in the physical. That’s why you do not appear before me, you can’t.”

“I don’t need to. You seem very sure of yourself considering your life lies in my hands. Have you no

fear of death or is it that you are too stupid to know no better.”

“I have no fear of death nor cheap insult. And you are the stupid one for it is actually your life that lies in my hands.”

“You think so,” the voice said with a laugh.

“Who are you?” Glah said and felt the voice die within him. Glah found that he regained full control and he went back to the box. He looked into the box and found three amulets, a bird's wing, a bull's horn and a silver coin. He took them out and closed the box.

Chapter 4

It was not long before Else walked in, in an excited state.” You would not believe it; she just grew old and died right before my eyes.”

“Then the spell is truly broken,” Glah said and showed him the amulets, “It was not much of an adventure.”

“I don't know, it's not often that you see a Goddess and watch her die before your eyes. So what are those things then?”

“Symbols, the bird's wing, spiritual flight, the bull's horn, protection from the Earth mother, the bull being symbolic of her fertility and finally the silver coin, mental strength.”

“Oh right, and she used them in the spell?”

“Well no, I don't know what she actually used as those things in the legend don't exist. No these are the treasures you receive for breaking the spell.”

“You were in there long enough anyway, what happened?”

“I'm not sure, I think it was trying to feed of my fears, death, solitude, the unknown that kind of thing.”

“Really, so how did you manage to defeat it?”

“You only face your fears by confronting them; I just asked it its name.”

“What, is that it?”

“Yes, I knew that whatever it was, was only in my mind.”

“That sounds even more frightening, I would rather face my enemies.”

“If they were only in my mind then like the ingredients she was supposed to have used they didn't exist. Though I was guided to the shadows, guided to despair and had bites taken out of my sanity. That bit was true.”

“Really,” Else said and Glah told him exactly what happened. After he had finished Else said “Well if that's the case then those things must be true.”

“They don't exist,” Glah said and thought awhile before saying. “Of course they wouldn't would they.”

“Sorry?”

“It's all in the mind; it was all one mind trap that was all.”

“I don't understand.”

“It works on your belief in it. The stronger the belief the more damage it will do,” On seeing Else's bemused expression Glah thought it prudent to elaborate. “The more your belief the greater your fear in its power combined with ignorance you are doomed before you start. The ingredients don't exist but to a superstitious mind it gives them a magical quality.”

“So basically it's playing on ignorant superstition. Yes I can see that, but there must have been something used originally I mean.”

“True,” Glah said and thought awhile before he said, “Whatever it was must be opposite to the treasures.”

“Could be anything, I wouldn't have a clue. Where would you begin?”

“The bird's wing, I would say that that would equate with guiding you to the shadows.”

“Really, how do you work that out?”

“Well it's symbolic of spiritual flight. That guides you to the light.”

“Yes, I can see that, so maybe it's something that flies in the darkness then?”

“Yes, and lives in the caves for it shuns the light. That would make it a bat, well part of one anyway.”

“Its wings maybe; after all it was a bird's wing.”

“Maybe but I've got a feeling it was something else, the eyes or ears I'm not sure.”

“It could be one, it could be all.”

“Yes, I would say that it was the bats essence thinking about it, the blood maybe.” and with that the wings disappeared.

“What happened there?”

“It is only a symbol, it has served its purpose and so it returns.”

“Oh, what a strange magical world you live in.”

“Well you do too; it's just a parallel world of symbols that's all.”

“So what about the bull's horn then,” Else said taking more of an interest, “You said it was protection through the Earth Mother?”

“And also fertility, maybe that would be worth pursuing as barrenness and despair are mutually dependent.”

“Really, how do you work that out?”

“Barrenness is emptiness, a major cause of despair.”

“Yes I can see that, so what would the ingredient be then?”

“Barren? Maybe something from a desert.”

“If we are talking about the desert's essence maybe it's the sand,” and with that the horn disappeared.

“Good, you're getting better. So the coin then, mental strength any thoughts on the matter?”

“Something that saps it, though as to what the only thing I can actually think of it despair.” and with that the coin disappeared, “How does that equate?”

“You have to put a piece of yourself into it. She must have mixed the blood and sand together and poured her heart.”

“Yes, I think that it must be it, and the treasures, how would they fit in?”

“Well I would be mentally stronger for losing my despair and all the fear is based on fear of death so it would open up a new reality, things beyond reality. Service to the Earth Mother gives protection and spiritual expansion.”

“But you already knew that.”

“Yes, it was destined to fail though it took quite a few less enlightened Souls in the process.”

“Oh, so that must have been what was meant by only you could close it. Not through marriage but through strength of mind.”

“Must be, mind you, you could also have done it now. Anyway now we are up here we may as well look for this Heald and see what he has to say.”

“I don't think he really exists, the legends say that he broke the ice wall and went to lands further north. There are no lands further north.”

“There may be, no one has ever tried to find out,” Glah said and looked around, “All this was ice the last time I was here yet look as far as you can see, nothing but land.”

“And do you think that there is land beyond this? Our legends call it the world's end.”

“Maybe it's just the end of their world, you can never tell with legends. Some do hold a certain truth to them besides it passes the time if nothing else,” and they set off on their way.

“I was going to ask you that. You must have lived for countless years now; don't you ever get bored with life?”

“I get bored, but not with life, you can never learn too much. In fact I've found out that the more I know the more I realise how little I actually know.”

“Really I would have thought by now that you would know everything.”

“Oh no, you’ll find out in time, your journey's only beginning.”

“Yes and hopefully there will be new lands ahead with new things to teach us.”

“Hopefully.”

“Would you tell me about the old days, I have heard legends but they do not reflect the real truth?”

“Sure, it will pass the time I suppose.”

As they walked on Glah told him about the giants, the sub men, the man-God and basically everything that I have already chronicled. Two full days it took to dispense the tale and by the end of it they saw the first signs of snow.

So,” Else said, “Do you think there may be other man-Gods in these new lands, well if they exist that is?”

“You know I have never thought about that. We always thought that we were the only ones that survived the first time. Maybe there were others.”

“If there were people I would say that there were bound to be, it stands to reason.”

“If they were like we were they would have long since been killed off.”

“You weren't that bad surely, I mean it's not like you ate human flesh is it?”

“We were worse and the worse thing about us was we should have known better.”

“How could you be worse?”

“We had the knowledge but we kept it to ourselves, not only that we made slaves of the people.”

“Ah.”

“Sorry?”

“We have done the same to the people of the Indus. We treat them as cattle to be butchered when we are hungry.”

“Never, they are a strong people; they would never let that happen to them.”

“They may have been in your time. Now though, well we found them easy prey.”

“They were once my people I am going to need time to come to terms with this. I know this is not your fault and you are not to blame for anything you did in ignorance but I will be silent for a while. It's nothing personal it's just that I have to go into myself for awhile. I'm sure you understand.”

“I understand,” Else said and they walked on through the snow in total silence. Day after day they travelled without a word said between them, one week, two week and still no sound. They saw nothing only snow, no man, no animal just whiteness. By the end of the third week Glah said, “Sorry about that. No even after what you have told me I cannot judge as we were still worse. Your actions, your people I mean not you personally, came from ignorance. Ours though, well we should have known better. Beside from what you have told me I caused it in the first place.”

“Well it was done in your name; I would say that Heald the wanderer has a lot to answer for.”

“I'm afraid that we all have if we start judging each other, besides with thought I would say that he has long died.”

“Really, what makes you think so?”

“The only reason you live forever is that you never grow old. By the fact that he has fell to age it means that he can't live forever.”

“Yes I can see the truth in that. So not being funny why are we still making this journey?”

“New lands and who knows there may be a man-God left. No, I have nothing better to do. The people of the Indus will get by without me, they will find their strength.”

“I've got to admit that the idea is still appealing, yes who knows what we will find.”

“New adventure and new opportunity.” Glah said and looking up ahead they both saw that the white was turning brown.

“Look,” Else said, “There is land.”

“And with it people though I don't know how friendly they will be.”

“Time will tell on that one.”

“I usually find in cases like this caution is the best bet,” Glah said and they walked on. After a few miles they saw a lone man up ahead so made their way towards him. He did not see them at first for he was looking the other way. As they got closer he heard the footsteps though and turned around. He looked at them suspiciously and went to make a grab for his spear so Glah quickly subdued him. “We mean you no harm,” Glah said, “We come in friendship.”

“You are from the other side of the world,” the man said, “How is it that you are here?”

“You speak like us,” Glah said, “Do you all speak that way?”

“This is not my native tongue, are you from the other side of the world?”

“I suppose you could say that.”

“Then you must be Gods, and to think I did not believe him.”

“Who,” Glah said, “And how is it that you speak our tongue?”

“I was taught.”

“Taught, taught by who?”

“Heald the wanderer.”

Chapter 5

“Heald the wanderer,” Glah said, “Is he still around?”

“No, he went up north to the people of the Elden, are you Golah, son of Tray?”

“What, er, yes.”

“He said that you would come, and you must be Else.”

“That's right, however did he know that?”

“He knows things that no one else does. He says that you mean to kill him.”

“No, I mean him no harm. I just want to talk to him that's all.”

“Well he is not here whatever your intention. He told me you would come.”

“And what else did he say?”

“He told me that your land was the land of the Gods, a violent land for the Gods liked to war, not a place for a mortal being like me. He said that you ate the flesh of men for strength and fought for knowledge like we fight for gold.”

“And you people, do they like to war?”

“No, we are a peaceful people as are the Elden but further north they are warlike and raid us constantly. I thought that you were some of them when I first saw you.”

“No, we are men of peace.”

“Men of peace, that's not what I've been told.”

“You shouldn't believe all that you hear, I mean Heald is from our land and he is a man of peace.”

“A man of peace, no he is with the people of the Elden rallying them for war. He wants to unite us with them and wipe out the people of the plains. He says it's the only way to stop them raiding.”

“And what do you say?”

“It will cause more trouble. Beyond the people of the plains are more war like people. The occasional raid is much better than a full scale invasion.”

“You speak with wisdom, so why is it that Heald won't listen?”

“He has said that he has seen it in a dream, no amount of persuasion can alter that.”

“He will bring death to your people, you do know that don't you.”

“Maybe not, he knows things others don't. Maybe he has seen us victorious.”

“And you believe that?”

“I'm not sure, I'm just a goat herd, and what do I know.”

“Will you take us to him?”

“To what purpose, I wouldn't want to see him come to harm.”

“He won't come to harm, I just want to make him see the error of his ways before it's too late.”

“I have your word on that?”

“Yes.”

“Very well, I am Myra, I will take you there after I have seen my son,” and they set off further north. Before long they came to a goat skinned tent and Myra sent his son to look after the goats.

As they walked on Else said, “Tell us of your people and their ways.”

“We were once a noble people. We used to live on the plains in its rich fertile land. We lived by the Great Mistress' plan and put our faith in honour and the destiny that fate chose for us. Yes we were a prosperous people.”

“So what happened?”

“New men came, strange in appearance and war like in their ways. They drove us from our homes and forced us to live in this desolate place. We cried out for guidance but all we got was contempt. Now we are few and powerless.”

“And what of your leaders, how have they let this happen to you?”

“We have no leaders, only Heald the wanderer.”

“Then if we are not careful you will be doomed.” Glah said

“Maybe it's a good thing” Myra said, “Is it not better to spend ten years as a wolf than a hundred years as a goat?”

“Was that one of his?” Glah said

“Well yes but I can see the truth in is words.”

“Who is to say,” Glah said, “You are entitled to defend yourself but anything else, well I wouldn't risk it.”

“Surely attack is the best means of defence. I know it was another one of his but it makes a lot of sense.”

“He sounds a very persuasive character,” Glah said with a smile, “A warmonger with the gift of good speech, a very dangerous man.”

“No,” Myra said, “He is old and frail.”

“Maybe, but I don't expect he'll be leading you into battle. No people like him lead from behind and disappear at the first sign of danger to themselves.”

“So what of your Gods,” Else said changing the subject, “Who do you worship?”

“After the Gods forsook us we did the same to them. Heald guides us now so I guess he's the closest thing we've got.”

“And does he perceive himself as a God?”

“He is an immortal not a God; the term he would use is a demi-God.”

“Right,” Glah said, “And what of his powers, does he have the power of the Gods?”

“No, just the power of dreams. Anyway we are now entering Elden country. I will do the talking and tell you what they say.”

It was not long before they came across a group of men just standing around and talking in a strange tongue. Myra went to them and they talked awhile. He came back and said, “He's not far. He is with their chieftain Zubu; I will take you to them.”

“Fair enough,” Glah said and they both followed him. As they walked Myra said, “I fear that you may be too late; there is talk of war as we speak. The men I have just left are all for it for they suffer worse than we do.”

“We shall see,” Glah said and soon they came across a tented encampment. They walked to the largest one but were stopped from entering by two guards. Myra talked to them and said, “I must enter alone.

Wait here I will not be long.” and entered.

As they waited Glah said, “I don't like the look of this, keep yourself ready.”

“Looking around I don't think we have much chance.”

“I meant to run,” Glah said with a laugh.

After a few minutes Myra returned and said, “You may now enter but you must leave your weapons outside.”

“I'm not sure about that,” Glah said, “Without our weapons we are an easy target.”

“No weapons are allowed, that is the way I'm afraid.”

“Very well,” Glah said and they both handed them to the guards who studied them intently not having seen the like of them before.

They entered into a spacious tent with goat skin rugs and trimmings. There were only two people in there, the older one said on seeing them, “They are who they say they are,” and turning to the other said in a strange tongue that Myra translated, “They are mighty warriors from the south, victory is now assured.” He then turned to Glah and said, “You said that you would come and I apologise for not believing you.”

“What, I have never met you before, when am I supposed to have said this?”

“Why only last night in a dream,” Heald said and looking at his confused expression Glah realised that he actually meant it, “Many times I have seen you. Why is it you disown me, is this a trick of the Gods to test my faith?”

“I do not understand,” Glah said, “You invest me with powers I do not have and yet you recognise me and knew that I was coming.”

“But it was you.”

“It cannot be, I would have known about it and yet it must be. This is beyond my understanding but there is one thing that I do know, lead these people to war and they are destined for death.”

“No, that is not what you said before.”

“Whoever it was it was not me. No the people of the plains act as a buffer so you take them on you open yourself to other war like peoples.”

“What else is there, their constant raiding causes these people to starve.”

“I have not seen the land; I can make no council before then.”

“It is a mountainous land suitable for only goats and eagles.”

“How do they get in?”

“Through the passes, there are three of them, pretty narrow but wide enough.”

“And this is the only way?”

“Well there is a secret tunnel unknown to them.”

“Take me to these passes then, it sounds to me they could easily be defended.”

“We have not the manpower to guard the passes. We don't know when they come or where.”

“Take me to these passes,” Glah said, “If my plan works they will not need defending. Bring a few men and soon we'll know for sure.”

Heald told the chieftain who was intrigued so they all went to the first one. It was a long narrow walkway, barely a path, with high banks either side. He looked up and saw what he was hoping to see.

“There,” he pointed, “See all those loose rocks. We must climb above them.” and went with four men.

It was a hard climb for Glah but eventually they got above them. The other men, more used to the terrain scrambled up like goats and waited patiently for him. When he got there he dislodged a large rock which rolled downhill knocking others in its path. Soon there was a great landslide that blocked the path completely and made it impassable. Just to make sure he went along the pass and dislodged other rocks before going back down again.

“That one will not need defending,” he said to Heald who told the chieftain.

“He is most impressed but fears that the other two might be a little wider.”

“We shall see,” Glah said and they went to the next one. As they looked it over Heald said, “This is the main way in. Usually though not always they come through here.”

“It's a lot wider,” Glah said, “Send some men up there,” and pointed to some loose rocks to the left, “And some there.” and pointed to the right. It was not long before the rocks were falling and the pass made unassailable.

“Go along the whole pass and do the same,” Glah told Heald who shouted up to the men. Soon the pass was completely full so they moved onto the next one which also quickly filled.

After it was over Glah said, “Keep the secret tunnel as you never know when you might need it. I would say that you should be pretty safe now so live long and prosper.”

“What now?” Heald said, “Where will you go I mean?”

“I thought we might go north,” Glah said, “Well if Else is amiable that is.”

“I've got the taste now,” Else said.

“Oh,” Heald said with a large air of disappointment, “I was hoping that you would stay awhile. You did say that you would.”

“I did, when was that?”

“In the dream yesterday. You said you would stay awhile and teach us the ways of the man-God.”

“You did say that the knowledge needed to be shared,” Else said coming to Heald's aid, “And besides we could also learn about their ways in return.”

“Well I had set my heart on travelling, all the new people to meet and new things to see.”

“There's plenty of time for that,” Else said, “As you said earlier we have all the time in the world.”

“Looks like I am eating goat then,” Glah said with a laugh.

The Travelling Years

Glah and Else stayed with Heald and the people of the Elden for 20 years. During that time they taught them their ways and were taught the Elden way and with it their language. As luck would have it one of the Elden knew the language of the people of the plains so they learned that also. Time moved on fairly quickly and it seemed no time before they were saying their goodbyes and making their way down the secret tunnel.

The people of the plains accepted them, surprised that they knew their language and anxious to hear their wisdom for they told them they were teachers. 20 years they stayed reasoning that any longer and it would draw suspicion. 20 years was long enough to go without showing any signs of ageing. They taught them wisdom though not with enough understanding to turn them into Gods. They in turn learned of the people of the plains and also the language of the next people they were to visit. On and on they went and years turned into centuries which in turn changed into millenniums.

The people of the Indus in the meantime had suffered for four hundred years of slavery before they finally turned. It was another six hundred years before their slavers were vanquished back to their former northern homes. Even then the problem was not solved as every 20 years or so when they had regained their strength they reappeared. A cold war situation developed with truces being made and broken, five hundred years it lasted before decisive action was taken. A full scale northern thrust was made by the by the people of the Indus and within 200 hundred years not a living human Soul was left in the north. Peace was returned but at a cost that was too hard to bear. The people were virtually wiped out, it took 800 years to get back to anything like a sizeable number and even then it was nowhere near the number of their heyday.

The people of the Elden too were not left out of the story. They lived in peace for 500 years though the harshness of their environment was to keep their numbers relatively small. Heald proved himself to be a war-monger and through him the people became hard hearted and lost the true understanding and.500 years of peace turned into2, 000 years of military training. Heald saw that the population was growing and so created compact groups of warriors to sneak out through the tunnel every so often. These colonised and subjugated other less prepared tribes. This kept the land of the Elden from being over crowded but played havoc with the welfare of the other tribes.

All this was unaware to Glah as he and Else continued their tour of the vast plains and mountains that lay past them. 20 years here and 20 years there, the years flew by and soon they reached the great ocean where the journey came to an end. Another thousand years had passed by then but they did not realise that. As they headed for home they stopped off at each tribe to gauge their progress and as they spoke their tongue they were readily accepted. It took another 2,000 years to get back to the people of the Great Plains who were now ruled by the Elden.

Meanwhile the people of the Indus had grown back to full strength and in a time of peace they prospered greatly. No more the nomad they had took to agriculture and lived in mud and wattle huts.

Heald as well had prospered greatly. He had enslaved the people of the plains and made them unblock the passages for now they had no one to fear. Well no one except Glah that is for Glah on seeing how he had abused the knowledge thought it prudent to take his life. It was not an easy decision to make but it was one that had to be done for he was making too much of a nuisance of himself. Heald fell easily for in his arrogance he thought himself invincible and in need of no protection. His people stunned by the death of their immortal leader lived in peace for a while and the people of the plains were freed Glah and Else crossed the snow once more and time the great healer saw fit to reduce the journey. Where once it had took 3 weeks it now became one. As Glah set foot back in the northern territory he said, "It looks like our travelling is done for a while."

The Civilised Years

As Glah and Else started their journey south Glah said, "So do you think that your people are still eating mine?"

"What? They are not my people I have disowned them."

"Only joking, it passes the time."

"Do you think that things have changed much?"

"Undoubtedly, I wouldn't even like to guess how long we have been away."

"A very long time. Could we have a look at my old home land whilst we are here? It's a little out the way but not that much."

"Sure, I'm in no hurry."

They went to where Else thought it should be and much to his surprise not only was it uninhabited the environment had completely changed. "No," Else said looking around, "I must have made a mistake, it doesn't even look the same."

"You'll be surprised how time changes things; we have been away for many lifetimes."

"But there is no one about, surely there still would be people though."

"I haven't seen a Soul since we've arrived now you come to mention it. Do you think they have all gone south? Didn't you say that they were starting to colonise it?"

"Must be that then," Else said and they carried on their way. As they got to the border Glah said, "Oh incidentally I know I have been calling myself Golah ever since you met me but I've changed it to Glah."

"What, you are or were Golah, son of Tray though?"

"Oh yes, it's just that when I first came to the Indus people I knew they would never accept a man-God so I became Glah of the western giants."

"Oh right, mind you I bet you would have been long forgotten now. In fact I would say that you could call yourself anything you like."

"I'm not sure about that; I was actually given that name."

"Given that name, by who?"

"Nebu the spider, in fact we ought to hunt him down as he should know what's been going on."

"You can talk to animals, you never told me."

"It never came up in conversation."

"I would say that you would have a job to find him now."

"Oh no, he lives through any spider," and as he said that a spider emerged from under a leaf of a tree they were passing, "See, great Nebu, it's been a long time."

"It had to be," Nebu said, "You have suffered greatly and learned untold things though so time has not been wasted."

"This is Else by the way," Glah said and greetings were made. Nebu told him what had happened whilst he's been away and after he had finished said, "You were thinking of changing your name?"

"That's right, how, er silly question. What are your thoughts on the matter?"

"Maybe a good idea, it's up to you though."

"So you don't mind?"

"Not at all, what name did you have in mind?"

"I was er, going to leave that to you. You have more understanding on these matters."

"Alright then, Vlah son of Kal and Else are you in the same mind?"

"Yes, it will be a symbolic break."

"Very well, Clek son of Etsu."

"Now I'm guessing you have a purpose for us," Vlah said, "Otherwise you would not be here."

“Very astute, how well you know me. Yes there is something you can do for me. Not your usual thing but I think you might like it.”

“So what are we actually talking about then?”

“Well all that travelling had a reason behind it. You were gathering knowledge for a purpose.”

“Really, what was that then?”

“I want you to found a city.”

“A what?”

“A great settlement, not tents though made out of stone.”

“Stone, I wouldn't know where to start.”

“For that part you will need help.”

“I wouldn't know who to ask, no one has ever built a city before.”

“Well not since the floods. During the first time there were great cities founded. Stone inlaid with gold, you would not believe the skill these men had.”

“Maybe but like the cities they built these men have long gone.”

“All but one. Carlin the aligner still lives.”

“I've never heard of him.”

“Before your time. Diamund of the forge would have heard of him though for he was well known in his field.”

“And where would I find this man?”

“He lives the other side of Death Mountain, deep underground for he now shuns the light. I've got to warn you though he might be reluctant to help.”

“Why's that then?”

“He blames the founding of cities for the down fall of man. He actually blames himself.”

“How did he come to that conclusion?”

“He thinks that when man made his first city he turned his back on the Earth Mother. In his mind she wants man to live with the land and become as one with her.”

“Well I can see the logic in that, maybe he's right then.”

“There is truth in what he says but you can still live in cities and be at one. It's only when you take more than you need that you lose your balance.”

“Oh and do you think that he can be made to see the truth?”

“With a persuasive man and maybe the help of a benevolent spider. I will guide you to him if you like,” and stepped onto Vlah's hand. They walked towards Death Mountain and were soon on the other side. Nebu showed him a hidden entrance and they were soon making a rapid descent. The passageway turned into a huge great cavern and they looked in awe at the way the walls were intricately carved.

“This must have taken some time,” Vlah said in an impressed tone.

“All the time in the world,” a voice said from behind him, “This is my place, you have no business here.”

Vlah turned around to see a surprisingly young looking man, “You must be Carlin the aligner then.”

“I know who I am; you have no business here so please leave.”

“Oh but I have, I have a purpose for you.”

“Purpose, the only thing I do I will not so you are wasting your time.”

“I know what you do and I also know why you do not do it, though I might have a compromise to aid my case.”

“I'm listening, and then you must leave.”

“I have heard of your great skills from Diamund of the forge.”

“What,” Carlin said surprised at hearing such a familiar name, “Who are you?”

“You would not know me; I am not from the first time. I used to go by the name of Golah son of Tray.”

“Oh the young upstart, I have indeed heard of you. You are a disgrace to the term man-God, how many have fallen because of your ignorance?”

“Many too many but I was in the dark then, although that is no excuse for my action.”

“So you think that you are enlightened now?” Carlin said in a mocking tone.

“Well more enlightened than I was, I’m still growing in understanding. Speaking of light why is it that you hide in the darkness?”

“I do not hide,” Carlin said angrily, “I am here to be as close as I can to the Great Mistress.”

“I thought that she was everywhere, though as you say I am not as enlightened as you.”

“I never though it is true I am too humble to make that statement.”

“Well forgetting your self-righteousness what have you actually done to honour the Great Mistress?”

“You dare judge me, once an upstart always an upstart.”

“Nothing then, even when you had the chance you failed to honour her.”

“What, when?”

“When you built your cities, why is it they were not built to the glory of the Earth Mother, every home should be a temple to her.”

“No, cities are loathed by the Great Mistress. She prefers us to live with the environment and not create our own.”

“Well I bow down to your experience but I was always led to believe that is was only when you took more than you needed that you lost your oneness with her.”

“Really, and who told you that?”

“Nebu the spider.”

“What, I don't believe it.”

“Well ask him yourself,” Vlah said and produced Nebu.

“Are you really who he says you are.”

“I am and what he says is true.”

“Then I have lived my life as a sham, where did I go wrong?”

“Time long passed. So what now Carlin, is it time to serve your purpose?”

“I await your command.”

“Good, Vlah and Clek will help you organise.”

“Who?”

“These two, Vlah or Golah as was and Clek too is a man-God.”

“Then we shall strive well together and every house shall be a shrine.”

“Good,” Nebu said, “Then I shall leave you to it.”

“What,” Vlah said, “Where are you going?”

“I've got a black widow lady to see, it's time I re-acquainted myself.”

“Be careful,” Vlah said as he watched him scamper off.

After he had gone Carlin said, “Well I guess we've got our toil ahead,” and they made their way back to the light.

As they walked along Vlah said, “So have you any plans to be made?”

“They're all in my head. Yes you will soon see the Great Mistress in all her glory.”

They walked to the other side of Death Mountain and headed south. It was not long before they came to the mighty river. They followed it until they came to a cluster of small huts where they were met by a crowd of men.

“You are not welcome here,” one of them said, “You come with an ill wind behind you.”

“That maybe so,” Vlah said, “But we come with good intention and from us you will only benefit.”

“Really, and why should you want to help us?”

“For the glory of the Earth Mother, she is all giving.”

"I know nothing of this woman."

"And yet she still is all giving. She wants you to have new dwellings, ones made out of stone."

"Well I've got to admit ours are not up to much. They are dirty smelly places. And you say that she is all giving, what does she want in return?"

"Your love, well that and your sweat."

"Well my sweat is yours but my love; well I would have to know a little more about her."

"In time."

Chapter 2

Work on the city began in earnest. The people of the Indus proved willing, industrious workers and word soon travelled down the valley of the great venture. Soon crowds gathered and they too were anxious to help. As the city grew so did the people's understanding of the Earth Mother and by the time it was finished their love for her had bloomed. Vlah and Clek's job was done but to Carlin it was only just beginning. He had a taste for it now and so went on to found another. Tragedy was to strike though and he fell victim to a rock slide in the quarry where he was supervising.

Vlah and Clek knew nothing of this for by then they were back up north debating their next move.

Time dragged quite slowly for them for now they had the taste for adventure but there was none to be found. It was Nebu that came to their aid, "So you are looking for adventure then?"

"Well yes," Vlah said, "Have you something in mind?"

"Now you mention it there is a little matter that wants clearing up."

"Well whatever it is we're your men, another city perhaps?"

"No, the people of the Indus are more than capable now. I've got something else in mind but first I have to give you a little grounding."

"Very well."

"You now know that others survived the great floods and I'm guessing that you have been wondering if any of them were of your kind."

"Now you mention it, we never found any to the north or east."

"That's because they are in the west, far to the west over the great sea."

"Then we are lost, the only boats are small and no match for the sea."

"But theirs are bigger and soon they will be trading with the Indus. It might be a good idea to try and go back with them."

"Well I suppose we could, is there any particular reason?"

"A sharing of knowledge, they have the power to put down their thoughts for all to see."

"What, however could they do that?"

"Through symbols, they represent words. It's a new thing that's going around. The people of the Indus are also trying it; I don't rate it myself personally."

"Really, why not?"

"Well you don't have to remember things you just have to look at the symbols. I don't think you get the full understanding that way."

"There is that, though it must have some good points."

"Well knowledge has less chance of being lost. Anyway before you can do that there's that little matter I was talking about."

"Right."

"First you have to defeat a monster, its called ignorance and it's an ardent foe."

"Ignorance, does it exist in form then?"

"Yes, a hideous creature but with guile and a little light it should not prove a problem."

"And why does it need to be defeated, I mean what has it to do with these symbols?"

“Not the symbols but the seas around you. The people of the Indus are an insular people who know nothing of the outside world. It is their ignorance that you are to defeat. Whilst ignorance lives there's a good chance they will turn on these strangers when they come.”

“Oh, can ignorance do that then?”

“Yes, they fear the unknown and though they are a peaceful people they might easily turn against these strangers.”

“I can see that, however did it come to exist in form though?”

“The barbarian north, no offence Clek.”

“None taken” Clek said, “I have not perceived myself as a North-man for quite some time.”

“Good,” Nebu said, “Anyway the constant years of war and slavery have taken their toll. It has been engrained deep in the mind of the Indus and along with it a distrust of those not their kind.”

“I noticed they were a bit wary when we met them,” Vlah said.

“And you look like them, imagine if you did not.”

“True.”

“Well these thoughts have been manifested into form; it lies in the high hills of Zarg and needs to be defeated before any real progress can be made.”

“Progress?”

“As man gets more aware of his surroundings he grows in awareness of the world. The world is a lot bigger than your immediate surroundings but the people of the Indus don't know that. They have gone as far as they can without outside influence but now they need it to carry on their evolution.”

“And how does this awareness help him?” Clek said.

“Pride, without this awareness he could quickly form an elitist attitude. He needs to see other types of people to realise he is not alone.”

“Oh right,” Clek said, “I can see that.”

“And how are we to defeat this monster then?” Vlah said, “I mean I take it that it won't fall to the sword.”

“True, no the only way you will do it is with patient understanding.”

“Now that's one thing I'm a little short off, and is it dangerous?”

“It could be contagious so be careful,” Nebu said, “Any way I will take you there,” and he guided them to the hills. It was not long before they came to a large cave, “You must go in alone I'm afraid.”

Vlah entered into the cave and let his eyes get used to the darkness. He could not see anything although he could sense something. He was not sure what it was so he said, “Come on out it's time we had a talk.” there was no answer so he said, “Look I know you are in here and I've got all the time in the world so I'm in no hurry.”

The cave echoed, “What do you want from me, why is it that you disturb my peace?”

“I have come to tell you that you have served your purpose, you are not needed any more.”

“Who are you to say that to me?” the voice echoed.

“My name does not matter,” Vlah said content to keep it in ignorance, “I have come to reason with you for the sake of the Indus people.”

“They are my people under my protection. You do not come for their sake for I uphold their cause.”

“At one time maybe but time moves on and your protection is no longer required.”

“Really, and you sound like someone with authority on the subject. So tell me, whatever you call yourself, why should I listen to you?”

“Because I am the one who is talking to you.”

“Don't waste my time.”

“I am of the Indus; if that's the case you should uphold my cause.”

“I tire of you now and your silly games leave me now or you will regret it.”

“What have I to fear from ignorance, you can't harm me because I have long since lost my ignorance? Now I have come to you and you will listen.”

“You know what I am then you know of my power.”

“You have no power in your own right it's your influence that I have come to deal with.”

“And how do you intend to deal with that?” the voice said in a mocking tone.

“I am here to enlighten you. This darkness that you surround yourself in, it's no good for you, no good at all.”

“So now you care for my health then,” the voice mocked, “I'm flattered.”

“Now it's your turn to play silly games is it. So let's look at the big picture then. The people of the Indus have to evolve in understanding; it's a natural state of progression. I'm afraid now because of your fear of strangers you are actually stopping them.”

“What do you mean evolve, and besides my fear of strangers is justified. If you are of the Indus as you say you are, you will know that.”

“I know of our history, I know of the slavery. I know of the pain and sorrow. I also know that your fear is not justified as there are other peaceful people around, just like the Indus.”

“What do you know of the outside world? Nothing because there is nothing outside this world, just ice and more ice.”

I have already broke through the ice wall and travelled all over the world. I have met many people and know of their ways. I speak many tongues and have learned a lot from them. One thing that I have learned and hold close to my heart it that there are good and bad in everyone.”

“You lie, there is no land past the ice, it is the end of the world.”

“That's shows your ignorance. There are also people across the great water, good people who want to trade and share their knowledge with the people of the Indus. Yet, you in your ignorance will try and stop them and hamper the Indus' progress.”

“What, that is not so. They mean to harm my people and whilst I live I will stop them.”

“What do you mean they mean harm up until I just told you, you didn't even know they existed? What madness has befallen you that you make judgement in this way?”

“No, there is no one else only the Indus they are the chosen ones.”

“Too late, you have already accepted the fact so you are ignorant of that no more,” and with that much to Vlah's surprise the room got a little lighter.

“Well maybe there is,” the voice said relenting, “Logic says that there must be. I don't accept that they are friendly though. No, you have not been across the sea so you too are ignorant of the matter.”

“I don't need to go across the sea; I have been told they are friendly.”

“Told, told by who, another ignorant person so just more ignorant talk.”

“I don't talk out of ignorance that is not my way. I was told by Nebu the spider,” and with that the cave got a lot lighter, “I thought that you would know him. Yes he has told me quite a lot so I am no longer ignorant.”

“And you say that he said they were good people, they mean the people of the Indus no harm and have good intention?”

“There is good and bad in everyone, you just need to take time out to find out that's all. You'll soon spot the bad ones.”

“Maybe you are right, maybe I have been a little distrustful.”

“At the time it was the right thing to do but time does move on and you have to move with it. The North men no long exist, they died long ago.”

“Then I will trust once more,” the voice echoed and it was no more. The cave got lighter and Vlah left and went back to Nebu and Clek, “All done.”

Chapter 3

“Good,” Nebu said, “Well now ignorance is gone we can make some progress.”

“Speaking of ignorance,” Vlah said, “Perhaps you can enlighten us about these man-Gods?”

“Sure, they too are remnants from a previous age. Not the first time though for like your kind they came to grief. There are two colonies of them left though colony might be a bit too strong a word as they are but a handful. To recognise each other they use coded sentences so it might be wise to know these.”

“Fair enough,” Vlah said, “Why do they have to hide though?”

“The stigma of the man-God still exists; they made quite an impact in their time.”

“Oh right, I can imagine.”

“You don't need to imagine, you have seen the reality already.”

“Ah, so these sentences then?”

“May your life be one of light or may goodness shine upon you. Either of these will get you recognition. Now they don't have leaders as such but the ones with the most influence are Jaka son of Tral of the Suma colony and Tera son of Froud of the Nilu colony.”

“Right and these will be friendly?”

“I'm afraid like the rest of the colony they have fell to arrogance. They will go through the motions of friendliness but keep an aloofness around you just in case.”

“I don't like the sound of this.”

“It shouldn't concern you. Give them your aid and make your excuses. Don't tarry too long as they are destined to fall a few years after they have completed their work.”

“Is that because of their arrogance?”

“In a way, anyway I mentioned the symbols earlier.”

“Oh right, I've been thinking about that. Didn't you teach me them when I first met you?”

“That was the alphabet of symbols. The symbols they use will be derived from them so you should not have too much trouble learning them.”

“Well I won't argue with that.”

“Good, that will be the knowledge you will be bringing to them.”

“What, is that all?”

“We don't ask too much of you. They have lost the knowledge of the higher Gods because of their arrogance. Their legends, through time and personal misinterpretation have lost a lot of their potency. You will be helping them to rewrite them that's all.”

“Right,” Vlah said, “That doesn't sound too bad when can we start?”

“Not for quite a few years yet the people of the Indus need time to evolve more. You have planted the seeds now it is time to let them grow.”

“And in the meantime?”

“Take time out, go and live amongst the Indus for a while. In fact whilst you are there you might be able to help them along the way.”

“If you're sure.”

“You don't seem too keen.”

“Well we have not long left them.”

“Go north then, see how the people of the Elden are getting on. Do anything you want, you are only wasting time at the moment.”

“So what do you say Clek?” Vlah said, “North or south?”

“North sounds good, give the Indus time to move on a little.”

“Sounds good to me, yes we will do that,” and they set off on their way. Nebu accompanied them for part of the journey and as they went he talked of the people of the Elden. “Since Heald's death they

have started to worship him as the father of the people. When they talk about him they will either call him the all-father or the avenger. They still perceive themselves as man-Gods but in a warped sense.”

“Sorry?”

“They don't believe in eternal youth. Instead they believe, mentally speaking that they can't die as they are already dead.”

“What,” Clek said, “You mean physically die.”

“No, they know they die it's their belief in an afterlife I'm talking about. They believe they go to the land of the dead, a distant fruitful land where everything they desire is theirs. They believe that this is the land they originally came from though they have to live here to prove their worthiness to dwell there.”

“What sort of a rite of passage thing,” Vlah said, “That's a strange outlook, however did that come to be?”

“Through misinterpretation of your teachings I'm afraid.”

“Mine, whatever did I say to make them think that?”

“When you spoke of spiritual rebirth and said your old Self had to die. In their mind they believed that their birth was a spiritual one. They were actually born as man-Gods instead of having to earn the right.”

“I can sort of see that and you said something about having to prove themselves?”

“That was Heald and is wandering mind. He told them that the more they killed the more they proved themselves worthy to live in the land of the dead.”

“I thought I had put him right on that.”

“You did, he just pedalled a lie for his own ends that's all.”

“Well he's gone now though I must admit he's left a lot of damage behind him.”

“For that he will be accountable. Now it is also worth remembering that to these people honour is everything and to them loss of face is a crime.”

“That sounds familiar,” Vlah said with a smile.

“They are a proud people who follow the way of the warrior. Heald has truly brain washed them. Now over time large bands have left and set up kingdoms of their own enslaving the native people in the process. They call their leaders kings yet they owe their allegiance to an over king called Olaf. The people think that within him Heald still lives and so treat him as a God. These are the things you'll need to know to be accepted by the Elden.”

“Right, and do you think they will accept us? I mean not being funny for all our knowledge we do not look like them.”

“You will have to pass yourself off as a friend of the Elden. It is a special privilege that they give to people who prove themselves to be noble warriors. You will have more status than a slave though less than the Elden themselves. Now with this special status you may look one of them in the eye and also speak before spoken to. This is more than a slave can do but there are things you can't do. You may never question their authority nor talk to one of their women without the consent of her guardian. You must never eat before they do and must always step aside for them. They, well except for the ones that have set up kingdoms, are still nomads that count their wealth in their livestock.”

“What goats?”

“No it's cattle now. They have prospered quite a lot of late. Keep those things I have told you in mind and you should fare well with them.”

“They sound like a right people,” Clek said.

“They're misguided that's all. Anyway I think this is as far north as I can go. It's starting to get a little colder now so I will probably see you on your return,” and Vlah put him down on a rock. They carried on their way and were soon crossing the ice wall. At the other side they came across an old man who

had made his home in the mountains away from the rest of the people.

"You are not of the Elden," he said on seeing them.

"No," Vlah said, "We are friends of the Elden. We are a little lost."

"You must be, no one ever comes here, it is the world's edge. Stay awhile, I see no one and though I choose this life sometimes I do get bored."

"Well if you don't mind then," Vlah said and they both sat down with him.

"Yes it can be quite a lonely life sometimes. I am Danu by the way."

"Vlah and this is Clek. So, if I might make so bold, what are you actually doing here?"

"I am looking for the truth. There are things that don't add up in my mind, things that don't fit. I have been here for many years but I am afraid I'm no further forward."

"And these things, they must be important to you."

"Life and death, if we are already dead how is it we have life. I mean what is life and what is death for a start. No, there is something terribly wrong with the Elden's outlook yet I don't know what it is."

"And what do your teachers say?"

"Teachers, do you mean our elders?"

"Yes, you will have to excuse our ignorance for although we are friends of the Elden we know little of your ways."

"Well they do keep their knowledge secret I'm afraid. As to the elders you don't express your doubts to them as that's heresy. No that is why I have come to live at the edge of the world; I have to face these doubts myself."

"And nothing has come from it you say?"

"The only thing I can think of is they have misunderstood what the Great Avenger has said. So you see my problem. How can I go to the elders with that? After all they are the ones that interpret his words."

"Yes, I understand what you are saying, though you are old enough to actually remember Heald."

"I was still scampering on the floor when he went back to rule the Land of the Dead. No, his words are alien to me. I look to the elders for guidance on the matter."

"Well I'll be honest as I said we are not of the Elden and so have a different understanding of life. I'm afraid that I too share those doubts."

"Well what do you believe in then? I mean who is to know what's right and wrong in these cases? You might be right in your understanding."

"We believe in the great Earth Mother, we were born to serve her and uphold her honour. Through doing this we grow in understanding of her and her ways."

"To what purpose though, I mean what's in it for you?"

"Nothing in the material sense, we seem to get an inner sense of joy from doing it."

"I can see that to a point but what about after death though?"

"We live with her and then come back again. Like the bush we bloom again and again."

"What, is that it, there must be something more than that surely. I mean fair enough you might come back again and again but there must be an outcome to it all."

"Oh yes, one day that bloom will bloom and that bloom will never die."

"Do you mean that you will live forever, is that what you are saying?"

"That's right, well not strictly true we believe that we will never fall to age."

"That's impossible, everything falls to age, it's part of the cycle of life."

"We don't believe that. We believe that through understanding we transcend the cycle of life."

"Impossible, not even the all-father could do that. He got old and look at the understanding he had."

"Heald the Wanderer, I'm afraid that he wasn't as understanding as you think."

Chapter 4

“Heald the Wanderer,” Danu said, “Only the elders know him by that name, I only found it out by accident. How is it that you know of this knowledge?”

“I was the one that sent him to the Land of the Dead.”

“Golah the dark one. Have you come for me now?”

“No, I am a teacher I do not collect people for death.”

“That is not what our legends say.”

“Well I'm afraid that I am ignorant of your legends. Tell me about them and we will see how close to the truth they are.”

“They say you were the offspring of a tigress and a bull. Created to guard the Land of the Dead and guide the fallen ones back there.”

“Well that's about as far away from the truth as there is and er, was there anything about Else?”

“They say that he eats the bodies of those who die as cowards.”

“Look I made a mistake when I was younger,” Clek said angrily, “Don't these people ever forget.”

Danu looked at Clek nervously and said, “I am no coward, you are not here to eat me are you?”

Vlah laughed and said, “No you are safe, Else too is a teacher.”

“So you actually knew Heald then,” Danu said calming down slightly, “What was he like?”

“He was a war monger. No, he was not a good man at all.”

“So why did you bring him back to rule the Land of the Dead then? I'm confused.”

“I didn't. I just killed him that's all. There is no Land of the Dead; it was all in Heald's mischievous mind. No I killed him because he was warping your peoples' minds. In their ignorance they caused a lot of trouble.”

“And his teachings, was there truth in any of it?”

“A little, not much.”

“That's why it didn't add up in my mind, it was all one big lie.”

“Well he did have the truth, we taught it him but I'm afraid he twisted it to suit his purpose. He was a war monger, pure and simple.”

“Will you teach me, there are others too, many have their doubts.”

“Bring them to us then. In secret though for we don't want to alert the elders of our presence here. One thing though, you do realise that after you know what we know you will no longer be able to live amongst the Elden.”

“I don't see that as a problem, I don't live amongst them now.”

“The others too.”

“I will tell them that, though where are we to go?”

“Well you are at one end of the world what about the other?”

“Whatever you say, the further away the better I say.”

“Just head north, north west then. Now you say that there are many others.”

“Quite a few.”

“We will teach them a few at a time and when they are sufficient in number they can go en masse. It is better that way.”

“Yes I can see the truth in that, though I am guessing the ones that have been taught will be restless.”

“Understandably, you must tell them to be patient though for there is safety in numbers. So the next question is, when do you want to start?”

“As soon as possible so er, how long do you think it will take?”

“Six days if you are a quick learner. I will teach a couple as will Else. When we have taught them they can teach and so on.”

“Yes, I can see that happening though I guess you will need to teach me first so I know what I'm talking

about when I talk to them.”

“Good idea, then let the lesson begin.” Danu was duly enlightened and went back to the people. Before long he was back with four others and the process began again. Within a few months they were ready and raring to go.”

“So all set then?” Vlah said.

“Ready, willing but I'm not sure about able.”

“Why is that then?”

“Well I'm not sure that Olaf will let us go and if he does then how long before we are hunted down.”

“Oh so why don't you think he will let you go then?”

“We have no reason to give him. We are not over populated at the moment so we have no excuse.”

“Then maybe we need a distraction,” Vlah said and thought a while. “Do you still know the secret passage?”

“Secret passage,” Danu said in surprise, “I didn't know there was one.”

“We will show it to you. If you use it you will get a good start. When you are ready to go Else will take you there and whilst he is doing that I will distract Olaf.”

“Fair enough, we are ready now.”

“Well I was hoping to catch Olaf on his own. When would be the best time for that?”

“Most of the time actually he lives a very solitary life for a king. He says that he needs to be on his own to be at one with Heald.”

“Right,” Vlah said, “Well take me to him. First though I've been thinking. Maybe, if Else is agreeable, we will come with you. We could show you the way.”

“It will pass a little time,” Clek said, “Yes, I'm in for it.”

“Very well then,” Vlah said and they went to the camp. Danu gathered his friends and went with Else to the secret passage and Vlah went to Olaf who was in a large tent eating.

“What are you doing here?” Olaf said spitting food out as he spoke, “You dare to look me in the eye.”

“I am Golah, the dark one. When I look you in the eye there is a purpose for it.”

“No,” Olaf said nearly choking, “It is not my time yet.”

“It's not you I am actually coming for. I have come for Heald because he has escaped from the Land of the Dead.”

“Then you must take him back,” Olaf said with a marked tone of relief.

“I intend to,” Vlah said and drew his sword, “But I'm afraid as he lives within you, you must come as well.”

“What,” Olaf said, “No,” and he was no more.” Vlah caught up with the rest of them just the other side of the secret passageway and said, “That should give us a little time,” and they set off on their way.

News of Olaf's death spread quickly through the camp and with the absence of so many people the remainder put two and two together and were anxious to give them what for. Tradition dictated that they had to bide their time though for two weeks of mourning were needed to make sure that Olaf arrived safely in the Land of the Dead. Power came to his cousin Delu, who if the truth be known was not really looking for revenge but had to go through the motions. After the allotted time he sent chariots to the outlying king to tell them what had happened. Vlah and the rest of them had long since passed by then though so it was a pretty futile exercise. The kings sent messages to other kings even further out but that too came to nothing. Vlah had crossed the Great Plains by then and was travelling through the vast forests that lay beyond them. He took Danu as far as the sea and after bidding them farewell left him to his own devices.

Vlah and Clek travelled around the great forest for a few years before making their way home. Much to their surprise the Indus had made astounding progress. Towns had sprung up everywhere and they were greeted where ever they went.

"May the Great Mistress keep you from harm," the first man they met on entering their first settlement said, "You are strangers if I am not mistaken."

"That's right," Vlah said, "We have just arrived."

"Then you are in need of work I guess. My name is Just and I am in need of a couple of labourers. You both look young and strong, how does it appeal to you?"

"Work," Vlah said as the word was alien to him, "What actually does it entail?"

"Unloading boats, nothing too heavy and the pay is the best you'll find. I take it that you need some lodgings as well."

"We have nowhere to stay."

"I have a place, it's not much but the rent's pretty reasonable and it's close to the docks."

"Well it sounds good, when would you want us to start?"

"First thing tomorrow, I could take you to your lodgings now if you like. My wife is a good cook and you have timed it right for now we usually eat."

"It must be fate then," Vlah said with a smile.

"Then follow me, I will show you around the place later if you like. You'll soon get used to the city and its ways. You must be from the country."

"Yes, you could say that."

"Come here for a better life I'll wager, I wouldn't blame you. You've got to make the most of life I say. No when I came here it was the best move I ever made. Don't get me wrong farming's alright but you see the same things again and again. Here though you meet people from far off places and hear interesting stories, I could never go back again, I tell you."

"You used to be a farmer then?" Clek said.

"Yes, 30 years man and boy. I've seen some changes in that time I can tell you. Yes with the Great Mistress' guidance we are indeed a prosperous people." He showed them their lodgings and with what they had been used to it was very comfortable. They ate with them and were soon back in their room.

"Well he certainly can talk I'll say that for him," Clek said, "He's definitely got a lot to say for himself."

"Yes he does go on. I suppose it goes with the city as it seems a faster pace of life. Any way I guess we had better find Nebu and find out our next move."

"I'm here," Nebu said and scampered out from a dark corner, "You will need to rest as you have a hard day tomorrow."

"Really, so what are our plans?"

"There's a ship coming in 2 days that will take you to where you want to go. Have a word with Captain Nelo and see if you can work your passage."

"Work our passage?" Vlah said

"Instead of paying. You'll have to get used to money now I'm afraid. It inspires greed but it is a necessary evil."

"So let's get this right, you work and get money for doing it?"

"That's right, just think of it as selling your sweat and you will be alright."

"Right, and this work thing, is it pretty hard?"

"Some, it depends on your job."

"Job?"

"The type of work that you do. The world has moved on quite a long way since you were last here."

"So I see."

"But don't worry it will only be for a few days. You board the ship and cross the great sea and then your real work begins."

"True."

"I will see you over the other side of the sea, and then I will guide you to whoever you are supposed to

meet.”

“I was going to say, it would take me forever to find them otherwise.”

“They will be quite nearby actually.”

“You think of everything.”

“We don't want to make life too hard, especially after the day you'll be having tomorrow.”

“I'll get an early night then.”

Chapter 5

Morning saw Vlah and Clek working from first light. The day dragged and when it was over they returned to their lodgings tired and blistered. With neither the time nor inclination to look around the city they went straight to bed. The next day saw them talking to Captain Nelo and boarding a ship to Ur so their docking days were pretty much over. They eventually arrived at Ur and were guided by Nebu to a crowded ale house. As they waited, having a drink a large man came in and on seeing a group of his friends said, “May goodness shine upon you.”

“That's the man,” Clek said, “What's our next move?”

“We have to approach them I guess,” Vlah said and went over and said to them, “And may your life be one of light.”

They looked at Vlah strangely and one of them said, “Who are you?”

“I am Golah son of Tray and this is my friend Else.”

“I am Jaka son of Tral, what manner of man are you Golah, son of Tray?”

“I am a higher God, I am from the east.”

“I thought that all of the eastern colony was destroyed?”

“There is always one that gets away to tell the tale but you are right the eastern colonies have long fallen.”

“And you say that you are a higher God. You have knowledge; I thought it was long forgotten.”

“It was kept alive by Diamund son of Novak, it was he that told me.”

“I have heard of Novak, you must be speaking with truth. Come and join us for we are in need of news.”

Vlah and Clek joined them and Jaka said, “So what brings you to Ur?”

“We thought it time we travelled, up until recently we thought we were all that was left of our kind.”

“No there still are a few that remain,” Jaka said and introduced his friends; “We had lost contact with the eastern colonies many, many years ago.”

“That would explain it; we have lived an isolated life and know nothing of the outside.”

“Well we might be able to help you there,” Cult, one of Jaka's friend's said, “Then maybe you could tell us of your world.”

“I could do that.”

“Good,” Cult said, “Do you know of our history?”

“Not before Novak I'm afraid. They kept us in ignorance about a lot of things I'm afraid. In fact that is what caused their downfall.”

“The first timers did the same to us though that was only the knowledge to get us to the next stage. They did tell us of life during the first time though. Yes they talked of great cities and noble heroes both benevolent to their slaves and high in honour. We used to rule the world and now look at us.”

“Enough of that talk Cult,” Jaka said reprimanding him. “Be patient for our day will come once more.”

“I apologise, may I continue?”

“Yes, but be mindful of what you say.”

“They were indeed a noble people; our colonies stretched the length and breadth of the world. Our ships traded gold and silver and the finest spices you could ever find. We brought refinement to the

ignorant savage and most of them knew and appreciated this. Some though, they wanted a thing called freedom. Freedom to what, starve. In their ignorance they would not have survived. No, we fed them; we clothed them and gave them shelter. In return all we wanted was them to work for us, nothing much to ask really. To some though it was too much. They escaped and formed colonies of their own. We suppressed them whenever we could and generally they were no match for us. Generally I say for one particular group proved pretty tiresome. We had sent a ship to deal with them but we had drastically underestimated their strength. For the first time in our history we felt the humiliation of defeat. We could not tolerate that for if one colony got away with it what was to stop others chancing their arm. We sent three ships with our finest warriors to deal with them. Novak, Sinta and Caspia were the captains, all noted for their prowess. They set sail to a heroes departure with the intent of destroying these savages though fate was to intervene. About half way there the world just shook beneath them and great tidal waves came to be. The ships were carried miles of course and when they eventually came to land it was a desolate water washed landscape. Floods the like of which the Earth had never seen had occurred and to the survivors it was a brave new world. The captains had different ideas of where to settle so Novak took his people and went east, Sinta took his people and went west and Caspia stayed here and we are all that remained.”

“Are you from the first time then?”

“No,” Cult said, “There were other survivors, not man-Gods like us just mortal savages. The first timers mated and we were the offspring of that outcome. Well anyway we grew in strength and like your people rose up against the first timers for keeping us ignorant. After their fall we had the power though the savages in their ignorance rose up against us and we were driven underground.”

“Right, and you mentioned another colony?”

“That's right, it is only fairly recently we renewed our contact with them. We found out about them quite by chance as a matter of fact. Yes with the advancement of trade our communications have been re-established.”

“So you see them quite regular then?”

“Pretty regular,” Jaka said, “We are going over pretty soon actually. You are most welcome to accompany us if you like.”

“Well if you wouldn't mind, we would like to grow in understanding of our people.”

“That you certainly will,” Jaka said, “So you were going to tell us of your history.”

“Not a lot to say really. We too rose up against the higher Gods though our main enemy turned out to be the ice wall. It drove us into confinement and a fight for the little land that was left. Great wars came to be and by the time it was over there were very few people left. Not just the man-Gods suffered, everyone did.”

“Sounds like a pretty traumatic time, I think we got off pretty lightly compared to you.”

“And the western colony, did they suffer a similar fate?”

“Pretty much so, the savages proved to be an ungrateful bunch after all we did for them.”

“They did not know when they were well off,” Vlah said though his irony was lost on Jaka.

“My thought exactly, I can see we are of the same mind. You will get on well with the others we have future plans that might be to your taste.”

“Really, tell me more.”

“It is time we took back what is rightfully ours. We have been ruled by lesser beings for far too long. No, our destiny is to rule not to hide away in ale houses.”

“Are there many of you then?”

“We are but a handful but we have plans for expansion so our numbers will soon increase.”

“Right, could be dangerous that. I would think that you wouldn't want to alert too many to your existence.”

“That's a risk we will have to take. Don't worry we will be discreet. No, we won't be standing on street corners if that's what you think.”

“No,” Vlah said with a laugh, “That would be foolish.”

“My thoughts exactly. Tell me Golah, have you ever come across the term writing?”

“No, I'm afraid that's new to me.”

“It's quite a new thing, well the people of the first time had it but it got lost.”

“Right, so what actually is it?”

“It's the recording of knowledge through symbols. We intend to record our words so that others will be enlightened and follow our path.”

“Right, one thing though, once they are enlightened how will you find them?”

“They will find us, the man-God seems to have a homing instinct, you found us and you were not even looking.”

“True.”

“Well anyway when we are sufficient in numbers we will take our place again. These inferior beings won't stand a chance against us. You can give us your aid if you like; I would say that between us it should all be covered.”

“Yes why not but I'll have to admit I know nothing of this writing.”

“You won't need to, it's just your knowledge that we are after.”

“Well it's there for your disposal, so what do you want to actually do then?”

“We thought that we would record the history, symbolically of course and sprinkle the knowledge throughout.”

“That sounds good, and the knowledge is to be hidden in the names?”

“Sorry?”

“Like before,” and went on to explain the alphabet of symbols to them.

“I never knew that, where ever did you get that from?”

“That is the knowledge of the higher Gods. With that you could hide the six days of creation in.”

“What?”

“The six days that it takes to create a man-God, I thought that was what you were talking about.”

“It sounds like you have come at the right time. All we were going to record were the levels of understanding. Yes fate must definitely be with us on this.”

“Well we can't argue with that then. No we will gladly help you though I'm afraid our time is rather limited.”

“Really, well we weren't planning on taking our time with it.”

“Oh no, it's just after it's done we won't be around for too long.”

“You don't intend to join us then. Imagine all that power that will be at your disposal.”

“Not for me thanks, I have to go back to the people of the Indus for that is my destiny.”

“Well no man can go against his destiny I suppose. I will say though I hardly know you, you will be sadly missed.”

“I will try and return when I can, though that is in the future for there is much to do before then.”

“True,” Jaka said and they talked some more. Vlah and Clek stayed the night and for a couple more.

Eventually they travelled over to the people of the Nilu and met up with the others of their kind. They proved to be just as arrogant as the others although Vlah and Clek said nothing only bided their time until their job was done. The book itself did not take too long to formulate and soon it was passed to an eager audience. Vlah and Clek made their excuses and left. They did not go back to the Indus but stayed amongst the people of the Nilu learning their language and their ways. They found them a friendly industrious race that had an active imaginative mind and could turn their hands to almost anything.

Jaka and his would be band of revolutionaries grew in number although not sufficient to cause trouble and took to communal living. They shunned the outside world taking comfort in the word and growing in understanding. Eventually they forsook their plans for world domination and just lived for the family for that was how they were starting to see themselves. They distrusted outsiders who in turn started to distrust them and animosity grew between them. Not really a good thing as the family was too small in number to defend themselves. As more time passed animosity turned to violence and the family was set upon and their lives came to an end. The book though was not lost for by then it had been copied and passed around. Although they did not have the full understanding of it those who read it recognised their level of truth and kept it to their hearts.

The Final Years

Vlah and Clek knew nothing of the man-Gods final demise for when it happened they were further north. They had taken the job as labourers as they found they had developed quite a taste for it. They absorbed all they found and kept a close eye on things that were going on around them. The progress of the book went to the upper echelons of Egyptian society and as it worked its way down to the people it started to be accepted by a few. Now to the Egyptians steeped in the old Gods they were seen as subversive and mistrust grew between them.

The upper classes with their deeper level of understanding saw it for what it was the Book of Life. The Book of the Dead had fallen out of favour to these imaginative beings for instead of hoping for a decent afterlife they wanted to eat of the Tree of Life and live forever. Others though saw things differently, their purpose along with its rewards lay in the old ways and they were to defend it vigorously as if their jobs depended on it. The process did not happen quickly and the followers of the new book did not get strong enough to make a real impression but fate was to move in their favour. One of the books followers actually became a Pharaoh and taking the book to heart proceeded to change the state religion. Not only that, to isolate the old order he built a new capital and took his court there. Now the new religion, even with the living God that the Pharaoh was backing was still very much a minority and the people led by the champions of the old order were turning against them. They saw them as renegade Egyptians and the Pharaoh a heretical God. Now being a God though they could not kill him so instead he and those who chose to follow him were led into exile and another took his place. Others though, with a deeper level of understanding chose to stay and went underground meeting in secret and growing further in understanding. Vlah and Clek kept themselves to themselves whilst all this was happening although their wisdom and understanding often attracted unwanted attention. It was not long after the mass exodus they were approached with recruitment in mind. It was the ganger, their immediate supervisor. He called them over and said, "You two are a bit too wise to be common labourers, is there something I should know?"

"Nothing I can think of," Vlah said.

"Let's look at it logically," the ganger said, "Your status is no greater than slaves. You could do a lot better than this, what's stopping you?"

"We like it here," Clek said, "It keeps us in shape."

"No, there's more to it than that, you could get a better job and go to sports." (Vigorous exercises to try and keep the body toned. Tended only to be used by the upper echelons and wealthier members of society)

"Don't interest us," Vlah said, "No, we are happy here, what's the matter, is our work not up to scratch?"

"No there is nothing wrong with it. No, there is something about you; you seem to stand out in a crowd. Where did you say that you came from?"

"I didn't," Vlah said, "But we come from the land of the Indus."

"You are a long way from home and yet you speak like a native, how long have you been here?"

"A fair few years, more than you can imagine."

"And are all the Indus like you, I mean as big." Vlah and Clek were quite a lot taller than most of the Egyptians they met.

"Some, not many."

"I thought not, and wisdom, are they all as wise as you?"

"I wouldn't like to say, not really my place."

"I have listened to you dispensing your wisdom to the others. You give good sound advice; you are more than just labourers, what are you, teachers or something?"

“We have turned our hand to it now and again; we tend to lead a varied life.”

“And what exactly do you teach. I have heard your words and they don't sound orthodox.”

“They are to us, why the interest?”

“They sound pretty similar to mine that's all. You ought to meet up with a few friends of mine; you'll find their conversation pretty enlightening.”

Vlah looked at Clek and said, “Sounds pretty interesting.”

As if to enhance the case the ganger said, “And who knows, if we get on you might find promotion waiting.”

“We'll come for the experience,” Clek said, “As for promotion; well if we weren't happy with what we were doing we'd get another job.”

“Oh,” the ganger said somewhat taken aback, “Well tonight at dusk we will see you at my place,” and told them where it was. They walked off and Vlah said laughing, “You did not need to eat him.”

“Well it sounded like he was hungry for knowledge another mouth to feed,” and laughed.

The rest of the day went quickly and they were soon at the man's place. There were five others and they all looked intense, “So tell me,” The ganger said, “Are you of the old school?”

“Sorry?” Vlah said pleading ignorance.

“The old Gods or are you like us and follow the new one?”

“Well neither really, we follow the Earth Mother.”

“And yet you have good understanding. Tell me something, have you ever come across the Book of Life?”

“We have heard of it, it caused quite a stir.”

“Indeed, and what are your views on it?”

“Well I guess it's symbolic and yet it also seems that it is literal, quite confusing really.”

“Oh it's symbolic; we are trying to work out what it actually means. Why not join us; they say that if you truly understand it you will live forever.”

“We could sit in awhile if you like, so how far have you actually got?”

“We believe that we live in the realms of darkness, although through light we can transcend it and become at one with God.”

“Right, you mention light?”

“Knowledge, God, Nature, that kind of thing.”

“And this darkness, how did it come to be?”

“Through man going against God's will, he did this when he ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and knew good from evil.”

“Do you think that symbolic or literal?”

“Symbolic of course, man was created flawed though within him lies the Divine Spark. Through light it grows in understanding and gets closer to God.”

“Very similar to our beliefs though I can't remember seeing that in the script.”

“We use others sources as well but in the book we think it was when God sent Adam and Eve out of Eden.”

“Could be I suppose so what would that actually make Eden?”

“Tricky that, we think that it is light.”

“Really why is that then?”

“Well that's where the Tree of Life is and not only that when we left Eden we went to live in the realms of darkness.”

“It would make sense I suppose, how would the snake fit in though?”

“Sorry?”

“I thought that the light would have no wickedness, surely it is just goodness.”

“Well he was cursed for his actions.”

“Maybe but he wasn't cast out and besides he should not have been there in the first place.”

“Well that's the best we could come up with, what did you come up with?”

“I think it is talking about the evolution of man. When Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge it is symbolic of man evolving free will.”

“What?”

“They knew good from evil and became like Gods, before they were animals.”

“No,”

“Oh yes, they did not know they were naked before they ate the fruit.”

“You know I think he's right,” one of the other said, “So if that's the case what would the Garden of Eden be?”

“I would say instinctive living, when you are an animal and are controlled by your instinct.”

“So if that's the case,” The same man said, “Eden's not light, it's actually darkness.”

“Well if you want to put it in those terms.”

“Amazing, I'm Faya by the way.”

“Vlah and this is Clek.”

“So if the garden was instinctive living, what were Cain and Abel?”

“To understand that you would have to know what Adam actually was.”

“I suppose so.” Faya said and thought awhile, “What would your thoughts be on that?”

“Personally I would say it was a state of mind. When Adam left the garden it meant that man had evolved free will. So from this evolution two types of man evolved.”

“Maybe after all there are many races.”

“That's what we got anyway.”

“I've heard that there is knowledge hidden in the book I don't know how though.”

“I too have heard this, there's a school of thought that says it's hidden in the names.”

“Oh mind you there is a lot of names in it I would know where to start.”

“That would mean there was a lot of knowledge.”

“Getting to it though.”

“True, they also say that it is hidden in the names of the old Gods.”

“Lot of good that is.”

“Well I don't know about the names but I have realised how they interact.”

“Really?”

“Yes, take Adam as an example. Now if he is symbolic of free will you know that Cain and Abel as they were his offspring came from him. So from free will you get two things, whatever Cain and Abel stand for.”

“Right, but didn't you say earlier they were two types of men?”

“It works on many levels. So that's direct descent. Sometimes the interaction is brother and sister and this would mean akin or similar.”

“So from free will you get something that is similar to another, right.”

“And the third interaction would be married, so something married to something else would give you and that would be what the offspring stands for.”

“Yes I can see that, what about Isis and Osiris then, they were both akin and married to each other.”
(Isis stands for blessed with understanding blessed understanding or spiritual wisdom. Osiris stands for seeing understanding (blessed with knowing loving understanding). So basically you can understand spiritual wisdom and through this you get loving understanding or you understand God. Spiritual wisdom is knowledge pertaining to God so understanding it is understanding God. Now blessed understanding married to loving understanding gives you Horus or spirit seeing knowing (loving

understanding) or the Holy Spirit).

“Yes, taken literally and it could be grounds for interbreeding.”

(The Egyptian Pharaohs married their sisters in honour of Isis and Osirus)

Chapter2

The rest of the evening wore on pretty quickly and soon they were walking back. “So why didn't you tell them what the names actually stood for?” Clek said as they walked along.

“It's better that they find out for themselves it will promote a better understanding.”

“So what do you think of their progress then?”

“They're getting there, quite a long way to travel though. Anyway it's time to move on, where next?”

“Back east I suppose, call on Ur on the way back.”

“Not a bad idea,” Vlah said as they arrived at their place. As they were packing Nebu made himself known, “Moving on?”

“I thought it best; people are starting to ask questions.”

“And are you going back east?”

“That's the plan, well unless you have other ideas of course.”

“Well there are a couple of things you can do but they are on your way.”

“Sure.”

“Have a good night's sleep and I will see you early in the morning,” Nebu said and scampered off.

The next morning saw them leaving early and it was not long before they were crossing the desert.

“So,” Vlah said, “What's first then?”

“There's a monster to defeat, this one's pretty dangerous so watch your step.”

“What sort of monster?”

“It's the fear of death.”

“I thought that was already beaten.”

“By you and Clek yes. It's the people's fear of death.”

“And where is it?”

“Not far, it's all around you in fact.”

“What the desert, I see no fear here.”

“In time, the journey's only just begun.”

As they walked on the days came and went. The beating sun dehydrated them and the fear of death started to take its hold. It was Clek that was struck by it. “This is a journey that we should not be making; there is no end in sight.”

“There is always an end,” Vlah said surprised at his surge of sudden down heartedness.

“Yes, but I fear it will be ours.”

“You have made worst journeys than this, just take it one step at a time and you'll do fine.”

“I'm not sure, there is something foreboding about this one. Death seems to be all around me.”

“It's just a fear; it does not exist outside your mind.”

“It seems pretty real to me, can't you see it?”

“No, there is nothing there.”

“To your left, a dark shadowy figure.”

“I don't see it; ask it what it wants from you.”

“It says my life.”

“And ask it how it intends to take it.”

“Time.”

“Tell it to go away as it is just wasting yours.” and with that the shadow disappeared. It had left its mark though for now Clek was restless and as the days wore on he seemed captive to despair. He was

now physically weaker and had trouble keeping up with Vlah. Time and again the shadow made itself known to him and sapped more and more of his resolve. Eventually he just gave up. "No, I can't go on." he said and collapsed on the hot desert floor, "You go on, I don't want to hold you back."

"I have all the time in the world. You are used to a lot worse than this, what's come over you?"

"It's no good, I can't go on, it's too strong for me."

"I don't understand, this fear of death should not affect you, its other peoples," and then to Nebu,

"What's going on?"

"It appears he still has a fear of death, hasn't he been tested?"

"Tested, I was not aware that you had to be."

"Oh yes, it's alright having the knowledge but you have to go through the experience."

"I never, well I don't think so anyway."

"Many times, your whole life was a test."

"What about Clek though, is there anything I can do to help him?"

"You will have to face the fear yourself."

"I cannot see him, how can I face him if he does not reveal himself to me."

"You will have to go to his lair, a very dangerous place it's on the outskirts of the Netherworld. I must warn you though he will be at his strongest."

"It must be done, is it far?"

"Just a sentence away, though to some it's a life sentence. Say the words, I have no fear not even fear itself. One final thing though you will not be facing the fear of death you will be facing death itself."

"It must be done," Vlah said and then repeated the sentence. The ground swallowed him up and he plunged for what seemed like miles. He found himself in a large dark cavern just in time to see Clek being dragged into what looked like a bottomless pit. The figure returned and Vlah took time to take in the spectacle before him. It wore a large grey coat that covered its face and smelt of rancid human flesh. It pointed a semi decomposed finger at him and said, "Now you have saved me a journey."

"I've come for my friend," Vlah said not intimidated by the figure much to his surprise.

"You'll be joining him soon, once you come you can never go back."

"You can't harm me I'm already dead."

"What, what non sense are you talking about?"

"I have told you and so is my friend so I would strongly advise you to let him go."

"Really, you presume to threaten me?"

"Just making you aware. If you perceive it as a threat then who am I to argue. I'm afraid that the man you took is not a mortal. He does not belong to the Netherworld but in the land of the Gods."

"No, no this cannot be all the immortals have long since gone."

"All but two, I used to go by the name of Golah's of Tray."

"No, you moved on many years ago."

"Look let's be realistic, my understanding tells you I am no mortal. I must be who I said I am as I can be no one else. How else would I know that name for a start?"

"And you friend, he too is an immortal?"

"That's right, I enlightened him myself. He is too evolved to go back on the cosmic wheel so what are you actually going to do with him?"

"That's quite a problem; it could easily upset the balance. I can't go in, I am forbidden, I can only go as far as the entrance."

"Do you mean I am going to have to fetch him out myself?"

"It's the only thing I can think of, I am just the gatekeeper."

"You took him there, surely that makes you responsible?"

"Well yes, but I am forbidden so that doesn't leave you much choice."

"I have two choices, fetch him back myself or put it in the hands of the higher beings."

"No, you can't do that it might be the end of me."

"You should have thought about that before. No you have left me in quite a dilemma," and pretended to think awhile, "Look I tell you what; if I do this for you I will be helping you out."

"Well yes."

"So in return I would expect you to do something for me to uphold the balance."

"And what would that be?"

"I want you to take away the fear of death from the Egyptians. I am not asking you to take death away, just its fear that's all."

"I could do I suppose."

"Very well I will fetch him, is there anything I should know?"

"Just see the processor and explain what has happened."

"And he will release him to me?"

"No, he will take you to the judge who will release him. Just step into the pit and you will float down."

Vlah stepped into the pit and sure enough he did float down. He found himself in a great hall with countless people around him. Now although they had cast off their physical bodies they were solid in form and looked in the prime of health. They were just milling around waiting for their names to be called so he looked around to see if he could find Clek After a few minutes he saw him talking to a group of women so he went over and said, "Come on, we have a desert to cross."

"But I am dead, my journey is over."

"There's been a bit of a mix up, I've come to take you back."

"What seriously?"

"Yes, we have to go and see the processor; do you know where he is?"

"Sure, I'll take you to his post," and did that. The processor was sceptical at first but when the true extent of the situation came to light he went into a panic. "No, this can't be. He has well overstepped the mark. I will take you to the judge immediately before this gets too out of hand. This is no place for you." and took him to the judge who was off the same mind. "You must go back straight away; I will take you there myself."

As they were walking along Vlah said, "So what actually happens here?"

"Well I can't really tell you that, the secrets of the Netherworld are best left that way."

"That's a shame; mind you I have been here now so I can draw my own conclusions."

"Well tell me what you think then."

"I think that you come here just to get ready for your next life. That is what the processor is for."

"And me?"

"Well you either judge on actions of the previous life or how much the person has evolved in understanding, I'm not sure which."

"That's because it's both. Well you do have quite a grasp I suppose so I can tell you the rest. It is true what you say. I judge people's worthiness for the next life. It's mainly to ascertain what their next life will be. If they have grown in understanding quite a lot in their last life it will be a life to promote spiritual awareness. If they have made a nuisance of themselves through abuse of their perceived power they will be put in the position of victim next time."

"And is that to do with spiritual laws?"

"Well yes but also to give the Soul the experience from both ends of the spectrum."

"Oh right, I can see that."

"Now after the decision has been made the processor takes over. He selects the life and wipes out the memory of the previous life. When a suitable opportunity comes along he dispatched them. Anyway we are here now; I don't expect I will be seeing you again."

Vlah and Clek found themselves back in the desert.

"I feel I have failed you," Clek said

"What," Vlah said in surprise, "Why?"

"Because of me you did not defeat the monster, you failed the test."

"I didn't, let's just say we came to terms," and they both walked on.

Chapter 3

The journey itself was uneventful though when they got there is was a different story. The city was being besieged by nomadic tribesmen and they could not gain entry. Instead they went back to the Indus where the people had taken refinement to the extreme. Its capital had all the makings of a modern city, indoor toilets, a sewage works and restaurants where ever you looked. It had also developed a huge degree of bureaucracy which neither of them found to their tastes. They had lost the true understanding of the Earth Mother and were basically just going through the motions with ritualised service. Though still a peaceful people, greed had entered their hearts for their prosperity had, had its usual negative effect.

"I can't live amongst this," Vlah said to Nebu, "Whatever have you dragged us here for?"

"You came of your own free will, besides it's not here that your next adventure lies."

"I was going to say, once man has avarice in his heart there is nothing I can do."

"My thoughts exactly. No, it's the people of the Elden that is your next step."

"Really, that seems like one extreme to the other, are they still set on world domination?"

"Oh yes, that has not changed, though they don't think that they are born Gods any more so some progress has been made."

"Right, so what's on the agenda then?"

"First I will have to enlighten you about them."

"Oh sorry, I seem to be getting ahead of myself."

"Not to worry, you'll catch up. Anyway as I said they don't perceive themselves as Gods now though they do call themselves the noble ones. Their elders are now priests and they have evolved a complex religious system of Gods and ritualised service."

"Really, so what about Heald then, do they still worship him?"

"Well yes, after a fashion, over time he has evolved into Indra."

"How would that happen, it sounds nothing like Heald?"

"Not Heald, that's been long forgotten. No it came from the wanderer."

"Right, wanderer, Indra I can see it."

"Good, now another development that might interest you, the higher priests have started to talk in rhyme. They see it as a higher level of understanding so it might be a good idea to practice."

"I don't know about that, anything else we need to know?"

"Their unity has long since fragmented. They spend a lot of time in feuds with each other. Don't underestimate them though for if the outside threat was made they would soon band together."

"Right, I'll bare that in mind."

"They have also developed a hierarchy. At the top are the nobles from where the warriors come, then the priest and finally the ordinary tribesman. There is a fourth class the conquered, the most inferior. These live segregated from the rest in small clusters."

"I take it that that's where we are heading."

"Initially but your prowess as a poet should get you noticed so it won't be long."

"What prowess, even when we used to do it in my learning years I wasn't that good."

"You'll soon pick it up. Believe me you will need it to get anywhere with these people."

"And once I am in with them?"

“One step at a time I will get back to you when the time is right.”

“Fair enough, it looks like we are crossing the ice wall once again.”

“It's virtually gone, which opens up another problem.”

“It does?”

“Before long the Elden will cross it. It will be safe for awhile though as they are too busy feuding but it will come.”

“And the Indus?”

“Not much chance I'm afraid, they'll be no match for them.”

“Maybe it was not a good idea taking away their fear of strangers then, it appears I've left them open.”

“It had to be done for at the time it was the right thing to do. It wasn't just their growth you were promoting it was a mutual exchange.”

“Well we went to Ur and it was being besieged, how long before they fall. Sounds to me it was a pointless task you gave us.”

“Not pointless, it all had a purpose. The knowledge will get through no matter what.”

“If you say so, it just seems to me a lot of pain for a little knowledge.”

“Believe me that knowledge is well worth the cost. Now I do know that you have a personal attachment to the Indus but don't let it distract you from your purpose.”

“Maybe you are right, besides these are not the Indus that I once knew.”

“People may come and go but the word remains forever, and as for the people of the Indus, they are good people, a little misguided that's all. There are still colonies there, remnants from those that fled the invasion of the North men.”

“What about the people of the Elden?”

“They will keep, there's plenty of time. No the people still live in much the same way as they always have.”

“Well if you don't mind and Clek's agreeable.”

“Yes why not, it will be just like reliving history.”

“Very well then,” Vlah said and they set off on their way. Their journey itself was uneventful so I won't bore you with the details but eventually they arrived. It was not long before they came to a settlement which much to their surprise they found was full of elderly people.

“Where are all the young ones?” Vlah said to the first man they met, “Are they all on a hunt?”

“Only for work, most of them left for the city. I wouldn't blame them; if I was young I'd do the same.”

“I have been myself, it was not to my taste.”

“What, really? Everyone I know that's been there speaks highly of it. They say you can make a name for yourself and live a good lifestyle.”

“Not for me, life seems to go too fast.”

“I have heard that but look around you, you cannot really call this life, its one big struggle. No my sons have gone and gave me a promise that when they have made their mark they will send for me.”

“And you won't miss this place?”

“Not at all. Mind you I will never leave so that a question not worth asking. Their promises are worth nothing, I am destined to die here. What brings you here anyway, this is not a place for the young.”

“We are just travellers, anxious to learn.”

“You won't find anything of interest here, well except the Cave of Glasnau perhaps.”

“Sorry?”

“The Cave of Glasnau. They say if you stop the night there you will wake up the next morning and know everything. It's only a legend; no one has ever tried it.”

“Really, why not?”

“Two reasons. Should you not be worthy of this knowledge then you won't wake up at all and besides

it's only a legend.”

“I always thought that legends were based on truth.”

“When you have lived as long as I have you will see things differently. No it's a nice place to visit though so it wouldn't be a wasted journey.”

“And is it far?”

“About half a mile in that direction” the man said and pointed, “You can't miss it.”

They thanked him and walked off. As they walked along Clek said, “I have never heard of this cave, do you think it is just a story?”

“Hard to tell, Nebu would know,” and called him. He soon appeared and said, “The Cave of Glasnau, if legends are true it could be a dangerous place.”

“And are they?”

“There is always some truth in legends, it's actually an oracle.”

“I have heard of them, I didn't think they existed.”

“Oh yes,”

“So what's an oracle then?” Clek said.

“It's a place where you go to see the future,” Vlah said, “I don't know how it works but I know it comes to you in dreams.”

“And is it dangerous, like the old man said?”

“Depends on what your future actually holds. I mean you wouldn't want to find out you would shortly die, it would somehow mar the day.”

“I'm not sure if I would want to know the future, take each day as it comes I say.”

“Well that's one way of looking at it,” Nebu said, “And you Vlah, what do you say?”

“I can't really see a purpose to it.”

“It might put your mind to rest.”

“Really, about what?”

“About the world, you won't think that what you have done is a waste of time then.”

“Well there is that I suppose. Mind you I think you were right and it was just a little emotional attachment making its play.”

“It's up to you, it's no big deal, it would be an experience for you that's all.”

“Why not then, yes it should be interesting.”

“Good.”

“Is this the real reason that you sent us to the mountains,” Clek said, “To go to the oracle.”

“You're learning,” Vlah said, “Nothing is ever as it seems with Nebu.”

“I always have your best interests at heart. No you need cheering up that's all.”

They went to the cave and whilst Clek waited outside Vlah entered. It was not too long before he fell to sleep and the future opened up to him. He saw, well a lot of it has been recorded in history so I won't go into detail suffice to say he came back enlightened. The next morning he came out refreshed, “That was amazing, so how does it work?”

“Hallucinatory gasses from inside the earth,” Nebu said, “They seep through fault lines and you inhale them.”

“What is that it?”

“Yes, there's nothing mysterious about it, it's just a natural phenomenon.”

“So why the Cave of Glasnau then? Is there any significance?”

“He was just a traveller that came across it by accident. He took shelter for the night and woke up knowing the future.”

“Oh and what about if you weren't strong enough you wouldn't wake up at all?”

“Just dramatic effect from him I guess. No, it's pretty harmless, so are you up to the journey now?”

Chapter 4

As they walked along Nebu said, "It might be a good idea to get into the spirit of things and talk in verse from now on."

"What," Vlah said, "I don't know about that, I'd feel foolish."

"Now, now Vlah that's not the way

Listen to the words I say,

Practice now whilst you've the chance

It will get easier as we advance."

"That's not bad that, what and it just came out?"

"No, no Vlah you got it wrong

From now on you speak in song,

Practice now and get the knack

Otherwise we'll just turn back."

"Oh alright I'll try my best

But I'll tell you now, you're just a pest,

Though I guess it must be done

So alright then you have won."

"Very good that wasn't hard

You're turning into quite a bard,

Though there's still a lot to learn

But not quite yet it's Clek's turn."

"I wouldn't quite know what to say

Rhymes and verses are not my way,

You see all this is new to me

Er. I'll leave the rest to you."

They practised more as they walked along and pretty soon they spoke in song. Sorry about that it's quite contagious. Anyway by the time they reached the Elden slave settlement they were quite well versed and cause a stir.

"You are not allowed in here," the elder said, "If the noble ones hear of this we'll all be done for. No, you must go back to where ever you came from and straight away."

It was Vlah who spoke, "We have travelled far and are in need of rest let us stay and you'll be blessed, for you see we're the spiritual kind, hear us now, we'll improve your mind."

"You're priests, yet you are not of the nobles, how is this?"

"We've journeyed far without a purpose for come to time we have a surplus, we're here to see what we can find and perhaps who knows broaden our mind."

"Not here you won't, you'll only find slavery. No take my advice and leave this area. Too late," and with that a chariot arrived. "You have no business here," a large man that was driving it said, "This is our land."

"I'm sorry we're just passing through looking for something to do, I haven't come to give offence, there's no need for you to be this tense."

"What is this? You talk like the priests. You must come with me, King Gula will be most interested to meet you," and with that he took him to the king.

"Cana tells me that you can versify," Gula said, "And yet you are not a noble, where are you from?"

"We're from a land that's far away, a distant land where we rhyme what we say, we're men of peace and mean no harm, we're sorry if we've caused alarm."

"It's true, I would not have believed it, the Gods must be looking down on me. You have come at the right time I can tell you. Tell me are you services for hire?"

“Our services we give for free so tell us what you want from me, the only thing I'll stipulate is that our actions don't come from hate.”

“Fair enough, we too have our bards and from time to time they compete. Now as it happens tomorrow is one of those occasions. Well not just any occasion it is the main one, the celebration of woman hood. Would you be willing to enter this on my behalf, I will pay handsomely for your trouble.”

“Well I suppose I could give it a go, there is one thing I would like to know, I mean not being funny nor wanting my chances to smother, but why ask us was there no other?”

“Up until recently old Seti had the post. He never trained another so with his death he was irreplaceable. You will be in competition with Stim the priest. Watch him well for he is a good word smith. Anyway after all that travelling you must be tired. My hospitality is yours,” and showed them a place to sleep. After he had gone Nebu made his approach, “Well you are here now. We'll dispense with the verses awhile.”

“That sound good to me,” Vlah said, “So what's it all about then?”

“Political intrigue, the priests are starting to see themselves more powerful than the king.”

“And is that a bad thing?” Clek said.

“At present yes. Now normally I don't get you involved in politics but this Stim character is a law unto himself. It turns out he thinks he has contact with Heald.”

“That's funny that Heald thought he had contact with me.”

“Probably been drinking the same thing then.”

“Sorry?”

“The juice of the crushed hobo plant mixed with milk, it opens up your mind to all sorts of imaginative suggestions. He thinks with Heald's help he is invincible and the cleverest man that ever walked the world.”

“And how would beating him in a poetry competition help?”

“It will show him that he can be beaten though I've got to tell you that up till now he hasn't been beaten in anything before.”

“So not being funny, why hasn't Gula dispatched him?”

“Two reasons, the first he's too weak willed and the second is he's his brother.”

“That's unusual, with that sort of pedigree why did he become a priest?”

“King means nothing to him he wants to be a God. He thinks if he carries on with his service and increase their believers they will make him one of their own.”

“Sounds a very dangerous man then and by thinking he's serving a purpose even more so.”

“And if he ever manages to wrest power from his brother there will be a massacre the like of which has never been seen before. Anyone that does not renounce their beliefs will be quickly killed. Mark my words if this man ever comes to power he will be the bloodiest man that ever lived.”

“Wouldn't it be easier just to kill him now,” Clek said, “I mean not being funny he sounds too dangerous to be left alive.”

“Normally yes, but his influence will live on and then others will take up his cause. He has made quite a name for himself already. Some of his followers have started to see him as Indra incarnate.”

“Oh,” Vlah said, “But how would a poetry competition sort him out. I can see that maybe he would be humiliated in defeat but that's really not going to do a lot of good is it.”

“These people think of poetry differently, to them it is the language of the Gods. The better the poet the more closer you are to them. Believe me they take it seriously. Take old Seti as an example; he knew that Stim was that far ahead of him so he trained no one to take his place. Now that he's been killed Gula was left in a dilemma.”

“Killed?”

“Under Stim's direction. With Seti out the way Gula has no champion and will have to face Seti

himself, well until you came along that is. Now if Stim would have defeated Gula he could claim to be closer to the Gods and being the same bloodline his followers would proclaim him king. You see it's a little more deeper than just a poetry competition. By the way I would sleep with one eye open tonight as word of your arrival might have got out."

"Sounds like a right hornets' nest. And the competition itself am I going to come up with one of my own?"

"No, use one that you had to learn, it was that long ago no one would be any the wiser."

"Which one though, there were so many of them."

"Not that many, it only seemed it. It was about the celebration of womanhood wasn't it?"

"That's right, I can't think of anything I've learned that would be suitable."

"What about the Joy of Giving?"

"I don't remember that one."

"Oh beauty transcendent of pure natural form

Oh radiant desire that weathers the storm,

Oh love light descendent that comes from your eyes

Oh love never ending, a heart full of sighs."

"Oh the soppy one, I'm not sure if I still remember it."

"We've got all night to practice; you won't get out of it so easily."

"Alright I remember it, is there nothing that gets past you?"

"There's no flies on me, anyway get some rest as the competition starts at dawn," and scampered off.

Morning came quickly and they were summoned to the great hall. Stim expecting no real competition was surprised to see Vlah though his arrogance perceived him as no threat. He used the one he had prepared already even though it was inferior to his others. After he had finished Vlah stepped up and recited the Joy of Giving and basically stole the show.(incidentally if you want to read the full transcript of the poem you'll find it in the back section 'no strings attached') Stim stormed off in humiliation though went to see Vlah a little later.

"What is the meaning of this, you are not a noble, you had no right to enter."

"The right you talk of that's the thing, it was given to me by the king, it seems to me you're above yourself, you are not a God with his spiritual wealth."

"What is this, who are you?"

"Know me now for who I am and that your life is just a sham, I've come down from another place, you're looking at a divine face."

"No, no, this cannot be, I have served you faithfully and dedicated my life to you. What do you mean sham?"

"I'm afraid you're becoming quite a pain and our patience's under a lot of strain, I'm not here to beat about the bush, change your ways or I will crush."

"But what have I done wrong. I've upheld your service, I've done all I can to extol your honour. I've even killed for you what more can I do?"

Vlah saw that he could not get through to him as his understanding was too flawed. Instead he went in for the kill."

"Well fair enough that was just a test and I guessed you've past, you've come out best, so list awhile there's something to do, you'll become a God before you're through."

"What really, so it was just a test and I've passed. I knew I was right. And you are going to turn me into a God for all my service?"

"Yes that's right you've served us well, you've done real good and we can tell. Now it's time to reward yourself and become a God in pristine health."

"Yes, yes, what must I do?"

“Go to the altar of sacrifice and in your heart plunge in the knife, you must go through a mortal's death and be reborn in immortal breath.”

“What really, I didn't realise it would be that easy.”

“Only because you've past the test, with that in mind you are blessed, if you'd have tried this thing before, you'd have never got up off the floor.”

“Then I will go straight away and learn to rhyme in all I say-so thank you great one for your aid and now my death, the price is paid.”

Stim went off and met his death and Vlah and Clek took to the hills before any blame could be laid.

Chapter 5

With Stim's death his followers went on the rampage. Not seeing it as suicide they blamed Vlah and Clek and saw them as King Gula's hired killers. They got involved in faction fighting and as they were pretty evenly matched in number the king and his men had their work cut out. Many died before the conflict was over and when it finally was there were few left to tell the tale. The slaves had taken to the hills long before then though so Vlah and Clek had plenty of company. They enlightened them to some extent before taking the slaves deeper into the hills to be well away from the Elden and their perceptions of humanity.

Now though king Gula and his survivors were barely a handful the people of the Elden in general were getting overpopulated. In their drive for more land they pushed into the outlying areas and settled in Asia Minor and Persia Some went even further and settled in Europe and from these came the Romans and the Greeks. Time was running out for the Indus who themselves had problems to deal with. Their intensive farming techniques had turned vast areas of land barren and they were having a job supporting themselves. It was as if the land itself was against them for it had rose up and many of their sea ports found themselves miles in land. Their southern settlements through their greed had become slipshod and where once there was quality, now they cut corners. Mass flooding hit the north and with it a flow of refugees. The people were virtually finished; they just wanted the coup de grace. As the Elden started to make inroads they laid waste the land. The Indus' fortified settlements proved futile and quickly fell to siege. Their highly urbanised culture was of no interest to the Elden and so like the Indus themselves it was doomed to obscurity. It was not a quick struggle though for the Elden's different sects fought amongst themselves as much as against the enemy and though the cities had fallen the Indus fought on without them. The people of the mountains offered little resistance and were quickly brought to heel. The remnant of the Indus though proved more formidable and it was quite a few years before they finally met their end.

Vlah and Clek left the slaves as free men and headed back eventually. They stayed around the Indus valley awhile to watch the cities deteriorate though lack of use and the Elden take up agriculture and push further south. As time passed by the wandering tribes settled in small kingdoms and the title king became hereditary. They ruled from permanent capitals and as the territories grew the conquerors and the conquered fused and the loose classes of their society became more complex. The priests themselves gained in power and raised themselves above the nobles for through complex ritual performance they actually had responsibility for the cosmic order.

By the time it got to that stage Vlah's disillusionment had turned into incredulity and he thought it time to head north once more. “What is this,” he said to Nebu one summer morning, “The priests now want to be honoured as Gods.”

“It was only a matter of time. Actually they think they are more important than Gods because they control the cosmic order, something the Gods can't do.”

“It's beyond a joke though; they are that well off track they can't see the road.”

“Ah the arrogance of man, sure it's lucky that I'm a spider and aloof from all this emotional

degradation. So you are thinking of heading north then?"

"That's right; I can't watch this going on around me."

"They will come to their senses in time but it might be a good idea to go north. The change will do you good."

"I wouldn't mind it myself," Clek said, "These people are far too arrogant to talk to. Have you got anything that wants doing whilst we are there?"

"Not that I can think of but if anything comes up I'll let you know."

As they walked along Vlah said, "So why do the kings put up with it then?"

"Sorry?" Nebu said.

"The pretensions of the priests, surely it's a direct challenge on their authority?"

"I think you'll find it's a case of mutual benefit. If the king honours them as Gods they support him and give him a religious angle to his purpose."

"What?"

"Well take the ritual of the horse sacrifice as an example."

"I don't think I've come across that one before, I thought it was mainly goats."

"Horse too. Now this ritual is commissioned by the king if that will help you with your understanding. In preparation for the sacrifice a stallion is blessed and allowed to wander for a full year. Any territory it entered was claimed by the king and the existing owner had to either give it up or fight for it."

"That sounds like a glorified land grab," Clek said.

"That's because basically that's what it is. Not only that the priests have given the king religious justification for the class system. So as you can see it is in the king's interest to have the priests."

"Yes, I think that they need a little time to sort themselves out."

"A few hundred years should do it," Nebu said, "So any particular place north or just a wander?"

"Just as far from here as I can."

"What about the other end of the world then?"

"What Dana, I suppose we could."

"Then there you have it, do you still remember the way?"

"Well yes, well I think so anyway."

"Good, in fact as you are going that direction there might be something you could do for me."

"I knew it, there's always something."

"Only a little matter, it won't take long."

"Well I suppose so, what did you have in mind?"

"In the great forest far from here is a tribe called the Silta. They are basically a good people and in need of your help. It seems there is a dark presence that feeds of them and must be confronted."

"Really, and what actually is it?"

"I don't know."

"What, I thought you knew everything."

"Not everything, hopefully when we get a little closer I might be a little wiser."

"So what actually do you know about it," Clek said.

"It's from a time long passed, well before the floods. Old legends have talked of it and its appetite for destruction. It seems that it's the remnants of a curse evolved into an entity of its own though as to the curse's nature or its evolution we're pretty much in the dark."

"Sound like an ardent foe, and do you know where its lair is?"

"I will show you when we get there," and they walked on. The days turned into weeks and soon they had reached the edges of the great forest. "Not far now," Nebu said, "You will soon be upon it."

"And are you any the wiser about it?"

"It appears it was a curse against the man-Gods for their cruelty. It was given by an old woman called

Haga whose children along with their children had been killed by them.”

“Right, and the actual curse itself?”

“That whoever has the light of the divine will fall to darkness. It was quite a blanket curse which makes it more dangerous.”

“And its evolution?”

“The darkness of the curses victims.”

“Right, and how would we defeat it?”

“With light I suppose though not the light of the divine as you will fall.”

“Well what other light is there?” Clek said.

“Knowledge of self, well more precisely itself. There's its lair so be careful.”

Vlah approached and waiting outside said, “Darkness come to the light,” and with that a great shadow emerged and towered over him, “My you are well fed.”

“It was good of you to drop by,” the shadow said, “And just in time, I’m hungry.”

“I'm afraid you'll find me indigestible, I’m afraid when Haga laid her curse she had never met a higher God.”

“You know of my creation,” the shadow said and got a little smaller.

“And your evolution, Haga is gone and so is the man-God. Don't you think it is time you came to an end?”

“There are still people to feed on, whilst that's the case I will still have light.”

“Well there is that I suppose and if that's the case I will have to destroy you myself.”

“You, you wouldn't know how.”

“Oh I do, recognition is your downfall. I see you for yourself and I only have to say the word.”

“Never, you wouldn't have a clue.”

“Ignorance,” Vlah said and the shadow disappeared. He went back to Clek and said, “Without a shadow of a doubt. So what's next then?”

“See Dana I guess,” Clek said and they carried on their way. It was a few days and a couple of boat journeys before they reached their destination. Dana and his band of followers had decided to settle on the further of two islands that lay of shore perceiving that they could get no further away than that. They welcomed Vlah and Clek with a genuine warmth and they lived with them for quite a few years.

Now might be a good time to talk about the history of Dana. They arrived at the island to find it was already inhabited so came to terms with the natives with mutual protection in mind. Later though after Vlah and Clek's departure other less enlightened Elden came and basically they were massacred. Legends say that they went to live underground and they did in a way as they were buried there. All this went unknown to Vlah and Clek as they were now back on the mainland living in the forest. They saw new civilisations emerge and fall without much effect on them until the advent of the Roman. They watched with horror as the Romans built all around them destroying anyone that did not agree with them. One good thing that came out of it was their long straight roads made travelling easier. In time too the Romans fell and were replaced by other empire builders though these were more on religious ground.

Vlah and Clek were still travelling around whilst all this was happening, twenty years here and twenty years there the time passed quickly. They saw great changes and saw great structures being built. They travelled on the first railway line, great ocean liners took them to the America's north and south. They saw remnants of long forgotten civilisations and marvelled at how great they actually were. Wars too, they had their fill of them for it seemed a constant occupation to the so called civilised people. Yet they also saw man's humanity to other men and the great acts of charity that came from it.

And what about now? Are they still around checking our progress waiting for when they perceive that

the time is right? Or have they weighed up the pros and cons and finding us sadly lacking gave up on us. Only time will tell on that one.

The Wisdom Game

1. In the beginning was the word if I remember rightly
For since I've found the pen my memory's not that sprightly,
You see the written word has a wisdom limitation
Without its understanding it just an imitation,
It encourages forgetfulness wisdom by appearance
The facts can't come to Earth they haven't got the clearance.

Chorus You have to understand things to truly get the power
Then you'll grow in harmony and balance won't go sour,
You'll cultivate your memory end up with strength of mind
So go on lose the pen you'll be surprised at what you find.

2. In the days before the pen our memories were supreme
Fact and figure recall they flowed just like a dream,
Vast tracts of knowledge recited word by word
Our memory's were much sharper, made for quite a gird,
But when the book came along our memory's were forsook
We did not have the recall, we just looked them up.

3. So we nulled a mental power, was it progress made
Mentally we got lazy and our memory decayed,
Come to contemplation on nothing we could dwell
And so our understanding, well it quickly fell.
Yes go on lose the pen and life won't be the same
It's the only real way to play the wisdom game.

A Sting in the Tale

1. I met her at the Clinic when I was drying out
Maybe I was vulnerable and didn't know what I was about,
But I thought she had a certain flair and fell for her quite deep
Though if I truly knew the score my affection I would keep,
For it seemed I'd found a Scorpion, one with a nasty sting
And I was trapped inside her Lair for I wore her Ring.

Chorus

Philosophically speaking you're a waste of Time and Space
Psychologically speaking you're just a Basket Case,
Meteorologically speaking you're just a Stormy Day
And if your love was a Traffic Sign it would be a Street that went One Way.

2 Married quickly on her say she said our love was strong enough
We could Weather any Storm she said for we'd had it rough,
I was swept along in a joyful haze just going through the motion
The Grass is Greener I once heard, could that be my notion?
Well if it was I'm afraid I erred and not in a little way
For she sapped my Self Esteem and made my Mind decay.

3 The Emotional Baggage that she had would have filled an Airplane
The constant Mood Swings that she took meant I often got the blame,
The continual rows that she provoked meant I got no peace
And then depression followed and it never seemed to cease,
She dragged me down the dark Abyss and deeply I did sink
I had no consolation, well except the drink.

The Sermon of the Mouse

1. You treat me with contempt and kill me when you can
You think that I am vermin yet I'm not as bad as man,
Sure I leave a mess but I'm not as bad as you
You are that destructive the Earth will be done before you're through,
You desecrate our world just to sate your greed
For unlike little me you take more than you need.

Chorus Don't dare to judge me, look unto yourself
You seem to be misguided by a thing called wealth,
You can't see anything else; it seems to rule your life
Yet to me it's a catalyst that leads you into strife.

2. I look at you in shock for you fill me with disgust
You're supposed to tend the Earth, sounds like a breach of trust,
You're destroying our environment; you deprive me of a home
Now I live with you for I've nowhere else to roam,
You created this situation so listen to my plea
This is your destruction don't you dare blame me.

3. No, you've got a nerve that is all I say
You've abused your power to appease your greedy way,
You truly are the vermin, a waste of time and space
Yet you look at me with a condescending face,
You don't deserve the power; it's beyond your understanding
You can't even find humility, you find it too demanding.

The Mirror Cracked

1. People try in their way for eternal youth
They pay thousands out on cream and that is the truth,
Anti ageing, dehydration will it ever end
In their quest to combat age they go round the bend,
One thing though about the mirror it will never lie
One day you will grow old and then you'll surely die.

Chorus Don't look hard at the mirror for it has a crack
One day you will fall to age and not get it back,
For times around to cloud your view and make you old
And that crack becomes a wrinkle and one that's bold.

2. Others try exercise to keep them young and strong
They lift weights far too heavy and for far too long,
They take steroids and vitamins to aid them out their plight
But I'm afraid with youthfulness it's a losing fight.
They may get muscles I'll admit but their age won't lack
In fact the only thing they will get is a sore stretched back.

3. Others think a youthful partner will aid them in the trick
It's a state of mind they'll say whilst you're feeling sick,
A flash car or fast motorbike to renew their youth
But I'm afraid that come to time well they're not aloof,
No basically like everything it's a waste of time
And time is a precious thing that really is a crime.

The Wilderness Years

1. She looked at me through loving eyes, adoration bold
Yet I could not return the gaze as shyness took its hold,
She did not think I wanted her, I could see it in her face
Though I could not bring myself to say that's not the case,
She looked away, another lost and I went home alone
Thinking of what might have been, another chance I've blown.

Chorus So what is it inside me that makes me look away?
That tell me things aren't simple that I know to be okay
That tells me I'm not good enough to have true happiness
That bars my life from situations guaranteed to give me bliss

2. Many times its happened too many times to count
I've tried to come to terms with it, to bring it to account
I've tried to analyse it to take away my fear
But for all my wondering despondency's still here
I hear about the other people, the conquests that they make
So tell me what's the difference, what is my mistake

3. One day though I'll conquer it and find my inner peace
Then I'll walk with purpose, all self doubt will cease
I will be a man of charm never lost for a word
With only vague memory's of when I was a nerd
Yes one day it will happen of that rest assured
But till then I'll suffer and spend my night times bored

The Travelling Years

1. I left school at 16 with travelling on my mind
I thought I'd have a look around, see what I could find,
Life is for adventure; well that's what I'm told
Go out and find yourself, fortune favours the bold,
Yes with that advice I could not go wrong
Well that's what I thought but listen to this song.

Chorus Never trust a stranger who has a winning way
For believe me if you do it's a heavy price to pay,
He will lead you astray by playing to your greed
Then he'll leave you stranded, seriously take heed.

2. Well the first thing that I did was to leave the town
I thought I knew it all when I was just a clown,
I would soon be rich for I could hold my own
I thought life would be easy ambitions quickly sown,
I even met this man who would help me find my way
“Just believe in me and soon you'll make life pay.”

3. So he took me to this shop with robbery in mind
Said the place was loaded, seek and ye shall find,
Said the place was empty, getting in would not be hard
And just to make things easier he would stand on guard,
So I entered in the place and things ne'er went that well
For the man absconded and I found a prison cell.

The Civilised Years

1. I thought I'd leave my outlaw lifestyle, come out of the cold
Get a legal job and re enter the fold,
Sure it means paying taxes and signing off the dole
But it's a price worth paying to get a civilised role.

Chorus I've got me a job now I truly know my place
I'm part of society with a civilised face,
I'm a man of worth and though I'm on low pay
I know that things will change and life will go my way.

2. So I started work on Monday, they said it was the norm
I was a security guard with a brand new uniform,
I looked quite the part with my buttons gleaming bright
A freshly ironed shirt it made for quite a sight.

3. The day itself dragged slowly much to my alarm
It was a boring job that gave me mental harm,
I stood around for hours with nothing else to do
Just checking people's baggage, ploughing my way through.

4. I worked 11 hours though it seemed much more
Put up with irate passengers, it made for quite a chore,
Maybe it will get better I'll have to wait and see
But at this point in time, civilisations not for me.

The Final Years

1. Looking back on my life all I see regret
Things that should have been, challenges not met,
Chances never taken due to lack of will
Things I should have done whilst I'd time to kill,
Guess it's a natural action when time is running out
I dwell in negativity, ponder on self doubt.

Chorus

So what is it with time, it's never long enough
You spend most of it getting out the rough,
It's hardly fulfilling, well that's what I think
No time is just a sea of death and you're destined to sink.

2. I have made some achievements please don't get me wrong
It just that memories of them really aren't that strong,
I'd rather think of failure, it seems to fit my mood
To my understanding I guess you'd call it food,
Things I have accomplished don't seem to have a hold
No, when I contemplate, they're left out in the cold.

3. No, now I sit here on my own bemoaning my own fate
Never making any plans for it's much too late,
Dwelling on my life and how it's been so shoddy
Cursing my misfortune and my ageing body,
Maybe next time round things will be much better
Life will be my liberation instead of just my fetter.

A New Jerusalem

Seeing Spirit, Self of God's Purpose through Understanding (understanding through transformation)

Blessed with understanding God's Purpose through understanding life (blessed transformation), Transformation blessed with Light understood. Through Light, Will of God's Purpose sees understanding (Loving Understanding) through knowing and Love sees Loving Knowing through transformation. Blessed with Loving Light (God's Knowing) Spiritual Wisdom sees Loving Spiritual Will -Will of God's (God's Purpose) life.

Will sees life-the Word sees understanding (Loving Understanding through)

Blessed seeing Loving Knowing-

- 1 Life blessed with Spiritual Will of Blessed Wisdom
- 2 Understanding sees Light
- 3 Will through Spirit and God's Purpose transformed
- 4 Spiritual Wisdom through Love seeing Knowing (God's Purpose transformed)

The Word known sees life

Blessed seeing Loving Knowing-

- 1 Will of Knowing through God's Wisdom
- 2 Spiritual Understanding sees Knowing through Understanding
- 3 Spirit blessed with Understanding Wisdom sees Knowing (blessed with Loving Light)

The Word-Loving Knowing of God's Purpose (through transformation)

Blessed seeing Loving Knowing-

- 1 Will of Knowing through God's wisdom (Light through Understanding understood)
- 2 Spiritual Understanding blesses Light through understanding
- 3 The Word sees knowing God's Purpose
- 4 God's Purpose
- 5 Wisdom sees Understanding

And through blessing (seeing Loving Understanding), Light (God's Life) through Spiritual Understanding of God (God's Purpose)

God's Purpose-understanding wisdom God's Light transformation

Through wisdom and knowing Light (blessed with Blessed Wisdom) understanding sees Spirit through knowing and understanding wisdom sees blessing seeing Light. Seeing Spirit

- 1 Love sees Light transformation
- 2 Knowing sees Loving Understanding of God's Purpose (God's Light transformation)
- 3 Love see Understanding

Will blessed with Love through light transformation

Will blessed with Love through Love blessed with Spiritual Wisdom, seeing Loving Wisdom transformation through life (God's Light transformation) seeing Spirit (Love through Knowing transformation)

God's Light (Wisdom)

God's Light transformation seeing the Word (life seeing Loving Light), Wisdom (God blessed with Light understood). The Word known (seeing loving transformation)

- 1 Life blessed with understanding Blessed Wisdom.
- 2 Will sees Love through Knowing (through transformation)
- 3 God's Purpose blesses work through God's Spiritual Understanding.

Knowing sees Loving transformation

Blessed seeing Loving Knowing(the Word) loving knowing blesses Blessed Wisdom, blessed with understanding(seeing Loving Knowing)transformed through Love seeing Wisdom, (blessed seeing Light).Blessed seeing Loving Knowing Will knows God's Will through the Word(God's Loving Purpose).

The Word-God's Love sees Loving Knowing

Understanding God's life (God's Will blesses Will), the Word sees knowing wisdom (blessed seeing Light). Blessed seeing Loving Knowing, Will of God's Purpose blessed with understanding (wisdom through Light) blessing Light Will.

God's Purpose-God's work through understanding God's Light transformation.

Life of God's blessing through understanding wisdom blessing Will of Knowing(blessed with Love through knowing understanding),Spiritual Love and knowing through understanding God(God's Purpose) life sees Light.

Spiritual Understanding blesses Love through knowing understanding

Blessed seeing Loving Knowing (Self sees Loving Light)-

- 1 Wisdom through seeing Loving Understanding (Will of God's Life through God's Light transformation)
- 2 Will through Light and knowing seeing Loving Understanding.

The Word known-Love blessed with Wisdom

Blessed seeing Loving Understanding-

- 1 Spirit through knowing self of God (God's purpose)
- 2 God's Purpose through God (the Word)
- 3 God's Light transformation
- 4 Light (Loving Wisdom) known blesses Wisdom
- 5 Blessed seeing Loving Understanding (knowing seen) seeing Wisdom
- 6 Seeing Spirit God's Purpose
- 7 God's Light transformation sees the Word
- 8 The Word (God's Purpose) through Light (Blessed Wisdom)

Will sees (knowing Light) Loving Will seeing the Word blessed by God

Seeing Spiritual Wisdom through life-

- 1 The Word through knowing God's Wisdom (through Light)
- 2 God's Wisdom through Self seeing knowing (Light seeing the Spiritual Word)
- 3 Seeing the Word through Spirit and knowing through
- 4 Blessed seeing Loving Knowing Spiritual Will of God knows God's Will (wisdom through knowing blessed with understanding)

Transformation blesses Will of Light (blessed with Blessed Wisdom)

Blessed with wisdom understood (blessed with Light) Spiritual Wisdom through understanding seeing God's Loving Purpose. Blessed with wisdom understanding the Word, God's knowing wisdom sees the Word (life through) through Light.

Spiritual Will of God's Light-wisdom through transformation

Blessed with understanding God's Light transformation Will sees God's Purpose transformed (through knowing Light), Spiritual Understanding sees knowing through the Word known (seeing life) through Love and knowing blessed Love of God (God's Purpose) through blessing. Blessed seeing the Word God's Purpose sees Love through transformation, seeing Spiritual Wisdom the Word sees love knowing God's Light transformation (the Word known seeing Light)

Spiritual Wisdom blessed with understanding God's Purpose (God's Light transformation)

God's Light sees Self of God's Purpose through Self of Knowing and through transformation wisdom knows (God's Light understood) Will through Light transformation blessing Light Will. Knowing God's Will through God's Light transformation Love blessed with Spiritual Wisdom (Blessed Wisdom), Will of Knowing and through transformation seeing Spirit the Word known sees understanding.

The Word

Through seeing the Word God's Purpose and Love blesses understanding (through understanding) seeing Loving Light transformation (Blessed with Light). Blessed with Loving transformation Will and life through Light (Wisdom-God's Light transformation, the Word known) and through the Word known (seeing life) God's Purpose blessed through Spiritual Understanding. Through God's Purpose transformed (Blessed with Light)

1 Spirit sees Light seeing Loving Knowing (Love blesses Spiritual Wisdom)

2 Spirit blesses Spiritual Will through understanding wisdom and through life (understanding through God's Purpose).

3 The Word known through God's Purpose blessed with God's Light (Wisdom)

4 Spiritual Wisdom through blessed understanding of wisdom.

God's Light transformation understood.

The Loving Word known through life and Spiritual Wisdom. Through Blessed Wisdom of God (God's Purpose)-

1 Work sees the Word

2 Wisdom knows Loving Spiritual Wisdom

3 Love blessed with Spiritual Wisdom sees Loving Wisdom (transformed through God's Purpose)

4 Loving Understanding blessed seeing Light.

5 Blessed with Light (God, God's [Purpose] God's Light transformation sees the Word.

6 Will knows God's Will through Love blessed with Spiritual Wisdom seeing Light (Wisdom)

7 Will sees Light (the Word of Love) understanding Wisdom.

8 Blessed seeing Light (God, God's Purpose, God's Light transformation) Will sees life.

9 The Word through Understanding understood

10 Blessed seeing Light, God's Wisdom and Blessed with Light Blessed Wisdom understood.

11 Self through Blessed Light-Will of God (God's Purpose), God's Light transformation.

12 Love blessed with Spiritual Wisdom (Spirit through God's Knowing Wisdom)

Spiritual Wisdom-God's Wisdom understood

Spiritual Wisdom and knowing through the Word seeing knowing (understanding) and through blessing Light Will.

Or in other words

Oh Blessed Isles, Myrddin's Enclosure, renowned in war through calm composure
Your mighty arms once held the world, from your great shore history unfurled,
Your greatness shines for all to see, your name shall stand eternity
So here's to you oh wondrous land, you give and give without demand.

Oh verdant land of mountains proud, misty covered like a shroud
Your purity is our devotion; your graceful favours a magic potion,
Your glistening lakes and majestic rivers, your vibrant streams where salmon shivers
Your bounteous game and generous fruit your herbal leaf and nutritious root.

Oh land of plenty, Cornucopia, oh temperate nature born of hope here
Your character is dignity; it's in the Soul, it's part of me,
Enchanted island, golden shores from every valley your love doth pour
And from this land a noble breed transcending race and with it creed.

Oh prosperous land of people wise, sound in judgement and free from lies
Held in honour with high esteem, self reliant they stand supreme,
They talk of truth without delusion in a land of grace without confusion
A land compassionate in its being, a land with heart that's there for seeing.

I entered this Poem in a National Competition. It didn't win, apparently it wasn't deep enough. I'll leave you to work that out.

The Tree of Life and the Six Days of Creation

Genesis Chap.3 Verse 22 And the Lord God said behold the man has become one of us to know good from evil and now lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life and live forever. The Fruit of the Tree of Life is a powerful foodstuff, by digesting it and absorbing all its goodness you live forever. So what is this Fruit? The Ambrosia of the Gods, that gives you Mind such power? Occultists believe that it is knowledge for that actually is the Minds life. Now this knowledge is Esoteric Knowledge and not your every day type of knowledge so I had better define what Esoteric Knowledge is. Esoteric Knowledge is Knowledge of Self and Knowledge of Purpose, in other words Enlightenment. This knowledge is actually hidden in Genesis, so well hidden in fact that you might have read it a thousand times and still not found it. It is buried in the Genealogies, each Letter is symbolic of a Word and so together the Name makes a Phrase. I will give you the Alphabet further on but first I want to define the Tree of Life itself. It is actually the symbol of the hidden knowledge. To picture it you have to imagine Two Triangles shaped like a Tree i.e. one on top of a larger one, Now the peak is actually the First Day of Creation and is One Tract of knowledge. The Second Day has Two and the Third Three. The Fourth is an extension of One the previous Tracts the Fifth has Two Tracts and the Sixth Three Tracts.

A	aleph	ox	God
B	beth	house	self
C,g	Gimel	Camel	Will
d	Daleth	Door	Transformation
h	He	window	spirit
u,v	vau	nail	Love
z	zain	Sword	Mind
ch	cheth	Fence	Spiritual Will
t	Teth	serpent	Wisdom
i,y	Yod	Hand	Blessed
k	Kaph	Palm	Work
l	Lamed	Ox goad	God's purpose
m	Mem	water	Life
n	Nun	fish	Light
s	Samekh	support	Understanding
o	Ayin	eye	Seeing
p,f	Pe	mouth	the word

x,tz	Tzaddi	fish hook	Insight
q	Qoth	back head	Soul
r	Resh	head	Knows
sh	Shin	tooth	spiritual understanding
th	Tau	cross	spiritual wisdom
E	could be through, from, and or words like that		

So onto the First Day then, God said '**Let there be Light**' and there was light. Eden or '**Through transformation through Light**' or enlightenment. The first day talks about enlightenment and what you get from it. It is hidden in the four rivers that run out of Eden, Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel and Euphrates, so written out long hand '**Through transformation (through Light) you get -**

The Word blessed with understanding (seeing Light),

The Will blessed with Spirit (seeing Light),

The Spirit blessed with transformation transforms through work (through God's purpose) and through Love the Spiritual Word knows God's Wisdom through understanding.'

Before I go any further I would like to define what enlightenment is as it will help you with your understanding. **Enlightenment is the transmutation of the Soul to a Higher State of Awareness through Esoteric Knowledge and Service.** Right then, the word blessed with understanding, this means that you understand the word as opposed to just knowing it. You get this through seeing Light or Spiritual Wisdom, that's why it's bracketed. So the First Aspect of Enlightenment, not only do you know the word you actually understand it. The Second Aspect of Enlightenment, the Will blessed with Spirit means that your will turns Spiritual, it is bracketed in the same way as the previous aspect for much the same reason. The Third Aspect the Spirit blessed with transformation is the transformation of the Holy Spirit, you get this through doing God's work which is basically a Life of Service. I am not talking Ritual Service here though, I'm talking Service to your fellow man. In hand with this is knowing the Spiritual Word or Knowledge of the Divine which is sort of like the Theory to the Practical. Finally knowing God's wisdom through understanding is talking about a deeper understanding of life which you get through the Holy Spirit or loving knowing, so putting them all together. **From Enlightenment you understand the Word, you evolve a Spiritual Will, you are transformed by the Holy Spirit and you get a deeper understanding of life.**

Now the Second Day talks of God splitting the Waters symbolic of Will and Understanding or the evolution of them to be precise. It is hidden in the Genealogies of Cain and Seth or **Will** (God blessed with light) and **Understanding** (through spiritual wisdom). The Waters below the Firmament the Self and the ones above the Will or Higher Self as it is actually the Spiritual Will. We'll start with Cain first. Cain begat Enoch who begat Irad who begat Mehujael who begat Methusael who begat Lamech. Now Lamech married Adah who begat Jabal and his brother Jubal but he also married Zillah who begat Tubal-Cain and his sister Naamah so written out long hand. **Will(God blessed with Light) - through Light seeing the Spiritual Will you get blessed with knowing God's transformation, from this you get Life through Spiritual Love (blessing God through God's Purpose) which gives you Life**

through Spiritual Wisdom(loving understanding of God through God's Purpose)which gives you God's Purpose(God's Life through Spiritual Will). Now God's Purpose married to God transformed to God's Spirit gives you(blessed by God)a Self of God(God's Purpose) which is akin to a blessed loving Self of God(God's Purpose).God's Purpose married to a Mind blessed with God's Purpose(God's Purpose-God's Spirit)gives you a Wisdom loving Self of God(God's Purpose) and a Will of God(blessed with Light) which is akin to the Light of God, God's Life (God's Spirit).

So from Enlightenment (Light) your Spiritual Will is transformed through God's transformation. Now at this point I had better tell you what God actually is, it's **An Enlightened Soul with a Purpose to serve**, basically it's the evolution of Purpose. This transformation is done through Spiritual Love (the Holy Spirit) which is the Spiritual Will's life and is activated by upholding God's Purpose or Service to your fellow man. Spiritual Love is also the understanding of Spiritual Wisdom, the essence of the Spiritual Will, which along with Service helps you to evolve to God's Purpose which is actually God's life. Now God's Purpose transformed through the Holy Spirit (God's Spirit- the Spirit of Purpose) gives you a Self of God which is a Loving Self blessed with the Spirit of Purpose and married to a Mind blessed with the Spirit of Purpose gives you a Self that loves Wisdom (as opposed to sensory pleasure and material relief) and a Will of God which is a Will of Light and a life of God. **So basically through Service and understanding Spiritual Wisdom you evolve to God's Purpose which is a life of God.** Now the Genealogy of Seth actually starts with Adam and includes their Ages. The reason for which escapes me but I do know that further on the Genealogy of Shem is repeated with the Second Passage also having Ages. This is to keep the Passages separate for the first one is part of the Third Day and the Fourth Day is the Second One. I can only suggest it's a Red Herring or it's put in place to get you used to things to come. So Adam begat Seth who begat Enos who begat Cainan who begat Mahaleel who begat Jared who begat Enoch who begat Methuselah who begat Lamech who begat Noah who begat Shem, Ham and Japheth, or to put it another way **From God's transformation (God's life) you get Understanding (through Spiritual Wisdom)-through Light seeing understanding you get a Will blessed with Light(God's Light)which gives you a Life of God, the Spirit of God(God's Purpose), God(God's Purpose) and through God's Purpose, you get blessed by God (knowing God's transformation) from which you get through Light seeing Spiritual Will, Life through Spiritual Wisdom, loving understanding through God's Purpose(God's Spirit)which gives you God's Purpose(God's Life through Spiritual Will)from which Light sees God's Spirit giving you Spiritual Understanding through Life, the Spirit of God's Life and blessed by God the Spiritual Word through Spiritual Wisdom.**

So from God's transformation you get understanding, this is what your Self is, your understanding of life. Now from Enlightenment you get a Will of God which is basically a Will of Light. From this you get a selfless life (a life of God),the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) and God which is Enlightenment through God's Purpose or God's Knowing which is done through the transformation of the Holy Spirit. Now this seeing your Spiritual Will gives it life (through Spiritual Wisdom and serving God's Purpose) and this gives you God's Purpose, the emergence of which (the Spiritual Will seeing the Spirit of Purpose) gives you Spiritual Understanding, a Spiritual Life and the Spiritual Word. **So basically understanding of Self and work through God's Purpose transforms your Self to a deeper, more Spiritual Understanding of life.**

Now Day Three talks about the benefits of the transformation Shem, Ham and Japheth or Grass, Herbs and Fruit and starts with the sons of Japheth who were Gomer, Magog, Madrai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech and Tiras. It then goes onto the sons of Gomer who were Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah. After that it

finishes with the sons of Javan who were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim or to put it another way. **From (blessed by God) the Spiritual Word through Spiritual Wisdom you get-**

A Will that sees Life through knowing,

A Life of God's Will (seeing Will),

A Life of God (transformed knowing God's blessing) and blessed by God's Love, God's Light,

A Wisdom loving Self of God (God's Purpose)

Life through Spiritual Understanding (through Spiritual Will) and Wisdom blessed with knowing God's understanding.

From a Will seeing Life through knowing you get=

God's Spiritual Understanding (work through Light of God's Mind),

Knowing blesses the Spiritual Word (God's Spiritual Wisdom) and Wisdom (seeing Will of God) knowing Life of God's Spirit.

From being blessed by God's Love, God's Light you get-

Through God's Purpose Spiritual Understanding of God's Spirit and the Wisdom of God knows Spiritual Understanding (blessed with Spiritual Understanding),

Work blesses Wisdom, Wisdom blesses Life and transforms seeing the transformation of God's Light blessing Life.' So being blessed by the Spiritual Word, which is your Spiritual Will, you get a Will that sees life through knowing. You know things in the Spiritual Sense which is basically a deeper understanding of life, you also develop a Spiritual Will (God's Will) and take to a life of Service (life of God) and are blessed by the Holy Spirit (God's Love) which through God's Light feeds a Wisdom loving Self and gives you Spiritual Understanding from your Spiritual Will, you are blessed with knowing God's Understanding. From a Will of Knowing you understand God and the Spiritual Word and develop a Will of God through God's Spirit (a Spiritual Will). From being blessed by God's Love you get through God's Light and serving God's Purpose, God's Spirit (the Holy Spirit) and Blessed Spiritual Understanding, through work, Wisdom blesses life and transforms the Will to God's Light. **So basically being blessed by the Spiritual Word you develop a Spiritual Will, get a deeper understanding of life and embark on a life of Service.** The next Passage starts with the Sons of Ham who were Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Cainan and goes onto the sons of Cush, Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabtechah, then the sons of Raamah, Sheba and Dedan, then the sons of Mizraim, Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, Cashuhim (out of which came Philistim) and Caphtorim and finally Canaan who had Sidon and Heth in other words, **From the Spirit of God's Life you get-**

A Will of loving Spiritual Understanding,

A Life blessed with a Mind that knows God(blessed Life),

The Spiritual Word(loving Wisdom)and a Will of God(Light of God, God's Light),

From a Will of Spiritual Understanding you get-

Understanding through a Self of God,

The Spirit of God's Love blessed with God's Purpose(God's Spirit),

Through understanding God's Self the Wisdom of God's Spirit and knowing God, God's Life(God's Spirit) you also get understanding God's Self, Wisdom through the Spiritual Will(God's Spirit).

From knowing God, God's Life (God's Spirit) you get Spiritual Understanding through a Self of God and transformed through the transformation of God's Light.

From a Life blessed with a Mind that knows God (blessed Life)-

God's Purpose(loving transformation) blesses Life

God Light (God's Life) blesses Life

God's Purpose through the Spirit of God's Self blesses Life,

The Light of God's Spiritual Word (Wisdom loving Spirit) blesses Life,

The word (God's Spiritual Wisdom) knows Love (understanding blesses Life),

A Will of God understanding God's Purpose (loving Spirit) blesses Life from which the Spiritual Word blessed with God's purpose (blessed understanding Wisdom) blesses Life and finally the Will of God's Spiritual Word (Wisdom seeing knowing) blesses Life.

From a Will of God (God's Light, Light of God) you get understanding (blessed with transformation seeing Light) and the Spirit through Spiritual Wisdom.

Quite a little passage that. So from the Spirit of God's Life or the Holy Spirit your will transforms to a deeper understanding of life, you know God through the Spiritual Word and you evolve a Will of Light. From this deeper understanding, well before I continue I had better enlighten you as to what the Seven Spirits of God are. They are the spirits of **Love, Life, Understanding, Insight, Wisdom, Knowing and Purpose**. This might make things a little easier for you. Now this deeper level I am talking about actually comes about through a shift in consciousness, where before you were a Will of Wisdom now you are a Will of Understanding. It is actually an evolved Will, the mergence of the Spirits of Wisdom and Understanding. Not only do you know things Spiritually you also understand them. So anyway with this shift in consciousness you become a Self of God and are fed by the Holy Spirit, (God's Spirit, the Spirits of Love, Understanding and Purpose) which gives you this understanding. By understanding this you get the Spirit of Wisdom and by knowing God you get God's Spirit of Life for God's Knowing is His life (hence the expression the Living Word). Also by understanding God's Self you get Insight through the Spiritual Will for it sees the big picture. From knowing God not only do you get Spiritual Understanding of Self you also get transformed through God's Light. From a Mind that knows God you get God's Purpose (through transformation of the Holy Spirit), God (through God's Light) and God's will (through the word, God's Light being Loving Spiritual Wisdom). From a Will of God you get transformed to understanding and get the Spirit of Purpose through Spiritual Wisdom. **So basically through the Holy Spirit and a shift in consciousness you get a deeper understanding of life, you know God Through the Word and a life of Service and you evolve a Will of Light through Loving Spiritual Wisdom.** So onto the Next Passage. The Children of Shem were Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram. It then goes onto the Children of Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether and Mash. Then Arphaxad who begat Salah who begat Eber who begat Peleg and Joktan. Joktan begat Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah and Jobab which stand for.

From Spiritual Understanding through Life you get through God's Purpose God's Life and God's understanding (Spiritual Understanding-loving knowing) and through God knowing the Spiritual Word, God's insight (God's transformation) through God's Purpose (loving transformation) and God knows God's Life.

**From God knowing God's Life you get-
A loving Mind**

The Spirit of God's Love (God's Purpose)

A Will through Spiritual Wisdom (through knowing) and a Life of God's Spiritual Understanding.

From God knowing the Spiritual Word, God's insight (God's transformation) you get understanding God (God's Purpose), God's Spirit from which through Self (through knowing) you get the word (through God's Purpose and Will) and (blessed seeing work) the Wisdom of God's

Light.

**From (blessed seeing work)the Wisdom of God's Light you get-
God's(God's Purpose)Life seeing transformation (God's transformation)and Spiritual
Understanding through God's Purpose (through the Spiritual Word)
The Spirit of God's Mind(God knowing Life of God's Love through Spiritual Wisdom)and
blessed through knowing God's Spirit, the Spirit of God transforms(seeing knowing)to God's
Life,
You get a loving Mind of God(God's Purpose)and transformation blesses work of God's
Purpose(God's Spirit)seeing Self of God(God's Purpose),
God Self blesses a Life of God through God's Purpose
Spiritual Understanding through Self of God and seeing the Spiritual Word (blessed with
knowing)the Spirit of God's Love blesses God's Purpose(God's Spirit)and finally a blessed seeing
of Self(God's Self).**

So from a deeper understanding of life you get God's Life through a life of Service, you understand God and through knowing the Spiritual Word you get God's Insight and God's Purpose and basically know God's Life. From knowing God's Life you get a Loving Mind, the Holy Spirit, a Will of Light and a life of God's understanding. From God's Insight through understanding God you get the Spirit of Wisdom which through knowing gives you the Word and the Wisdom of God's Light through Service. From the Wisdom of God's Light you are transformed to God's life, you get a deeper understanding through the Spiritual Word and a life of Service, you get Loving Spiritual Wisdom which transforms your essence (as opposed to God's life of Service), you get a Loving Mind and God's Purpose transforms your Self to a life of God, you get Spiritual Understanding and seeing the Spiritual Word God's Love blesses God's Purpose and you see yourself as blessed. **Basically you get a deeper understanding of life which gives you insight into both God and God's Purpose which gives you a life of God(essence) And God's Purpose (service).**

Day Four goes back to Enlightenment again symbolised by the lights in the Firmament and is actually an extension of Day One. Not only that the Passage is an expanded version of Shem to emphasise the point. So Shem begat Arphaxad who begat Salah who begat Eber who begat Peleg who begat Reu who begat Serug who begat Nahor who begat Terah who begat Abram, Nahor and Haran who begat Lot or. **From Spiritual Understanding through Life God knows the Spiritual Word, God's insight (God's transformation)from which you understand God, God's Purpose(God's Spirit)from which through Self (through knowing) you get the word(through God's Purpose and Will) which gives you Love through knowing which gives you an understanding(through knowing)loving Will from which the Light of God's Spirit sees knowing and you get Wisdom through knowing God's Spirit from which God's Self knows God's Life,**

The Light of God's Spirit sees knowing and the Spirit of God knows God's Light from which God's Purpose sees Wisdom.

So from Spiritual Understanding you get God's Insight from which you understand God and God's Purpose from which you get a Self through knowing from which you get the Word which gives you understanding and know the Light of God's Spirit from this you get God's Life and God's Purpose sees God's Will, (Wisdom) **Basically through understanding God and God's Purpose you get a Self of Knowing, a life of God and God's Purpose merges with God's Will.**

Now Day Five is an extension of Day Two with the Creatures of the Air, the Will and the Creatures of the Water the Self, under the Water being the Subconscious, the domain of the Self. The evolution of the Will is hidden in the Genealogy from Nahor to Rebekah and the evolution of Self the Sons of Abraham and Keturah. So from Nahor and Mileah came Huz, Buz, Kemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel who begat Rebekah and from Nahor and Reumah came Tebah, Gaham, Thahash and Maachah or to put it another way. **From the Light of God's Spirit seeing knowing and a Life blessed with God's Purpose (Will of God's Spirit) you get-**

A Spiritual loving Mind,

A Self loving Mind,

Work and Life of Love through God's Purpose from which God knows God's Life,

You get the Spiritual Will and understanding through transformation

The Spirit of God's Mind sees the word(blessed with God's Purpose)transformed to God's

Spiritual Understanding

Blessed with blessed transformation to God's Purpose(God's Spiritual Word)

A Self through Spiritual Wisdom(Love through God's Purpose)from which you get knowing and Self through work of God's Spirit).

From the Light of God's Spirit seeing knowing and knowing through loving Life of God's Spirit you get-

Wisdom through Self (God's Spirit)

The Will of God's Spirit(God's Life)

The Spiritual Wisdom of God's Self (God's Spiritual Understanding) and a Life of God, God's Spiritual Will (God's Spirit).

Now the Light of God's Spirit is the Will (God blessed with Light, the ain in Cain) and seeing knowing means it has evolved to a Will of Knowing which married to a life of Spiritual Purpose gives you a Spiritual Mind and a Loving Self through which by serving God's Purpose you know God's Life. Your Will and Understanding evolves through Spiritual Transformation through Service and the word to God's Spiritual Word and your Self becomes in essence Loving Spiritual Wisdom. From the Light of God's Spirit and the Holy Spirit your self is fed with Spiritual Wisdom, you become God's Will and Understanding and live a life of God through Spiritual Understanding. **So from a Will of Light and a life of Spiritual Purpose you evolve to God's Spiritual Word and your Self in essence is Loving Spiritual Wisdom. From a Will of Light and the Holy spirit you become God's Will and Understanding and live a life of God.** Now the evolution of Self is hidden in the Sons of Abraham and Keturah, so Abraham married Keturah and had Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan who begat Asshurim, Letushim and Leummim. Midian begat Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah and Eldaah or.

From God's Self knowing God's Spirit (God's Life) and work through Wisdom (loving knowing God's Spirit) you get-

A Mind blessed with Life knowing God's Light and blessed seeing work Spiritual Understanding of God's Light

Life through transformation to God's Light and Life blessed with transformation (blessed by God's Light)

Blessed with Spiritual Understanding, Self of God's work and Spiritual Understanding of loving God's Spirit.

From(blessed seeing work)Spiritual Understanding of God's Light you get-

**Spiritual Understanding through Self of God
 Transformed through the transformation of God's Light which gives you God's understanding
 (Spiritual Understanding),
 Loving knowing blesses Life
 God's Purpose through Wisdom (loving Spiritual Understanding) blesses Life
 God's Purpose through loving Life,(Life blesses Life).
 From Life blessed with transformation (blessed by God's Light) you get-
 Through the Spiritual Word, God's Spirit
 Through the word the Spirit though knowing
 The Spirit of God's Light sees Spiritual Will
 God's Self blessed by transformation to God's Spirit and through God's Purpose the
 transformation of God to God's Spirit.**

So from God's Self knowing God's Life and work(Service) and Loving Wisdom you get a Mind blessed with God's Light and Spiritual Understanding of God's Light, the Transformation of Light being the Mind's life administered by the Holy Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit transforms the Self through God's Light and gives you God's Understanding, Purpose and Spiritual Wisdom. From being blessed by this transformation through the Spiritual Word you get God's Spirit seeing Spiritual Will and the Self transforms to God's Spirit and through God's Purpose, God's Will transforms to God's Spirit. **So from a Spiritual Life you get a Self of Light and Spiritual Understanding fed by the Holy Spirit which is the Mind's life and transformation** (both Self and Will to Spirit).

Now Day Six is an extension of Day Three, the clues are and **God brought forth the living Creature** Shem, hidden in the generations of Ishmael. **And God made man in His own image**, Ham, hidden in the Sons of Jacob and finally **God blessed them**, Japheth hidden in Jacobs's Grand children. So first of all the Generations of Ishmael, from Ishmael came Nebajoth, Kedar, Adbed, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tamar, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah.

**From being blessed with Spiritual Understanding(Life of God through God's Purpose)you get-
 Light through a Self of God(blessed seeing Spiritual Wisdom)
 Work through transformation to God's knowing(God's transformation- Self through) through
 God's Purpose
 Life blesses Self understanding God's Life
 Life blessed with Spiritual Understanding (Life of God) transforms to loving Life of God's Spirit
 and Life of God's understanding,
 Understanding God's Spirit God transforms to God's knowing
 Wisdom through Life of God**

**Blessed through Wisdom, loving knowing and the Light of God's Spiritual Word blesses Spiritual
 Understanding and works through transformation through Life of God's Spirit.**

So through Spiritual Understanding of Spiritual Wisdom you get Light for you Self, you understand God and are transformed to God's Knowing through Serving God's Purpose and this is your Self's Life, sums itself up really so the next Passage is the Sons of Jacob. It starts with Leah, so from Jacob and Leah came Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah, from Jacob and Bilhah came Dan and Naphtali. From Jacob and Zilpah came Gad and Asher, then from Jacob and Leah came Issachar and Zebulim and daughter Dinah, Jacob and Rachel had Joseph and Benjamin.

**From being blessed by God's Will (seeing Self) and God's Purpose through God's Spirit you get-
 Knowing through loving Self and Light,**

**Understanding blesses Life through seeing Light,
God's Purpose through Love (blessed) blessed with loving transformation to God's Spirit, Blessed
with understanding (understanding God's Spiritual Will) God's knowing
A Mind and Self of Love (God purpose's blesses Life) through transformation (blessed with Light
of God's Spirit).**

**From being blessed by God's Will (seeing Self) and a Self blessed with God's Purpose (Spirit of
God's Spirit) you get transformed to God's Light and the Light of God's Spiritual Word
(Wisdom of God (God's Purpose) blessed).**

**From being blessed by God's Will (seeing Self) and a Mind blessed with God's Purpose (the word
of God's Spirit) you get a Will of God transformed and God's Spiritual Understanding (through
knowing).**

**From being blessed by God's Will (seeing Self) and knowing God's Spiritual Will through God's
Purpose you get blessed seeing understanding through the Spiritual Word and a Self through
Light blessed with God's Life (blessed Light)**

So through being blessed by God's Will and Spiritual Purpose you get a Self of Knowing, you understand life and are transformed to a Mind and Self of Love. Through being blessed by God's Will and a Self blessed with the Holy Spirit you are transformed to God's Light. Through being blessed by God's Will and a Mind of God's Purpose you get a Will of God and blessed with God's Spiritual Understanding. From being blessed by God's Will and knowing God's Spiritual Will through Serving God's Purpose you are blessed with understanding through the Spiritual Word and have a Self of Light. And finally Jacob's Grandchildren, from Reuben came Hanoch, Phalin, Hizron and Carmi. From Simeon came Jamuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachim, Zohar and Shaul. From Levi came Gershan, Kohath and Merari, from Judah came Er, Onan, Shelah, Pharez (who had Hezron and Hamul) and Zarah. From Issachar came Tala, Phuvah, Job and Shimraon. From Zebulim came Sered, Elon and Jaheel. From Gad came Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli. From Asher came Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah (who had Heber and Malchiel) and Serah. From Benjamin came Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppin, Huppin and Ard. From Dan came Hushim, From Naphtali came Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem so quite a few to whet your appetite

From knowing through loving Self and Light you get-

The Spirit of God's Light seeing Spiritual Will,

The Spiritual Word of God(God's Purpose) (God's purpose-Love),

The Spirit blessing Mind of knowing(seeing Light)and a Will of God knowing Life is blessed.

From understanding blessing Life through seeing Light you get-

Blessed with God's Life (Love through God's Purpose)

**Blessed with God's Life (blessed with Light) seeing Spirit of God's transformation and blessed by
God's Spiritual Will blessing Life the Mind sees Spirit of God's knowing and Spiritual
Understanding of God's Love (God's Purpose).**

**From God's Purpose through Love blessed you get a Will through knowing Spiritual
Understanding (seeing Light),**

**Work sees the Spirit of God's Spiritual Wisdom and a Life through knowing (God's knowing
blessed)**

**From being blessed with loving transformation of God's Spirit you get through knowing seeing
Light, God's Light,**

Spiritual Understanding through God's Purpose(God's Spirit),

The Spiritual Word (God's knowing through Mind) (from which you get the Spirit through Mind (knowing seeing Light)

The Spirit of God's Life of Love (God's Purpose)) and a Mind of God knowing God's Spirit. From being blessed with understanding (understanding God's Spiritual Will) God's knowing you get-

Wisdom of God (God's Purpose),

God's Spiritual Word of Love (loving God's Spirit) blessed seeing Self and Spiritual

Understanding blesses Life (knowing seeing Light)

From a Mind through Self of Love, God's purpose blesses Life you get understanding through knowing through transformation through God's Purpose seeing Light (blessed with the Spirit of God) and through God's Purpose.

From a Will of God transformed you get-

A Mind blessed with the Spiritual Word (blessed seeing Light),

The Spirit of God's Will(Will blessed with Spiritual Understanding),

Loving Light blessed through Mind (Self sees Light)

Through knowing blessed with God's knowing (seeing transformation blessed)and God's knowing through God's purpose blessed.

From God's Spiritual Understanding (through knowing) you get-

Blessed with blessed Life (Light of God's Spirit),

Blessed with Spiritual Understanding (Love of God's Spirit),

Blessed with understanding (Love blessed),

A Self through knowing (blessed by God's Spirit) (from which you get a Spirit and Self through knowing and a Life of God's (God's Purpose)'s Spiritual Will blessed through God's Purpose) and understanding through knowing God's Spirit.

From a Self through Light blessed with God's Life (blessed Light) you get-

A Self through God's Purpose (God's Spirit),

A Self through Spiritual Will through knowing God's Spiritual Understanding (Self through God's Purpose),

Will through knowing God, Light of God, God's Life (God's Light) and through the Spirit blessing knowing seeing Spiritual Understanding, Life of loving word(the word blessed with Light)

The Spiritual loving word(the word blessed with Life)and God's knowing transformation.

From the transformation of God's Light you get Spirit of Love (Spiritual Understanding blesses Life).

From the Light of God's Spiritual Word (Wisdom of God (God's purpose) blessed) you get-Blessed with God's Spiritual Mind and through God's Purpose a Will of loving Light blessed, (blessed through Mind through knowing)

Spiritual Understanding blessed with God's Purpose(God's Purpose through Life)

Well quite a long passage that though most of it is self explanatory so I will quickly gloss over it. From knowing, God's Light sees Spiritual Will through the Spiritual Word and you get a Will of God and know your life is blessed. From understanding and serving God's Purpose you get a life of love, the Spirit of Knowing and the Holy Spirit. From God's Purpose and Spiritual Understanding you get a Will of Knowing through the Spirit of God's Spiritual Wisdom. From being blessed by the Holy Spirit you get the Spirits of Knowing, Life and Understanding and a Mind of God. From blessed understanding your Self gets God's Spirit of Love and you get Spiritual Understanding. From a will of God your Mind

is blessed with the Spiritual Word and you understand love in the Spiritual Sense for you become God's Spiritual Will. From God's Spiritual Understanding you get a Spirit and Self through knowing and a life of God's Spiritual Will. From a Self of Light you are blessed with God's Purpose, Spiritual Will and Understanding and the transformation of the Loving Word. From the transformation of Light you get Spiritual Love and from God's Spiritual Word you get a Spiritual Mind through God's Purpose and a Will of Love and Spiritual Understanding.

The Joy of Giving

Come fair maid and rest your head for love is on my mind
Talk to me in vibrant prose with beauty well defined,
Let me feel your warming heat, give to me your smile
Hold me close oh fragile rose because I like your style.

Love me tender fairest maiden for I crave your grace
Come to me oh child of heaven show me your kind face,
Give to me your love unending, kiss me tenderly
For now I know you lie beside me you are reality.

Kiss me now and hold me tightly let me taste your love
Senses tingling, heart beat singing, manna from above,
You are now my one desire for I want your heart
So tell me of your love for me and we will never part.

Oh beauty transcendent of pure natural form
Oh radiant desire that weathers the storm,
Oh love-light descendant that comes from your eyes
Oh love never ending, a heart full of sighs.

My one true intention is to serve you with zeal
My one true desire is your heart beat to feel,
My one true purpose is to bow down before you
My only real motive is to be faithful and true.

You are my reason and from that I grow
You are my senses you're all that I know,
You are my life now for your love is my grace
You are a Goddess with the fairest of face.

Oh light of my life bearer of my song, I'll walk with you because you make me strong
You are my yearning my one true desire, you are the spark that ignites my fire,
You are my passion my reason to serve you are my lady my loyalty won't swerve
You are existence, you are too fine, yours is the love on which I must dine.

Oh love of my life conjurer of my smile I'll walk with you because I like your style
I'll hold your cause for you are my maid, yours is the price that my love is paid,
Yours is the beauty that lifts up my heart, yours is the presence that I'll not depart
Yours is the fragrance that beats any flower, yours is the grace on which I'll shower.

Oh power of my senses, emotional lift with your love inside me I'll never drift
With you as my partner I get so high with your love inside me I'll never die,
With you love-light inside me I'll always shine with your love inside me I feel divine
With you in my arms I'll grow in peace with your love inside me my troubles will cease.

In Love

The wind blows hard the rain doth pour, the police man knocks upon my door

The rent man's due, so soon again, this blasted leg still gives me pain,

My dogs gone missing, just left the place and someone smacked me in the face

Guess that's life, it's only fair but I'm in love what do I care.

The String that Broke

THE BOOK OF LIFE-A SYMBOLIC JOURNEY

The Book of Life is a book of symbols and to actually equate it takes some imagination and a deeper understanding of things. The actual Book of Life is Genesis and to open it means to understand it but I am talking about reading life like it was an open book which is a slightly different thing. Before you can truly understand it you have to realise that you were put here for a purpose and the Book of Life is there to help you achieve it. It will take you there one step at a time and only reveal to you what you are ready to hear when you are ready to hear it. You might find the information in a book you are strangely drawn to or you might see someone you will tell you what you need to know to bring you forward to the next stage of your development. This information need not be spiritual knowledge; it might also be something that will help you to remove the mental barriers that stop you from achieving true understanding of your purpose.

Before I continue I would like to dwell on these mental barriers because having them not only detracts you from your purpose it is very detrimental to both your self confidence and your self-development. The human psyche takes on knowledge and utilises it for the living of life. Without the power of discernment it takes on things blind and so leaves it open to suggestion and basically easily manipulated by others more devious and better educated than it. I say better educated but that need not be academic it could also be more experienced in life for these two methods are what actually build your powers of discernment. Now without these powers of discernment the mind is very pliable to other people's will for it looks to others for guidance and takes on what they say as fact. If told that they are both worthless and useless they actually believe it. These are the mental barriers at their most basic but they are often enhanced by others just sitting back and picking faults with the victims work and self to reinforce the point and keep the person in their place. Once the victim's spirit is broken and their confidence truly wilted they actually start to see the predator as their saviour and fed with the right sort of knowledge they become an extension of the predator's well being.

So how do you actually get rid of these mental barriers? Well reading self development books and doing crossword puzzles help to expand your mind for it is only by testing it to its limits that it sets itself new boundaries. Many people say that they haven't the time to do this but if they sat down and worked out how much time they actually waste pandering to the predators ego they would be pleasantly surprised. First though set yourself some limits of behaviour that you find acceptable to yourself and don't let anyone cross them. When you know where you stand then soon everyone else will know where they stand. Incidentally before you can stand on your own two feet you must first get off your arse for I am afraid that mental sloth plays a big part of the problem. Try these two methods and you will quickly see the difference, expect some confrontation for the predator will be loath to let go of their power over you. Don't dishearten though for when you make the conscious decision to alter your life fate will be in your favour and situations will generally go your way.

Hopefully these mental barriers will soon be lifted and you will quickly find your true purpose and the peace of mind that goes with it. Once these barriers are lifted and you make the decision to get more understanding of life you will be guided by your Higher Self (or Father in Heaven depending on your creed) to help you develop your Self and expand your spiritual consciousness (or awareness if you like). This is what will draw you to the relevant book or to be in the right place to meet that certain

person who has the knowledge you will need for the next step in your development. Your Higher Self is part of a collective conscious for that person you met was also guided so as you can see once you make that decision the whole of creation is behind you. Symbolism does play a major role in the Book of Life so it might be a good idea to go a little deeper into it. Your house is symbolic of self so when you make the decision to work on it, it is symbolic of working on your Self. Getting rid of the clutter gets rid of the emotional baggage and redecorating it is symbolic of a change in lifestyle for it denotes a conscious decision to change your Self. Your garden too has a place for it is symbolic of your imagination. Kept well tended and in order it is surprising the peace of mind it will bring. Symbolism also works with other things. I knew a person who needed glasses and instead of getting their eyes properly tested they would use other people's glasses symbolic of taking on other people's perceptions. It was only when they got their eyes checked and fitted with the correct lens that they started to see things more clearly. Incidentally using the wrong glasses is detrimental to your eyes just as taking on other people's perceptions blind is detrimental to your understanding so the symbols do go down quite deeply.

Natural symbols too have their place. A robin is symbolic of rebirth and to see one signifies a new beginning after the death of an old problem for aspects of the Self have to die so it might evolve to a purer nature. These aspects are negative and are put in place to strengthen your will by testing your resolve, with each one defeated you get a little stronger, mentally speaking that is. Incidentally if you see a death in a dream, well unless it is a premonition, it also means the death of a negative aspect so like the arrival of that robin it should be seen as a relief and not a cause for concern.

Symbols are highly personal in some respects but generally speaking they will provide rough guidelines to gauge your mental development and evolution to your purpose. They can be found anywhere and everywhere and can work on many levels dependent on your understanding. Here are a couple of ancient symbols the understanding of which will help you on your path to self development.

Infinity

Infinity is actually the symbol of precession, the sun's projected journey around the greater zodiac. Each age lasts over 2,000 years making 26,000 years in total and then the process repeats itself ad infinitum. The larger circle contains the twelve ages and the smaller circle their elemental attributes, air, earth, fire and water.

The Caduceus

The Caduceus is an ancient symbol of healing first recorded around 2,600b.c. It is symbolic of more than one thing so I will do each one in turn. Firstly it is symbolic of the elements; the wand is symbolic of earth, the wings, air, and the snakes fire and water.

Secondly it is symbolic of the three life forces, the winged wand symbolic of the spiritual force and the snakes positive and negative. Thirdly the forces merge at points called chakras, seven in number, the first four, the base, abdomen, solar plexus and heart are the four places that the snakes entwine. The fifth or the throat chakra is located at the snakes heads (incidentally in Reiki healing the throat chakra is the only chakra that you do not physically touch) the sixth chakra, the brow chakra, the wings and finally the crown or knob of the wand. With that in mind I would say that its real meaning is that it is symbolic of man.

The Book of Life-Your Chance to Write it

The seven deadly sins incarnated in the people around you, sounds far-fetched look a little deeper.

Look around your world and see if you can personify the sins in the people around you. If their actions affect your life in the sense that they waste a lot of time and give you a lot of undue stress then they are sapping your self esteem and want facing. From this you will get stronger, I will give you a couple of pointers and an example that hopefully will give you a starter for the book should you choose to write it. Before I start though I would like to define humility as it seems to have got confused slightly with timidity. Humility is true self confidence and should be eagerly sought after. It is you without an ego. Timidity on the other hand is fear through lack of confidence. It is you without self esteem.

A negative side of humility is that people tend to look at you as a crutch and even come to treat you basically like a door mat. You should never allow this to happen for on a personal level it saps your self esteem and from an objective viewpoint you stunt their evolution. They too have to grow.

I know a person who had a friend who was sloth incarnate. Sloth was quite capable of doing things for itself but as the person had a good heart she was more than willing to share the burden. Over time it evolved from just helping to actually doing it themselves. Could you phone the council for us and so on. You can recognise sloth by its whining voice and false pandering to your ego. You do it so much better than me kind of thing, and by the fact that you always feel drained by their presence. And how do you defeat sloth? Keep yourself busy when it wants you and it will have to do it for itself. You can still point the way but don't hold its hand that's all. In the long term they will probably thank you, well if they could be bothered that is. I used that as an example but you will find that most of people possessed with these flaws will leave you drained and waste a lot of your time. They also have a nasty habit of turning the tables on you and actually blaming you for their mistakes after you try and clear up the mess that they made. Remember that it is not your job to clear up their mess and if, out of the goodness of your heart you choose to; you are doing them the favour and not the other way around. With that in mind you will gain control of the situation. One final point, you might actually be someone else's demon without knowing it so take a look at your life and find out your side of the bargain, it will make for a lot more pleasant environment.

So back to the introduction then. I want you to write the Book of Life but first you have to live it. Now first sit down and work out who the seven culprits are and weave them into a story starting with their relationship with you in terms of time lost and mental anguish caused by their self centredness. Follow that through as you deal with each one on a day to day basis and tell how their relationship to you changes(hopefully they will see you in a new light and treat you accordingly but if they don't you might have to be prepared to sever that link completely). When you have done this keep it safely and read it now and again should you ever need a lift. I will give you the introduction so good luck and all speed.

Introduction

Everything happens for a reason and that reason is you. Most people ponder on their fate instead of pondering on fate itself. This is a bad mistake as instead of building up your imagination you generally fall to either pride or envy which manifests as self delusion or self pity. This distracts you from your true purpose, the reason to your being and nulls your understanding of the fact that everything happens for a reason and so you are destined to make the same mistakes again and again. The Book of Life is not a complicated book it is only us that make it so